

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission



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Electoral Commission report on 1 December 2016 electoral registers in the United Kingdom

On 17 March, we published a report on the 1 December 2016 electoral registers in the United Kingdom.

We reported that the size of the local government electorate in the United Kingdom on 1 December 2016 increased by 2.5% on the previous year, to 47,350,696. The data indicates that the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers have remained stable since the last assessment at the end of the transition to IER in December 2015.

The number of attainers on the local government registers has increased by 17.7% in the same period, although the figure for Great Britain is still 30% smaller than the number registered before the start of the transition to IER in February/March 2014.

There has also been a 144% increase in the number of registered overseas voters, to 263,902. The majority of these applications to register were made in advance of the EU Referendum.

In the report, we reiterate our conclusion that the current annual canvass is no longer the most effective or cost-efficient way of maintaining the registers. We also highlight our existing recommendations designed to address the challenge of delivering a modern electoral registration system, such as the automatic registration of young people when they are issued with a National Insurance number.

You can read the full report [on our website](#).

May 2017 polls: update on party names, descriptions and emblems

In [Bulletin 176](#), we provided a reminder of our administrative deadlines for changes, additions and deletions of party names,

descriptions and emblems for the May 2017 polls. We also provided a list of recently deregistered parties.

Updates are still being made to the online register of political parties and while the Commission is aiming to make all updates to it by 22 March 2017, there remains the potential that the register could be updated after that date. We will therefore continue to update Returning Officers and their staff through the Bulletin of changes, deletions and additions which are made in time to take effect for the May 2017 elections.

Since Bulletin 176, we have made updates to the following parties:

- [Blue Revolution](#)
- [Ideal Bradford](#)
- [Independents for Frome](#)
- [Llantwit First Independents](#)
- [Orkney Manifesto Group](#)
- [Newport Independents Party](#)
- [Plaid Cymru - The Party of Wales](#)
- [St. Neots Independent Group](#)
- [Southampton Independents](#)
- [Swanscombe and Greenhithe Residents' Association](#)
- [The Haswells Community Party](#)
- [The Hive Party](#)
- [The Nuneaton and Bedworth People`s Party](#)

You can find full details of what amendments have been made in our [list of the 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](#).

In any case, 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.

May 2017 polls: delegation of authority by Nominating Officers

We have received several enquiries about whether parties must supply the 'original' delegation of authority document, which is used by a party's Nominating Officer in order to delegate powers to authorise the use of a party name or description to someone else (sometimes referred to as the 'Local Nominating Officer certificate' or 'Deputy Nominating Officer certificate' by the parties).

There is no need for this document to be submitted as part of a nomination. It is not a nomination paper. In practice, some candidates may supply this alongside their nomination papers, but it is not required. As such, if it is supplied, it can be supplied as a copy.

May 2017 polls: commonly used names

We have received a number of enquiries about what the Returning Officer's powers are if they receive a nomination form on which a candidate has used the commonly used name provisions to drop their forename or surname.

Electoral integrity pilots: Cabinet Office prospectus

Information on and a link to the Cabinet Office's recently issued prospectus.

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.

In summary, ROs do not have discretion to reject a nomination form on the basis that they think that the candidate has wrongly used the commonly used name provisions to drop one of their forenames or surnames.

The law requires ROs to take whatever a candidate has entered in the commonly used name box at face value and to accept it as the candidate's commonly used name. The commonly used name provided on the nomination form must be carried forward to the statement of persons nominated and the ballot paper unless the RO thinks that:

- (a) showing a candidate's commonly used name on the ballot paper is likely to mislead or confuse electors; or
- (b) the commonly used name is obscene or offensive.

If, at an informal check stage, ROs are presented with a nomination form that has been completed in such a way that it appears to the RO that the commonly used name given is not different from any other forename or surname they may have, the RO should draw the candidate's attention to the legal definition of a commonly used name and highlight that it is an offence to knowingly make a false statement on the nomination form. The RO should also point out that if a nomination form is not completed in accordance with the law, the candidate will run the risk of challenge if they are elected. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that they have completed their nomination in accordance with the law.

Chapter 2 of [Part C of our guidance](#) for Returning Officers provides our full guidance on commonly used names.

May 2017 polls: Public awareness update - new partnership with Nextdoor

This year, to help encourage voter registration, the Commission is pleased to be partnering with the new social network for neighbourhoods, [Nextdoor](#).

Nextdoor is a free and private social network that was launched a few months ago and is taking off in thousands of communities all over the UK. The platform is only open to verified local residents, and is used to [find trustworthy local resources](#). We are working with Nextdoor to place '1 week to go' messages on their subscribers' newsfeeds.

Your local authority can also work with Nextdoor directly – they have a bespoke [public services platform](#) that is free to use. Dozens of councils are already on the platform, which allows authorities direct communication with residents and aims to engage local communities in various ways, including through geo-targeting.

For further information, please contact [Max Chambers](#) at Nextdoor for more details.

Electoral integrity pilots: Cabinet Office prospectus

On 15 March 2017 the Cabinet Office [issued a prospectus](#) inviting local authorities to express an interest in piloting options which will

require electors to present proof of identity when voting in person at a polling station at the scheduled local elections in England in May 2018. The Cabinet Office also welcomes any expressions of interest from local authorities who are not able to run a pilot at an election in May 2018, but would like to run activities which contribute to the evidence base.

Expressions of interest should be made in writing to Mark Hughes, Head of Elections Projects at mark.hughes@cabinetoffice.gov.uk. The deadline for submitting expressions of interest for these pilots is 24 March 2017, although the Cabinet Office have made clear that those who do not submit an expression of interest will still be able to submit a formal application at a later stage.

The Commission has a statutory duty to evaluate the pilot schemes and report its findings within three months of the election.

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The Electoral Commission
3 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8YZ
Tel England: 0333 103 1928
Tel Wales: 0333 103 1929
Textphone: 18001 020 7271 0500
infoengland@electoralcommission.org.uk
infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk
www.electoralcommission.org.uk

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