

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission



Issue 241 (England) – 18 March 2019

Canvass reform: interim statement of policy on canvass reform and guidance on data testing

On 12 March, Cabinet Office issued an [interim statement of policy on canvass reform](#) to EROs.

The document provides an overview of planned reforms to improve the annual canvass of electors undertaken each year by EROs across Great Britain.

There is a statutory requirement for the Commission to be consulted on the proposals, and we expect this to commence in w/c 25 March. Cabinet Office have noted that as part of this consultation the Commission may recommend changes to the policy, and as a result of this and also continuing discussions with the devolved governments in Scotland and Wales on the application of the reforms, the policy set out in the statement is still subject to change.

In preparation for the reforms, EROs will be required to undertake certain steps to ensure they are prepared for the national data test, which is expected to take place in January 2020, and for the discretionary local data matching.

To help EROs prepare, the Cabinet Office have produced guidance to support EROs through the data testing process, which can be accessed via the following links:

- [Part I: Data Test Preparation](#)
- [Part II: Testing local data](#)

If you have any questions in relation to the statement or guidance, please contact mrd-engagement@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

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May 2019 polls: update on party names, descriptions and emblems

In [Bulletin 240](#), we provided a reminder of our administrative deadlines for changes, additions and deletions of party names, descriptions and emblems for the scheduled May 2019 polls.

Updates are still being made to the online register of political parties and while the Commission is aiming to make all updates to the online register of political parties by 26 March 2019, 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 the changes, removals, and additions which are made in time to take effect for the May 2019 elections.

Since [Bulletin 240](#), we have made updates to the following parties:

- [Bath Northeast Somerset Independent Group \(BIG\)](#)
- [British Union & Sovereignty Party](#)
- [Lytham St Annes Independents](#)
- [Sutton Residents' Party](#)
- [Residents' Association of Cuddington](#)
- [It's Our County \(Herefordshire\)](#)
- [Social Democratic Party](#)
- [South Woodham Ferrers Council Taxpayers Association](#)
- [Foundation Party](#)
- [Centre Progressive Party](#)
- [Our Nation](#)
- [Democrats and Veterans Party \(GB\)](#)
- [Democrats and Veterans Party \(NI\)](#)

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 registers 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.

Should you have any questions about the registers, please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

May 2019 polls: further call for polling station data

As set out in [Bulletin 238](#), we're in the process of updating the polling station finder on [Your Vote Matters](#), ready for the local elections in May. This is so that voters can simply enter their postcode and find out where they need to go to vote.

limits.

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.

If you haven't done so already, please share your polling station data with us. You can export the data from your EMS and email it to pollingstations@democracyclub.org.uk. There are [instructions](#) available on how to do this if you're unsure.

To make sure we have time to update the information, we ask that you send your updates by not later than **Friday 12 April**.

May 2019 polls: 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 2019 elections.

Contacting us during normal office hours

Our local teams will be available between the hours of 08:30 and 17:30 from Tuesday 26 March 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 advice service begins on Tuesday 26 March and includes weekends, Good Friday (19 April) and Easter Monday (22 April).

Additionally, there will be 24-hour cover available on polling day, and weekend cover on Saturday 4 May and Sunday 5 May.

We can be contacted out-of-hours by calling: **0207 271 0613**.

Exclusion of disability-related expenses for candidates

Legislation has been made which will exclude disability related expenses from the candidate spending limits at a number of elections.

The [Representation of the People \(Election Expenses Exclusion\) \(Amendment\) Order 2019](#) has been signed by the Minister for the Constitution and is now in force, meaning that it will apply at local elections in England in May 2019.

The exclusion also applies to candidates at:

- UK Parliamentary elections,
- Northern Ireland Assembly elections
- Combined Authority Mayoral elections
- Local Mayoral elections
- London Mayoral and Assembly elections

Our [website](#) has been updated to reflect these changes.

The EnAble Fund for Elected Office for disabled candidates

The Government Equalities Office has set up an interim fund to support disabled candidates at some elections up to March 2020. Further information can be obtained by contacting the [scheme administrator](#).

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