

# electoral administration bulletin

The  
Electoral  
Commission



Issue 261 (England) – 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

## Contents

### [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.

### [May 2020 polls: publication of guidance](#)

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

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

We are sending you this newsletter as it contains important information about the Electoral Commission's work which is relevant to you. The newsletter forms part of the Electoral Commission's public task which has its basis in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. We will manage your personal information and contact details in line with the General Data Protection Regulation and UK

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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### May 2020 polls: publication of guidance

Further to [Bulletin 258](#), we have now updated and published Parts C and D of our core guidance for [Returning Officers](#) ahead of the scheduled local government and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2020. This includes guidance for both standalone Police and Crime Commissioner elections and for combined Police and Crime Commissioner and local government elections.

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.

We've also been working with the GLA to update our guidance for the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections in May 2020, and Parts C and D of this guidance for [Returning Officers](#) have also now been published.

In all cases, the guidance hasn't changed significantly from previous years, with the updates principally being focussed around reflecting GDPR and legislative changes removing the requirement for candidates to have their home addresses published on the ballot paper. 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 above polls. We will update you via a future Bulletin when this guidance is available.

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