

Electoral Commission public awareness campaigns – Spring 2011

11 November 2010

Background

The Commission is planning to run two public awareness campaigns in spring 2011. The first will be ahead of the referendum on the powers of the National Assembly for Wales scheduled for March. The second will be ahead of the scheduled elections and the proposed referendum on the UK Parliamentary voting system on 5 May 2011.

The campaigns will provide information on the events and how voters can take part in them. The campaigns will target all eligible voters.

Public information booklets

Both campaigns will centre on a public information booklet which will be delivered to each household.

The booklet for the referendum on the powers of the National Assembly for Wales will cover:

- the powers of the Assembly
- the referendum question
- what will happen if the majority of people vote 'yes' or 'no'
- how to complete the ballot paper
- who is eligible to vote
- different ways to vote (at a polling station, postal, proxy etc).

There will be four versions of the booklet for the scheduled elections and proposed referendum on the UK Parliamentary voting systems - one each for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Content will include:

- information on the Scottish Parliament / National Assembly for Wales / Northern Ireland Assembly
- how to complete ballot papers for the devolved elections and how winners are declared
- the referendum question

- what will happen if the majority of people vote 'yes' or 'no' in the referendum
- how to complete the referendum ballot paper
- a description of the first past the post and alternative vote systems – how ballot papers are completed and how the count process works under each system
- who is eligible to vote in the elections and referendum
- different ways to vote (at a polling station, postal, proxy etc.)

Advertising

For both campaigns, the booklet will be supported by advertising on TV, the internet and radio. The advertising will take place in two phases. The first will take place as the booklet is being distributed to each household. It will raise awareness that the referendum / elections are approaching and will encourage people to look out for the booklet. The second will take place after the distribution of the booklet is complete. It will remind people about the referendum / elections and let them know that more information is available through our website or helpline.

Other activity

The Commission will produce materials that local authorities can use to promote awareness of the elections / referendums in their area. The Commission will also engage with charities and other groups to help disseminate information and material about the events.

The campaign will provide information on the elections and referendums in a range of formats accessible for people with disabilities and a range of languages.