

electoral administration bulletin



Issue 251 (Wales) – 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

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Further information on the publication of guidance for the May 2020 polls.

[Update from the Wales Electoral Coordination Board](#)

Information from the Wales Electoral Coordination Board, including a link to a summary of their meeting held on 2 September.

EA Bulletins are issued on a regular basis. They are one of our key channels for communicating with Returning Officers, Electoral Registration

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](#).

May 2020 polls: notice of decision made by Police Area Returning Officers in Wales

Police Area Returning Officers (PAROs)* in Wales, in their capacity as members of the Wales Electoral Coordination Board **, have recently discussed the timing of the verification and count for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections in May 2020.

Following discussions at Board level and with Local Returning Officers, they have reached a national consensus for all local authorities in Wales that will enable verification and count venues to be booked.

- The verification will take place from 22:00 on Thursday 7 May
- The count will take place from 9:30am on Monday 11 May

The offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales and members of the Assembly Parties Panel have been informed of the decision.

*The Police Area Returning Officers (Designate) are:

South Wales Police	Debbie Marles (Vale of Glamorgan Council)
Gwent Police	Michelle Morris (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council)
North Wales Police	Colin Everett (Flintshire County Council)
Dyfed Powys Police	Ian Westley (Pembrokeshire)

** The Wales Electoral Coordination Board was established in 2017 and fulfils a key role in the coordination of relevant electoral events and electoral activity, modernisation and reform in Wales. It also facilitates greater collaboration between Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and other key partners. The

Officers and their staff. Past issues of Bulletins for England, Scotland and Wales are available [here](#). You can also [subscribe to the EA Bulletins](#).

Please [keep us informed](#) of any staff changes within your team. This will help us to keep our mailing lists up-to-date.

If there is a new RO/ERO appointment in your authority, please contact the team in Wales by e-mailing infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk.

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members of the Board include a selection of Regional Returning officers and Returning Officers/Electoral Registration Officers from across Wales, together with representatives from the Electoral Commission, Welsh and UK Governments and the Association of Electoral Administrators.

May 2020 polls: publication of guidance

Further to [Bulletin 248](#), we have now updated and published Parts C and D of our core guidance for [Returning Officers](#) ahead of the scheduled Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2020.

In addition, we have also published updated guidance for [Police Area Returning Officers](#) on the delivery of key processes to support their preparations for the May 2020 polls.

In all cases, the guidance hasn't changed significantly from previous years, with the updates principally being focussed around reflecting GDPR. The change log at the front of each guidance Part has been updated to reflect the amendments that have been made.

We will be publishing Parts E and F of our guidance for Returning Officers over the next few weeks. We are also making revisions to the candidate and agents guidance for the May 2020 PCC elections. We will update you via a future Bulletin when this guidance is available.

Update from the Wales Electoral Coordination Board

The Wales Electoral Coordination Board (WECB) met on 2 September.

Their discussion covered: the European Parliamentary elections; the Recall petition; planning for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in 2020; capacity, mentoring and support; electoral reform; and the future role and work of the WECB. There were also updates from the Electoral Commission, Welsh Government, Assembly Commission and Welsh Language Advisory Group.

A briefing note which summarises the discussion is available [here](#).

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