

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission



Issue 331 (Wales) – 5 October 2022

Elections Act: guidance update

Following discussions at the AEA Seminar on the implementation of the Elections Act – particularly the voter ID provisions - we wanted to update on our guidance plans to support you in delivering the new measures.

Firstly, further to [Bulletin 328](#), we have updated our [key planning considerations guidance](#) to reflect the detail confirmed since it was published in August, including updates from UK Government on funding. This guidance will remain a living document as further detail emerges, and it now includes a change log. We will also update you on changes through the Bulletin as usual.

Now that the UK Government has confirmed it will lay the secondary legislation covering voter ID measures in early November, we have been able to progress our plans for the associated guidance. We are taking a phased approach to this, given the scope of the measures and the limited time available, aiming to get you what you need as swiftly as possible in the order you will need it, and to reduce the time between having sight of the final legislation and making guidance available. Our initial focus is on core guidance for EROs to support the Voter Authority Certificate application process. We aim to publish the first sections of this in mid-November, ahead of further guidance, especially in relation to RO planning and polling station processes.

There are other specific concerns in Wales, arising from the Elections Act, which relate to divergence between reserved (UKPGE and PCC) and devolved (Senedd and Local Government) elections. The Wales Team will be sending further information on this to you all very soon.

Reminder of consultation on draft accessibility guidance for Returning Officers

As set out in [Bulletin 329](#) on 5 September we launched [a consultation on draft guidance for Returning Officers on assistance with voting for persons with disabilities](#).

Contents

Elections Act: guidance update

An update on the Commission's plans for guidance, including a reminder of our consultation on draft accessibility guidance for Returning Officers.

Voter ID: public awareness campaign

An overview of the Commission's plans for the Voter ID campaign.

WECB Communications Sub-Group

Information about The Wales Electoral Co-ordination Board Communications Sub-Group and how to join.

2022 canvass: ERO survey

Information on and a link to our ERO survey.

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.

If there is a new RO/ERO appointment in your authority, please contact the team in Wales by e-mailing

The Elections Act includes provisions relating to assisting disabled people to vote, and introduces a duty on the Commission to provide guidance for Returning Officers (ROs) on the requirement to provide reasonable equipment to assist voters with disabilities in polling stations. ROs must have regard to this guidance.

The changes made by the Act have provided a timely opportunity to review our existing guidance to help ensure everyone can vote independently and confidently. There should be no barriers to voting for disabled people, and everyone should have the right to vote on their own and in secret.

We are grateful for the feedback we've received to date. The consultation closes on 17 October and we want to hear from as many people as possible. You can respond by filling in [this form](#) or emailing your views to EAConsultation@electoralcommission.org.uk.

Voter ID: public awareness campaign

Voter ID campaign: update

Ahead of the English local elections in May 2023, the Commission will be launching a new public awareness campaign in January 2023. The campaign will subsequently be rolled out across Wales at the next relevant poll.

What we know about our audiences

We know, from research conducted by the Cabinet Office in 2021, that 96% of people in Great Britain hold some form of recognisable photo ID, with passports (91%) and driving licenses (81%) being the most commonly held forms. This means most people simply need to know about the voter ID policy change and to be reminded to bring their ID on polling day. This group will be effectively reached by our mass media and digital advertising campaign.

Working in partnership

Research also tells us that some demographic groups are less likely to have a form of eligible ID. These groups are also more likely to face significant or compounding barriers in engaging with this new requirement:

- People aged over 85
- Trans and non-binary people
- Disabled people
- Ethnicities with low ID ownership, including people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- Homeless people and those in refuges
- Anonymous voters

We're working closely with civil society organisations to produce communications resources which raise awareness of the change and support people to understand what types of ID are eligible, how to apply for free voter ID, and what to expect at the polling station.

We will use our learning from the 2023 English local elections campaign to inform our plans for the campaign in Wales. If there were to be a UK Parliament by-election, we would work closely with the relevant council communications team and support

infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk

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.

the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer to raise awareness amongst voters about the new requirement.

Contact us

We will share more detail on plans for the campaign in due course. If you have any questions, please contact us at partners@electoralcommission.org.uk.

WECB Communications Sub-Group

The Wales Electoral Co-ordination Board Communications Sub-Group was established last year to improve the consistency of elections communications across Wales and share best practice across authorities. Moving forward, a key area of the communications work for the group will focus on the areas of divergence for electoral services teams and voters, stemming from the UK Government's Elections Act and any future Welsh Government reforms.

We are currently in the process of updating the group's membership and would like as many local authorities across Wales represented as possible. Previously, staff from communications teams or a public engagement officer (if in place) have attended.

To find out more or to nominate yourself as a group member, please contact edowning@electoralcommission.org.uk.

2022 canvass: ERO survey

As in previous years, we will once again be requesting information from all EROs, which will help us to build up a picture of how the canvass is progressing. All EROs should have received an email directly last week with [a link to the survey](#).

The information gathered from the survey will support our engagement with you as well as informing our reporting on electoral registration. It will also be used to support the identification and sharing of examples of good practice and to further inform our guidance for EROs. Please complete the survey by no later than Wednesday 12 October.

If you have any questions relating to the survey, please contact infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk.

The Electoral Commission, Wales
Companies House, Crown Way, Cardiff, CF14 3UZ
Tel: 0333 103 1929

infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk

www.electoralcommission.org.uk

© The Electoral Commission 2022