

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission

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Electoral Commission report on the recall petitions held in Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire

Information on and a link to the Commission's report, which was published on Thursday 10 October.

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Issue 239 (Scotland) – 16 October 2019

Electoral Commission report on the recall petitions held in Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire

On Thursday 10 October, we [published our report](#) on the recall petitions held earlier this year in Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire.

As only one petition had been held before, in 2018 in the North Antrim constituency, these recall petitions have provided us with valuable evidence about how the existing petition rules work in practice and how the process can be improved.

Our report finds that both Petition Officers delivered all of their duties under the Recall Act 2015 and provided a high level of service throughout the six-week signing period. There were, however, some aspects where applying electoral rules to a process that is not an election led to administrative challenges, and issues with transparency and secrecy.

We have recommended that the UK Government should now review the rules to improve the experience for those who come forward to sign future petitions, and to make it easier for Petition Officers to run the process effectively. These include:

- The need to consider how to bring secrecy to the petition process; we propose one way to achieve this, by offering eligible constituents the chance to indicate their opposition to the petition.
- Identifying the appropriate length for a reduced signing period of less than six-weeks. This should start by considering whether a four-week period would be sufficient.
- Setting out more clearly what time signing places should close on the final day of the petition period and the deadline for receipt of postal signing papers, and when and how the

Speaker should be notified of the petition result.

We have also recommended that Petition Officers and Returning Officers should review their plans for running future recall petitions:

- Petition Officers for future recall petitions should ensure they offer some extended opening hours for people to sign the petition, beyond the minimum hours of 9am to 5pm.
- Returning Officers should review their contingency planning to include arrangements for delivering any recall petitions which could potentially take place in their constituencies, particularly to identify possible locations for signing places.

There are also factsheets available for both recall petitions – [Peterborough](#) and [Brecon & Radnorshire](#). Our report on the 2018 North Antrim constituency recall petition is available [here](#).

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