

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission



Issue 257 (Scotland) – 21 April 2020

Electoral Commission report on the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election

The Electoral Commission has today (Tuesday 21 April) published [a report on the UK Parliamentary general election held in December 2019](#).

We have a statutory responsibility to report on UK general elections and are committed to transparency. We are publishing our post-election report at this time to give access to the research and share our analysis of the lessons from the 2019 general election at the earliest opportunity.

We have looked at how the election was run, how voters found participating in the election, and how campaigners got their messages across to voters. Our report sets out what we found and what we think should change for elections in the future.

Our research with the public shows that there were high levels of satisfaction with the processes of registering to vote and voting. These were similar to other recent elections in the UK.

Beneath this generally positive picture, however, we have also seen evidence about concerns and problems at this election.

Although more than two thirds of people said they were confident the election was well-run, a significant minority of nearly one in five people told us they were not confident. Many of these people selected reasons relating to concerns about campaigning or the media to explain why they were not confident. Some people also selected concerns that related to the way the registration or voting processes worked.

Our report identifies three key challenges relating to the delivery of the election:

- Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) were under pressure from large numbers of applications to register to vote made close to the deadline, and they had to spend time and effort at a critical point dealing with many duplicate applications

Contents

Electoral Commission report on the 2019 UK Parliamentary general election

Information on and a link to the Commission's report, which was published on Tuesday 21 April.

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 data protection legislation as outlined in our privacy notice (<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/privacy-notice>)

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, you may [unsubscribe](#) at any time.

- Some overseas electors again did not have enough time to receive and return postal votes, which meant their votes could not be counted
- The December timing of the general election brought specific challenges for Returning Officers (ROs), who found it harder to recruit staff and secure polling stations and counting venues

We have made the following recommendations to support EROs and ROs so that they can meet voters' expectations at future elections:

- The UK Government needs to identify improvements to the online register to vote service, electoral management software systems and the funding model for elections, to help EROs effectively manage large numbers of registration applications (including duplicate applications) ahead of major electoral events
- The UK Government should also explore reforms that would make it easier for people to register or update their details throughout the year, such as by integrating registration applications into other public service contacts
- The UK Government needs to consider innovative new approaches to improve voting for overseas electors, using evidence from other countries, particularly given its plans to increase the number of British citizens living abroad who are eligible to vote
- The UK's three governments need to set out how they will simplify and modernise electoral law, building on the comprehensive and well-supported recommendations by the Law Commissions

The Electoral Commission
City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh,
EH1 1YJ

Tel: 0333 103 1928

Textphone: 18001 020 7271 0500

infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk

[**www.electoralcommission.org.uk**](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)

© The Electoral Commission 2020