

# electoral administration bulletin

The  
Electoral  
Commission



Issue 216 (Scotland) – 30 November 2018

## Electoral Commission response to the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments' policy statement: proposals for reform of the annual canvass

We have today, Friday 30 November, [published our response](#) to the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments' policy statement setting out their proposals for reform of the annual canvass.

We welcome the proposals to enable Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) in Great Britain to use data to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the annual canvass of residential properties. A modern electoral registration system should use trusted public data to help ensure it remains accurate and complete throughout the year.

The important and significant changes detailed in the [policy statement](#) will need careful implementation. We are conscious that the window of opportunity for implementing these proposals in time for the 2020 annual canvass is small.

Our response highlights some of the key areas that will need to be addressed to ensure the proposed changes work effectively:

- It is essential that the canvass reform changes are in place by no later than December 2019, at least six months before the commencement of the 2020 canvass. This will enable EROs in England, Scotland and Wales to plan for the changes and have the skills and capacity in place to be able to deliver them effectively. However, earlier clarity will be important to enable necessary preparatory work to support the implementation of the changes to be undertaken.
- The UK's governments need to ensure that work on developing and agreeing implementation plans is accelerated to meet these challenges. We will continue to work with government officials to help ensure these plans are workable and robust.

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Information on and a link to the Commission's response, which was published today (Friday 30 November).

### December 2018 registers: collection of electoral data

Request for electoral data following publication of the revised registers.

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

The changes detailed in the policy statement are an important first step in further modernising the electoral registration system. They will mean EROs do not need to use their limited resources to chase canvass form information from properties where there has been no change. In the longer-term, however, there is more to be done to build on these reforms to ensure we have an effective year-round registration process. Our response highlights the need for the UK's governments to develop more ambitious plans for electoral registration reform, including:

- allowing EROs to use a wider range of reliable and trusted information from other public sources to maintain the registers;
- integrating electoral registration into other public service transactions; and
- exploring the feasibility and benefits of more automated forms of registration

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### December 2018 registers: collection of electoral data

As in previous years, the Electoral Commission is collecting data on the canvass and the December 2018 electoral registers. The data will assist the Commission's work on electoral registration research and performance standards.

As usual, we have worked with Electoral Management Software (EMS) suppliers to ensure there is an automated report in your system that will generate the data we require. Information on how to generate the report should have been provided to you by your EMS supplier.

We would be grateful if you could generate the report (Excel/CSV file) and send it to [research@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:research@electoralcommission.org.uk) as soon as possible after publication of the revised register and by **no later than 21 December**.

We would also be grateful if you could you email [research@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:research@electoralcommission.org.uk) if you are planning to delay the publication of your register beyond 1 December as a result of having a by-election during the canvass period.

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