

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission



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Policy statement on canvass reform

The UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments have published a [joint policy statement](#) on proposals for reform of the annual canvass. Since our last assessment of the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers, [published in July 2016](#), we have often said that we do not think the current registration system is sustainable in the long term. We have also highlighted the risk of continuing with a costly approach to the canvass at a time when local authority budgets are tight.

We therefore welcome the recent joint policy statement on the proposals for changes to the canvass, which recognises that the current processes, as prescribed by law, are resource intensive and do not take account of the differences within and between registration areas.

The paper poses a number of questions on the current plans and asks for responses by 5pm on 30 November 2018. The Commission will be responding and we will publish our response on our website. We would encourage others to take a look at the policy paper and to respond to make sure your views are heard.

2018 canvass: management information survey

As part of our stakeholder engagement activities for the 2018 canvass, we are collecting information from all EROs via our [management information survey](#).

The survey requests data about when you issued HEFs and ITRs, and asks about your plans for following up with those households or individuals yet to respond. It also asks for high-level information relating to personal canvassing and any comments you wish to make on particular challenges you have encountered or any new approaches you have tried that you think have worked well.

Please complete [the survey](#) by no later than Friday 19 October.

If you have any questions or concerns about the process, please contact your [local Commission team](#).

Electoral registration: Office for Students' guidance

In [Bulletin 210](#) we provided information about the Department for Education's Higher Education Regulatory Framework consultation and included a link to the [Ministerial guidance](#) for the Office for Students (OfS) on student electoral registration. We also set out that the OfS would use the Ministerial guidance to inform production of their [own regulatory guidance for Higher Education providers](#), which has now been published.

The OfS guidance focuses on the on-going regulatory condition E5 – meaning that Higher Education providers, registered with the OfS, must comply with guidance published by the OfS to facilitate, in co-operation with Electoral Registration Officers, the electoral registration of students.

The OfS will monitor Higher Education providers and assess compliance. In particular, they will focus their attention on providers where issues have been raised which suggest that the provider may not be cooperating effectively with EROs to facilitate electoral registration, if there is evidence of non-compliance the OfS will have the power to apply monetary penalties to Education providers.

Therefore, if you have evidence of providers failing to cooperate on the facilitation of electoral registration, you can write to the OfS at regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk. The OfS are particularly interested in cases where unhelpful behaviour is systematic and where you make clear to providers the legal and regulatory basis for your requests for information or cooperation, and continue to get an unhelpful response.

You should note that, condition E5, which also includes the power to issue monetary penalties to Higher Education providers, will not come into effect until August 2019. However, information received from EROs before that date will still be valuable as it will help the OfS to understand where to focus their attentions, but they will only be able to take regulatory action in this area once the condition and powers are in place.

Reminder of the consultation on the Electoral Commission's electoral observers' scheme and Code of Practice

As set out in [EA Bulletin 225](#), on 9 August we launched [a consultation](#) on proposed changes to our statutory observers' scheme and Code of Practice for electoral observers.

The proposed changes include, updating the language and presentation of the Code to make it more accessible, clarifying and modernising the application process, clarifying expectations about the role of observers, improving guidance on the practicalities of being an observer and establishing a voluntary feedback process for observers.

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.

The consultation closes on Wednesday 31 October and we want to hear from as many people as possible. Therefore, please send your response to:

EAConsultation@electoralcommission.org.uk.

Job vacancies at the Electoral Commission

The Commission is currently recruiting for the following positions:
Regional Manager North
Canvass Reform Manager

The closing date for applications for both positions is Sunday 14 October 2018.

If you would like further details or would like to apply, please visit the [recruitment page of our website](#). For an informal discussion on either of these two vacancies, please contact Melanie Davidson, Head of Support and Improvement on 020 7271 0552.

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

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