

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission



Issue 352 (England) – 15 March 2023

Elections Act: voter ID - public awareness campaign

Our voter ID campaign – ‘Note to self’ – has been live since 9 January. It sets out to raise awareness of the need to bring photo ID to the polling station; to ensure voters are aware of the most appropriate form of ID for them; and, for those who need it, to raise awareness of the free voter ID.

Campaign performance so far

We are now halfway through the campaign. Public opinion research that was carried out at the end of February gives us a strong indication that the campaign strategy is working, and that we are successfully raising awareness of this change among voters.

Research highlights:

- 63% of people now know that they need to bring ID to vote in a polling station, compared to 22% when the question was first asked in December. This is a significant increase in public awareness and shows that people are developing a strong understanding of our campaign message. It's worth noting that awareness of the need to register to vote sits at around 85%.
- 30% of all voting-age adults say they know about the VAC option, up from 10% when asked in December. Those who agree that they have a good understanding of how to apply for a free voter ID has increased from 9% in December to 24% at the end of February.

Campaign performance:

- Our TV advertising – across ITV, Channel 4 and Sky – has delivered a total of 67.2 million impacts – the number of times seen – against a planned 54.2 million impacts for the mass phase.
- During the mass phase, digital advertising has had 67.8 million impressions – again, the number of times seen – which has led to 473,000 clicks to the Commission's website for further information.

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Information on a series of advice surgeries for candidates and parties to discuss specific issues relating to spending and donations.

- We have delivered over 3000 panels across England including print and digital billboards, bus stops and bus rears.
- The view-through rate of our YouTube ad is at 50%; more than double the industry standard. This means that 50% of people watch our ad to the end, despite being able to skip it.
- Sustained levels of broadcast and print media coverage is being driven by both the Commission and local authorities, at national, regional and local levels. For the period between 9 January – 9 March, a total of 447 articles were published referencing the May elections, of which 423 specifically referenced voter ID or the Voter Authority Certificate. We have also issued 6 press releases and provided local authorities and partners with 8 template press releases.
- We have produced over 150 partner resources for key demographic groups.
- We have run roadshows and other engagement sessions with key charity partners: for example, with the British Deaf Association for BSL users, attended by more than 350 people. The recordings have also been shared more widely.

What's next?

The campaign will continue to run right up to, and including, polling day. Advertising, press activity and information provision across our digital channels will continue. And we will continue working with our partners (including local authorities) to amplify these messages – sharing our resources and delivering more roadshows.

Following the campaign we will conduct a full evaluation of our campaign to understand how it performed and help inform future communications and campaigns.

What can you do to help?

A big thank-you to all of you, and your colleagues, who have helped raise awareness of this important message so far. Your support for this campaign is invaluable in supporting voters through this change.

If you haven't already, you can download our [general resources](#) and [resources for key groups](#) to help raise awareness of the legislative change, amplify our main campaign messages and support people to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate if they need one.

Elections Act: guidance for EROs

Further to [Bulletin 347](#), we have made some further additions to our guidance for EROs in response to a number of queries that we have received.

We have expanded our [guidance on the retention and inspection of Voter identification evaluation forms \(VIDEF\)](#) to provide additional detail on the post-poll requirements, and updated our guidance on [issuing temporary Voter Authority Certificates](#) to clarify the circumstances under which they can be issued.

May 2023 elections: update on party names, descriptions and emblems

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.

As per our approach to providing updates on changes made to party names, descriptions and emblems set out in [Bulletin 351](#), below is a summary of the updates we have made since then.

As you will see, there have been a number of recent changes to the register and whilst not all will be relevant to candidates standing in your area, it is important that you read the list of updates to parties carefully to ensure that you are aware of changes that may impact on those standing in your area. The changes to the register so far for March are as follows:

- [Horwich and Blackrod Independents](#)
- [Northern Independence Party](#)
- [Resurrection](#)
- [Stafford Borough Independents](#)
- [Wakefield & District Independents](#)

No parties have been deregistered since the previous Bulletin.

You can find full details of what amendments have been made in our [list of recent decisions to approve or reject applied-for party names, descriptions and emblems](#). On our website you can also find a [list of applications we are currently considering](#).

When receiving nominations, Returning Officers must check that the party name or any description given on a nomination form, as well as the requested emblem, is registered on [the Commission's register of political parties](#) and that the details provided match the registration. To ensure that you are viewing the most up-to-date information, you may need to delete your browser history or refresh the page. If you are unsure how to do this, your IT team should be able to advise you.

Please [contact us](#) if you have any queries about the information contained on the registers.

May 2023 elections: out-of-hours advice during the election period

We will once again be providing an out-of-hours telephone advice service to deal with urgent electoral administration queries in the run up to and immediately following the May 2023 polls, and we thought it would be helpful to remind you of how you can contact us.

Contacting us during normal office hours

Our local teams will be available between the hours of 08:30 and 17:30 throughout the election period to support you as usual.

If you are contacting us during normal office hours, please use our Advice and Guidance Line: 0333 103 1928.

Alternatively, you can email us at:
infoengland@electoralcommission.org.uk

Contacting us outside of normal working hours

Our out-of-hours urgent advice service will be available from Monday 28 March and includes weekends and bank holidays throughout the election period. Evening cover will be from 17:30 until 21:00 and weekend and bank holiday cover from 10:00 until 16:00.

Additionally, there will be 24-hour cover available on polling day, and weekend and bank holiday cover from Saturday 6 May to Monday 8 May.

We can be contacted out-of-hours by calling: 0207 271 0504

May 2023 elections: candidate and agent webinar – Tuesday 11 April

We are hosting another pre-election webinar for candidates and their agents taking part in the upcoming elections. We've included a copy of the invitation below, for you to share with those you know want to stand for election in your area, particularly independent candidates.

'The Electoral Commission is hosting a pre-election webinar for candidates and their agents taking part in elections in England on 4 May.

It will provide essential information on the spending and donation rules, including:

- When the spending rules apply
- How much you can spend
- Notional spending rules
- Who you can accept donations from
- What you need to report after the election in your spending return
- Guidance on harassment and intimidation at elections and when it goes too far

There will also be a chance to ask questions. The webinar will take place using Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 11 April 2023 at 12pm – 1pm.

Please [complete the Commission's form](#) to confirm your attendance, and let them know if you have a specific question or topic you would like covered on the day. If you have further questions about the event please contact sbutler@electoralcommission.org.uk.'

May 2023 elections - surgeries for candidates and agents

As part of our commitment to delivering more proactive support for candidates and parties, we're hosting virtual advice surgeries before and after the elections to ensure those taking part have the advice and guidance they need.

We are offering 15-minute appointments with an expert advisor at the Commission to discuss specific issues relating to the spending and donation laws, and to answer any queries candidates and agents might have. The appointments after the election will provide practical support with spending returns. Virtual appointments will be available using Microsoft Teams throughout the following days, on a first come, first served basis.

Tuesday 18 April
Tuesday 25 April
Wednesday 26 April

Tuesday 23 May
Wednesday 24 May
Friday 25 May

Please feel free to share this information with those standing for election in your area. To request an appointment, candidates and agents should [complete our form](#) and can contact Stuart Butler on sbutler@electoralcommission.org.uk if they have any further questions.

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