

# electoral administration bulletin

The  
Electoral  
Commission



Issue 202 (Scotland) – 26 April 2018

## Electoral registration: additional template HEF letters and envelopes

In [Bulletin 196](#), we shared the results of the project we carried out with Hull and Hackney Councils and the [Behavioural Insights Team \(BIT\)](#) which aimed to increase response rates to the HEF during the 2017 annual canvass.

Further to this, we can now confirm we will provide EROs with additional template versions of the HEF letters and envelopes which reflect the learning from the trial.

The additional templates will include:

- a modified HEF letter ('Easy' messaging) – a simplified call to action highlighting the online return method
- a modified HEF letter ('Cost' messaging) – highlighting the cost of non-compliance and framing the amount in terms of another council expense
- a modified HEF letter ('Hassle' messaging) – making future hassle of failing to complete the form more prominent
- a modified envelope – making it clear the letter requires a response by adding 'Do not ignore this envelope. If you live here you need to respond to this letter' to the front of the envelope

These additional templates will be made available on our website by the end of May. We will confirm in a future Bulletin as soon as they are available.

We appreciate that some of you will already be well advanced in your planning for this year's canvass and so this timing is not ideal, but we nevertheless wanted to make the additional templates available and share the learning from the trial in a practical way as quickly as we can. The existing templates will, however, remain available and can still be used. It will be for you as ERO to decide which templates, if any, you want to use based on your own local

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Information on the development of additional template HEF letters and envelopes reflecting learning from the 2017 project aiming to increase response rates.

### Electoral registration: updated suite of absent vote application forms

Information about and links to our updated suite of absent vote application forms.

### National Democracy Week

Information about National Democracy week and the National Democracy Week Awards.

### Electoral Commission response to the National Assembly for Wales consultation on electoral reform

Information on and a link to the Commission's response to the consultation.

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](#).

circumstances.

If you would like any further information, or have any questions, you can contact Jonathan Mitchell, Senior Communications Officer – Voter Materials via telephone on 0131 225 0202, or via email.

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### **Electoral registration: updated suite of absent vote application forms**

Further to [Bulletin 201](#), we can now confirm that we have updated our suite of absent vote application forms to reflect the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which comes into effect on 25 May 2018.

You should continue to use the existing absent vote application forms until 25 May, and they will remain on our [website](#) until that date. From 25 May, you should use the updated forms.

We are making the updated forms [available to you now](#) to assist your planning for the annual canvass, and from 25 May they will replace the current forms on our voter-facing [website](#).

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### **National Democracy Week**

National Democracy Week is taking place between 2 and 6 July 2018. Launched by the Cabinet Office, this is an opportunity to promote democracy. Information about National Democracy Week is available [here](#).

### **National Democracy Week Awards – nominations now open**

Do you know any individuals or organisations in the UK that are working hard to engage people in our democracy? If you do, make sure you nominate them for a Democracy Award.

Democracy work, particularly with underrepresented groups, has the potential to help people understand their democratic rights and make their voices heard. This service is not always recognised, but these awards are an opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding contributions that so many have made.

There are four award categories:

- Young Advocate of the Year Award
- Diversity Champion of the Year Award
- Changemaker of the Year Award
- Collaboration of the Year Award

The deadline for nominations is 27 May and the awards ceremony will take place during National Democracy Week. You can find further information about the National Democracy Week Awards and submit your nominations [here](#).

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### **Electoral Commission response to the National Assembly for Wales consultation on electoral reform**

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 February the Assembly Commission launched its consultation '[Creating a Parliament for Wales](#)' which asked for views on how the electoral, operational and internal arrangements of the National Assembly for Wales could be changed. This included questions around franchise, voting systems and electoral law.

Our focus is to ensure that any changes made to modify and reform electoral arrangements are adequately resourced to ensure that they can be implemented in the best interest of voters.

We responded to the consultation on 13 April 2013 and our full response can be found [here](#).

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