

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission



Issue 238 (Scotland) – 8 October 2019

Electoral Commission report on the May 2019 elections

The Electoral Commission has today [published a report](#) on the local government elections, which took place in England and Northern Ireland and European Parliamentary elections held in May 2019.

Our research with the public shows that a majority of people were confident that the May 2019 elections were well-run, and most voters were satisfied with the voting process. But overall levels of confidence about the European Parliamentary elections and the local government elections in England were lower than at other recent elections, following concerns about issues experienced by voters.

Our report identifies two key issues that had a detrimental impact on voters: the difficulties experienced by some EU citizens living in the UK who wanted to vote in the European Parliamentary elections in the UK; and the difficulties experienced by overseas British voters who were unable to return postal votes in time to be counted.

We looked at the registration process for EU citizens resident in the UK, and what happened in practice before polling day in May 2019 to enable EU citizens to register to vote and vote in the UK. More information can be found in the [Commission's inquiry report](#).

Many of the issues we highlight in our report are not new, and we have said for some time that the failure of governments and parliaments to properly maintain and update electoral law, and to address pressure on local authorities, has built up significant risks for well-run elections.

The May 2019 elections illustrate that electoral law is increasingly complex and out-dated, and presents real risks for voters, candidates and campaigners, and electoral administrators.

We want to see progress by the UK Government towards

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Electoral Commission report on the administration of the May 2019 European Parliamentary elections

Information on and a link to the Commission's report, which was published on Tuesday 8 October.

Legislation update and call for evidence

A link to legislation published by the Scottish Government and information on how to respond to a call for evidence on the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill.

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

implementing recommendations that we and others have made, including:

- Introducing new approaches to improving access to the voting process for overseas electors, as has been readily and successfully done in other comparable democracies.
- Ensuring there is clarity about the legal framework for elections at least six months before EROs and ROs need to deliver statutory processes.
- While ROs and EROs will always need to be prepared to respond to unanticipated political developments, governments should also ensure that their decisions support effective contingency planning.

Given all of this, it is an immense credit to the ROs and other electoral staff across the country that they achieved what they did in the circumstances: largely well-run elections in the face of substantial challenges.

We will continue to work with the electoral community to explore what more can be done within the current framework to address the challenges around resilience and capacity in local electoral services

Our report on recall petitions held in Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire

On Thursday 10 October, we will be publishing our report into the recall petitions held in Peterborough and Brecon and Radnorshire. We will provide a summary of our findings and a link to the report in next week's Bulletin.

Legislation update: call for evidence

The Scottish Government has published the [Scottish Elections \(Reform\) Bill](#), and the Scottish Parliament's Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee is now [seeking evidence](#) in relation to the Bill.

The Bill includes proposals for changes to a number of aspects of parliamentary and local government elections including:

- Length of terms
- Number of councillors per ward
- Role of the Electoral Commission
- Role of the Electoral Management Board
- Boundary reviews for Scottish Parliament constituencies and local government wards

The deadline to respond is Thursday 7 November 2019.

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information and contact details in line with the General Data Protection Regulation and UK data protection legislation as outlined in our privacy notice (<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/privacy-notice>)

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