

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission

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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

Issue 323 (Scotland) – 30 March 2023

Scottish Government consultation on electoral reform

We have now published [our response](#) to the [Scottish Government's consultation on electoral reform](#).

As well as responding to the specific questions set out in the consultation paper, we have also highlighted the urgent need for further reform of the electoral registration process along with streamlining the processes for applying for absent votes for both UK Parliament elections and devolved Scottish elections. These measures will help make it as easy as possible for voters to register and cast their vote by their preferred method.

We have also underlined the need to consider the resilience of electoral services teams and the timing of any legislation to ensure that any changes can be delivered effectively for voters.

Publication of report on electoral registration in Great Britain in 2022

We have today (Thursday 30 March) published [a report on electoral registration in Great Britain in 2022](#). The report looks at how the canvass was run and considers the ongoing impact on the electoral registers of the changes to the annual canvass process introduced in 2020.

Our analysis of data relating to the 2022 canvass suggests that the reformed canvass processes may not be sufficient to ensure that the registers keep pace with population movement. This is consistent with our findings from 2020 and 2021. Specifically:

- Some households continue to be allocated to the 'wrong' route due to imperfections in the data matching process and/or the lag between matching and canvassing. Almost a fifth of responses from households allocated to Route 1 (where the data matching process suggested there had been no change in household composition) reported significant changes to electors' details.

- Necessary changes to electors' details may not be reflected on the registers. Around 2.4 million households in Great Britain, or one third of those allocated to Route 2 (where a change in household composition was expected), did not respond to the canvass.
- The number of registered attainers continues to fall, possibly as a consequence of the reduction in contact that EROs now make with Route 1 households. The decline in the number of registered attainers began after the introduction of individual electoral registration (IER) in 2014. It continued in 2022, although the number fell at a much lower rate than in 2021.

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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While we know that new registration applications are most readily driven by large scale electoral events, it is nevertheless important that the canvass and other year-round registration activity supports accurate and complete registers. This can help to reduce the large volumes of registration applications received immediately in advance of major polls, when EROs' staff capacity is already stretched.

We cannot draw definitive conclusions on the impact of the changed canvass process on the registers from this analysis alone. Our research studies into accuracy and completeness allow us to produce reliable estimates of the quality of the registers. The results of our next study will be published in September 2023 and will enable us to robustly evaluate the impact that the canvass reforms have had.

We have regularly highlighted our concern that the registration system, including the canvass, is unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term and have recommended that the UK's governments should reform the system, including to make better use of data to keep the registers up to date and to explore more automated registration processes.

Over the next year we will continue to support and challenge EROs, and work with you to ensure we all make full use of the data that is available. This should help to provide a better understanding of the impact of particular practices within the current framework and support us with identifying and sharing good practice.

Guidance update

We have now republished in HTML format our core guidance for [\(Acting\) Returning Officers at a UK Parliamentary by-election](#).

The guidance has been updated to reflect the Elections Act provisions which come into effect for these polls from 4 May onwards, relating to voter ID and accessibility measures.

We have also updated all relevant supporting resources.

In addition, we have updated our [candidates and agents guidance for UK Parliamentary by-elections](#).

Again, these changes reflect the Elections Act provisions which come into effect from 4 May onwards.

Should you require any further support, please contact
infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk.

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The Electoral Commission
City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh,
EH1 1YJ
Tel: 0333 103 1928
infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk
www.electoralcommission.org.uk
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