

Cabinet Office update for electoral administrators on postal votes

Cabinet Office has been working with suppliers and electoral stakeholders to address the impact of Covid-19, prepare for the May 2021 polls, and understand the capacity and capability of the supplier market to support Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers to deliver effective elections.

As restrictions lift, we continue to address the impact of Covid-19 on the delivery of elections, including any local lockdown situation.

This work has led us to decide that we do not need to impose an all-postal vote for the local and mayoral elections in England and the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales in May 2021.

The UK Government remains of the view that all-postal voting increases fraud risks, and removes choice from voters who wish to cast their vote in person.

We do anticipate an increase in postal vote applications this year, particularly from people with health issues.

Therefore, we continue to work with postal vote suppliers, electoral sector partners and election teams to understand capacity for printing and administering postal votes. We also continue to work with all parties to consider how we can prioritise postal votes for people with health issues and support areas that may be affected by local lockdown precautions. We will provide an update on this work as soon as is practicable.

We will be grateful if local authorities take these issues into account if they are considering encouraging postal vote applications in the coming months.

We will continue to work with the Electoral Commission, Association of Electoral Administrators, SOLACE, Local Government Association and other partners to support the delivery of safe and secure elections.

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