



The Association of Electoral Administrators

Policy Positions

Updated: October 2021

Adopted by the AEA Board: 15 December 2021

The Association of Electoral Administrators



Our policies are broken down into three sections:

- Elections
- Electoral Registration
- Other issues.

Supplementing our high-level positions, we have produced the following [policy position statements](#):

- The need for legislation on second electoral registrations
- Review of the Returning Officers role in the handling of candidates' expenses
- Delay in the publication of the revised register of electors
- Provision of polling districts and polling places
- The use of schools as polling places
- Electoral registration funding
- Sale of the register of electors
- UK bank holidays and electoral administration.

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Key messages and policy statements

Question	AEA policy position
1. Elections	
<p>What are the biggest challenges facing returning officers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New electoral legislation • Staffing resources including competency of Returning Officers (ROs), Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and electoral administrators • Funding • Complexity of legislation • Complexity of different voting systems • Combined polls • Unscheduled polls • Tight election timetable • Cross boundaries • Electoral reform such as national electoral ID document • Overseas electors reform • Scotland and Wales – divergence in electoral legislation in the devolved nations. Election and electoral registration rules are increasingly different from UK wide polls, presenting significant challenges. <p>In our 2021 ‘Blueprint for a Modern Electoral Landscape’ we made the following recommendations:</p> <p><i>We urge all Governments and local authorities to take a more joined-up approach to assist EROs and ROs to deliver democratic processes with collective ownership and a clear understanding of the pressures faced both by electoral administrators and the wider electoral community.</i></p> <p>Other recommendations addressing these challenges are included throughout this paper.</p>

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<p>Should electors be required to show ID in polling stations?</p>	<p>This is a matter for the UK Parliament and devolved administrations to determine.</p> <p>Under the Elections Bill the UK Government is proposing photographic ID will be necessary to vote. AEA members will administer the process according to the legislation in force. Careful consideration is crucial to make sure planned changes are deliverable and do not lead to disenfranchisement, particularly for voters from already underrepresented groups.</p> <p>It is also imperative that polling stations are adequately resourced with sufficient, well-trained staff able to assist those wishing to vote.</p> <p>Once legislated for, changes must be clearly communicated well in advance of implementation. Electors and all those involved in the process must have time to understand the implications of the final scheme and prepare accordingly.</p> <p>Voters who do not have photographic ID must not be negatively impacted. Any national electoral ID document must be easy to access. The ID issuing process must avoid adding to the election burden on local authority officials. Sufficient lead-in time for legislation, administrative planning, delivery and voter education is vital to ensure any scheme is successful.</p> <p>Any new system must be robust enough to withstand the demands of a high turnout poll and the associated impact on registration. We believe the Gould Principle must apply – with changes introduced at least six months before a major electoral event.</p>
<p>Should there be an electoral ID card which could be used as ID to vote?</p>	<p>Under the Elections Bill the UK Government is proposing photographic ID will be necessary to vote.</p> <p>An electoral ID document would offer obvious benefits to electors who may find it difficult to produce one of the stipulated forms of identification.</p> <p>We understand the UK Government intends local authority EROs to take on responsibility for issuing</p>

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	<p>electoral ID cards. We urge that consideration be given on how to reduce the burden on EROs and increase access to electoral ID for citizens. Requests from electors will inevitably be made at EROs’ busiest time when they are administering increased levels of registration ahead of an election, often with already stretched resources.</p> <p>We are also concerned a deadline to apply too close to polling day could end up disenfranchising electors who do not receive their ID in time. A short deadline could also become an unmanageable burden on EROs and ROs, arguably at disproportionate cost to the public purse.</p> <p>For a smooth transition, any electoral ID scheme requires sufficient lead-in time for legislation, administrative planning and delivery. We believe the Gould Principle must apply – with changes introduced at least six months before a major electoral event. It is also crucial that full national funding is available, with no additional cost burden pushed onto local authorities now or in the future.</p>
<p>Are election timetables of sufficient length to securely run polls?</p>	<p>The current 25- ‘working’ day timetable applies to most UK polls. This is only just achievable, particularly in the case of a snap national poll.</p> <p>A minimum statutory timetable with no lead-in time does not put the citizen first. A shorter timetable risks disenfranchising electors, leaving them little time to register to vote, apply for absent votes or cast postal votes, particularly those living overseas. Less time would also significantly jeopardise a RO’s ability to manage poll logistics, and significantly increase the risk of disenfranchisement and failure.</p> <p>We strongly oppose any reduction in the UK Parliamentary general election timetable as proposed in March 2021 by the Joint Committee on the Fixed Term Parliaments Act. As stated in our evidence to the Committee, a reduction is simply not possible within our current electoral system.</p> <p>In our 2021 ‘Blueprint for a Modern Electoral Landscape’ we made the following recommendations:</p>

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	<p><i>'Fixed Term Parliament Act – we strongly disagree with any proposals which will reduce the general election timetable.'</i></p> <p><i>'An extended 30-day electoral timetable, including for UK Parliamentary General Elections, to reduce risk and increase capacity.'</i></p>
<p>Should the voting system at an election change from supplementary voting to first past the post?</p>	<p>It is a matter for the UK Parliament and devolved administrations to decide on electoral voting systems.</p> <p>AEA members will deliver polls in accordance with legislative requirements, however we urge Governments to provide clarity on when any changes will take effect. This is vital to ensure all stakeholders have time to understand, communicate and implement the changes.</p>
<p>Is legislation being introduced with sufficient time to implement changes?</p>	<p>Changes in legislation are often introduced too close to implementation and too close to polling day. Apart from exceptional and unavoidable circumstances, we believe the Gould Principle must apply. Election legislation should be in place at least six months before polling day as a minimum to reduce risks to the electoral process.</p> <p>When legislation is introduced it should be accurate, and the impact and intention of the legislation fully understood to prevent the need for further modifying legislation. All guidance and template documents provided to support electoral events should be timely and accurate. All should be provided in English and, where appropriate, in Welsh.</p> <p>Significant planned changes in the Elections Bill are arriving in an already crowded landscape. Any change creates challenges for ROs and EROs, but the range and scale of new requirements in the Bill makes it vital for sufficient lead-in time to make necessary alterations. Careful planning and a clear understanding of the pressures on electoral services and local authorities – both existing and potentially caused by incoming legislation - is needed.</p>

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<p>Should voters be able to cast their vote online?</p>	<p>We believe using IT for voting should be considered, but should only utilised when the technology can be verified to deliver safe and secure results, deliver improvements on current paper-based systems, be cost-effective and enhance public confidence and accessibility.</p> <p>Many advantages and disadvantages to online voting have been identified, including by organisations referenced below. If the UK Government were to introduce online voting, we would expect consideration be given to the following types of reports, to experiences from other countries and from conducting further UK pilots to build on those from 2007:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dr N Ben Fairweather & Professor Simon Rogerson Centre for Computing and Social Responsibility School of Computing De Montfort University, Leicester – Implementation of e-voting in the UK – technical issues ▪ House of Commons: Speaker's Commission on Digital Democracy: meeting on electronic voting ▪ IDEA – Introducing Electronic Voting – essential considerations ▪ Electoral Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Official report on the electoral pilot at Swindon elections - Official report on electronic voting and counting pilot at South Bucks elections ▪ Electoral Reform Society
<p>Should convicted prisoners be entitled to vote?</p>	<p>It is a matter for the UK Parliament and devolved administrations to determine if the franchise should be extended to include convicted prisoners. AEA members will administer the process according to the legislation in force. Any changes must consider the need for the administration of votes to be safe, secure and secret.</p> <p>The current position across the UK is:</p>

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	<p>In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, no convicted prisoners can vote.</p> <p>In Scotland, the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Bill became law on 1 April 2020 and introduced the right to vote to some prisoners in local and Scottish Parliamentary elections.</p>
<p>Should the voting age be reduced?</p>	<p>It is a matter for the UK Parliament and devolved administrations to determine any change to existing franchise. AEA members will administer the process according to the legislation in force.</p> <p>We believe it is in the interest of the voter for the same policy to apply to all polls wherever possible. Where this is not possible, full consideration should be given to the potential impact of any decision.</p> <p>The current position across the UK is:</p> <p>In England and Northern Ireland, the voting age for all polls is 18.</p> <p>In Scotland, the voting age is 16 for all polls excluding UK Parliamentary elections, when it is 18.</p> <p>In Wales, the voting age for Senedd elections is 16. For local government elections it is currently 18 although this will be lowered to 16 for the local government elections on 5 May 2022 - Local Government and Elections Wales Act 2021. For UK Parliamentary and Police and Crime Commissioner elections the voting age is 18.</p> <p>Devolution in Scotland and recent changes made in Wales to reduce the voting age will clearly have an impact. We have concerns about inconsistencies across the UK. We would urge all governments within the UK to consider the risk and confusion caused by different electoral registration and election processes.</p>
<p>What is the AEA’s position on electors being able to vote more than once at local government elections?</p>	<p>We have produced a policy position paper on the need for legislation on second electoral registrations. We believe current legislation should be reviewed to consider whether registration in more than one location should continue. Should it continue, the law should be amended to clearly</p>

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	<p>define 'residency' and what constitutes a 'valid second registration'.</p> <p>The UK voting system is largely based on trust. With individuals able to register more than once where they can demonstrate residence, there is a risk of electors voting more than once when not entitled to.</p> <p>In our 2021 'Blueprint for a Modern Electoral Landscape', we suggested <i>'An end-to-end review of electoral registration is urgently needed which considers...Legislative amendments to clearly identify what constitutes a valid second registration and for 'residency' to be defined in electoral law'</i>.</p>
<p>Following the UK leaving the European Union (EU), should EU citizens continue to have voting and candidacy rights for certain elections as previously?</p>	<p>It is a matter for the UK Parliament and devolved administrations to determine the franchise.</p> <p>The Elections Bill will remove the automatic right of European Citizens to register to vote and to stand in UK elections which use the local government election franchise and are reserved to the UK Government. The Bill will establish new criteria for European citizens' participation as voters and candidates/office holders.</p> <p>We are concerned that if the change in policy is implemented too quickly, EROs may not have sufficient time to contact electors who may not be eligible to remain registered to vote. It is law that the register of electors must be accurate and only include eligible electors. EROs need sufficient resources and time to maintain a complete and accurate register. The impact of this change should not be underestimated.</p>
<p>Should all citizens, regardless of nationality, be entitled to vote in the UK?</p>	<p>It is a matter for the UK Parliament and devolved administrations to determine the franchise. AEA members will administer the process according to the legislation in force.</p> <p>However, both exiting the EU and franchise changes in devolved nations has created inconsistency across the UK, potentially increasing levels of voter confusion at combined polls.</p> <p>The Senedd and Election (Wales) Act and the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation)</p>

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	<p>Act have extended voting rights to all qualifying foreign citizens for Senedd, Scottish Parliament and Scottish local government elections. Wales is also due to extend voting rights for local elections with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (legislation.gov.uk).</p> <p>We would urge all UK governments to consider the risk and confusion caused by introducing different processes for elections and electoral registration. We believe it is in the interest of voters for the same franchise to apply to all polls. Where this is not possible, full consideration should be given to the potential impact of any divergence.</p> <p>In our 2021 'Blueprint for a Modern Electoral Landscape', we suggested the introduction of <i>legislation to prevent the combination of polls that are legislated for by different governments, for example: PCC and Senedd, UKPGE and Local Government, and PCC and Local Government.</i></p>
<p>Should voting at places other than traditional polling stations be permitted?</p>	<p>We believe polling places should be accessible, suitable for all eligible electors and allow votes to be cast in secret.</p> <p>It must be noted that while legislation provides for publicly funded premises, including local authority schools, to be made available free of charge to ROs, custodians are often reluctant to make them available for a variety of legitimate reasons.</p> <p>We have produced a policy position paper on the use of schools as polling places. We believe more should be done to support ROs' use of publicly funded buildings.</p> <p>The key priority is to ensure electors can vote in a convenient way. Non-traditional venues such as supermarkets and high street shops may encourage participation and provide accessible buildings. However, they can also bring confusion for voters who are not eligible to vote at that venue.</p> <p>We believe the time may have come to reconsider whether the current polling district arrangements are still appropriate, given the ongoing issues with venue and staffing availability.</p>

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<p>What support should be provided to voters who need additional assistance?</p>	<p>The key priority is to ensure all eligible electors have equal access and can vote in an easy, accessible, and convenient way.</p> <p>Current legislation requires that all polling stations should have disabled access so far as is reasonable and practical, enlarged ballot papers, pictorial guidance and a tactile voting device. Legislation also allows a companion or presiding officer to assist a voter in casting their vote. In addition, presiding officers are encouraged to position ballot boxes on a low-level surface, provide an additional chair for seating, standard pencils with grips, and allow use of mobile phone apps to assist with reading the ballot paper.</p> <p>The Elections Bill requires ROs to provide each polling station with equipment that is reasonable to enable, or make it easier, for voters with disabilities to vote. It also further expands the criteria for who can act in the role of 'companion', by widening it to someone who is aged 18 or over.</p> <p>We do not believe there is a 'one size fits all' solution for providing additional assistance. Allowing ROs to make adjustments in line with the needs of their voters is sensible, as long as they are supported by sufficient guidance and resources.</p>
<p>Should voting take place at weekends?</p>	<p>It is a matter for the UK Parliament and devolved administrations to determine when polling should take place. AEA members will administer the process in line with the legislation in force.</p> <p>If voting was moved to weekends, we are concerned about additional costs, the impact on the availability of staff and the availability of venues for both polling and the count.</p>
<p>Should voters be able to vote at any polling station in the constituency/local government area?</p>	<p>We believe all electors should be able to cast their votes as easily as possible, securely and independently. However, we also recognise the challenges electoral administrators face in meeting the needs of all electors.</p> <p>Should the UK Government or any devolved administration introduce changes to allow voters to vote at any polling station in a constituency/local</p>

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	<p>government area, there would be significant legal and administrative challenges to ensure the ballot is safe, secure and not open to fraud.</p>
<p>Does the complexity of the current system support the effective delivery of electoral services to voters?</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>We have identified well in excess of 100 different pieces of legislation that have added to, deleted from and changed the processes originally introduced by the Representation of the People Act 1983 – as shown in our legislation timeline. This fragmented layering of legislation makes the administration of electoral processes inefficient and introduces significant risk.</p> <p>We believe the point where consolidating legislation to solve problems inherent in the electoral process has passed. We need ‘root and branch’ reform and modern legislation.</p> <p>We welcomed the Law Commissions’ work towards simplifying electoral legislation across the UK in a single Electoral Administration Act.</p> <p>We consider implementing the Law Commission’s recommendations a priority policy matter.</p> <p>We have recommended on a number of occasions, most recently in our 2021 ‘Blueprint for a Modern Electoral Landscape’, that:</p> <p><i>A new Electoral Administration Act is needed that modernises processes and reflects the divergent wishes of all four UK nations.</i></p> <p>And in our 2019 statement, we recommended that:</p> <p><i>The UK Government should consider and progress the Law Commission recommendations as a matter of urgency including addressing the issues raised in our response to the inquiry by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee.</i></p> <p>We will continue to press for changes in secondary legislation to address current areas of concern.</p>
<p>What is the AEA’s view on funding for</p>	<p>The funding mechanisms for electoral services are unclear and imprecise.</p>

<p>elections/electoral registration?</p>	<p>For elections, there is central funding in the form of 'fees and charges' for UK-wide elections and referendums. Devolved polls, for example Senedd and Scottish Parliamentary elections are paid for by the relevant government and local elections are paid for by the local authority the poll is run for.</p> <p>Registration costs are paid for by local authorities. On the initial introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER), central funding was made available for any additional registration costs incurred. This funding has since been adjusted to account for savings from canvass reform, meaning the majority of local authorities no longer receive any additional funding.</p> <p>We have significant concerns about funding and have called for a review on numerous occasions. Most recently in our 2021 'Blueprint for a Modern Electoral Landscape' we made the following recommendations:</p> <p><i>A full review of all electoral funding and funding mechanisms is urgently needed, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>the mechanism for funding electoral registration where it can be demonstrated those costs were incurred directly because of a national electoral event</i><i>the timescale for fees and charges allocations and guidance</i><i>making legislative provision and funding available for poll cards to be sent to properties with no electors registered to encourage registration prior to an election or referendum</i><i>ensuring the Fees and Charges Order covers the costs of appointing reserve polling station and count staff</i><i>processing and signing off all election claims in a more efficient manner than at present</i> <p>In addition, we have published a policy position paper on electoral registration funding.</p> <p>We will continue to work with the UK and Devolved Governments on identified funding issues, and hope</p>
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	<p>future arrangements will benefit from these discussions.</p>
<p>Who decides on the location of polling stations and what changes to the process would the AEA like to see?</p>	<p>Legislation currently requires local authorities to review UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places every five years. However, ROs are responsible for the provision of polling stations and their staffing and equipment under relevant election rules.</p> <p>We believe the selection of polling places should be the responsibility of ROs, who act independently, rather than local authorities. This would put the interest of voters at the centre of the issue and give ROs more flexibility to insist on providing accessible polling stations.</p> <p>In our 2021 'Blueprint for a Modern Electoral Landscape' we made the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>EROs should be given responsibility for the sub-division of UK parliamentary constituencies into polling districts, and ROs for the designation of polling places within those districts</i> • <i>changes to legislation should be introduced so that in exceptional circumstances, the statutory polling district and polling places review may be extended, with EROs given powers to make changes to agreed schemes.</i> <p>We have also published a policy position paper on the provision of polling districts and polling places.</p>
<p>Does the AEA support the changes made in the 2023 Parliamentary Boundary Review?</p>	<p>It is for the UK Parliament to determine how the UK is divided into constituencies and the number of MPs in the UK Parliament.</p> <p>The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 provides for Parliamentary seats to remain at 650, provides for a longer timeframe between reviews and streamlines Parliamentary approval processes. We believe these provisions assist electoral administrators.</p> <p>While retaining the same number of Parliamentary seats has led to fewer constituency cross</p>



	<p>boundaries between local authorities than when the number was being reduced, there are still challenges to be faced.</p> <p>We have concerns about the administrative complexities cross boundary proposals could bring, especially given the review will be implemented in a similar period as the new requirements proposed in the Elections Bill. We are also concerned that administrators may not have sufficient time to plan for administering elections on new boundaries if a UK Parliamentary general election was held in the six months following the implementation of the review.</p> <p>For future reviews, we believe the eligible electorate figures should be based on the register for the May polls prior to the review. A Bill amendment was made for the 2023 review to be based on the number of registered electors on 2 March 2020. This amendment was a one-off due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, following the introduction of IER and the huge increase in event led registration, the register for the May polls is generally when the register is most complete and accurate.</p>
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2. Electoral Registration

<p>What are the biggest challenges facing EROs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New electoral legislation • Increase in event-led registration • Staffing resources including competency of ROs, EROs and electoral administrators • Funding • Complexity of legislation • Two stage process for annual canvass • Ensuring complete and accurate register of electors • Registration of hard-to-reach groups • Tight election timetable – registration and absent vote applications • Cross boundaries – postal vote data
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local government reorganisation • Electoral reform – such as registration of overseas electors ‘votes for life’ • Scotland and Wales - divergence in electoral legislation in the devolved nations with rules for delivering elections and electoral registration increasingly different from UK wide polls. This will present significant challenges in Scotland and Wales moving forward. <p>In our 2021 ‘Blueprint for a Modern Electoral Landscape’ we made the following recommendations:</p> <p><i>We urge all Governments and local authorities to take a more joined-up approach to assist EROs and ROs to deliver democratic processes with collective ownership and a clear understanding of the pressures faced both by electoral administrators and the wider electoral community.</i></p> <p>We also recommended that once canvass reform is implemented, that UK Government and key stakeholders undertake a registration system review to clarify and improve the voter experience for anyone needing to complete two registration processes during the annual canvass period.</p> <p>Other recommendations linked to these challenges are included throughout this paper.</p>
<p>Should campaigners be prohibited from handling or assisting with the completion of postal ballot papers and application forms?</p>	<p>We continue to call for campaigners to be prohibited from handling and/or assisting with the completion of postal ballot papers and absent vote applications. This would provide transparency and ensure absent vote applications are received by the ERO without delay.</p> <p>The measures outlined in the Elections Bill will go some way to addressing this issue, and will also limit the number of voters a proxy can act for.</p> <p>While there needs to be a mechanism to assist electors, we would welcome further restrictions on the handling of absent vote applications to prevent</p>

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	<p>political parties and candidates collecting forms from electors.</p>
<p>What is the impact of the UK Government's plan to require postal voters to reapply every three years?</p>	<p>At present electors with a postal vote must refresh their signature at least every five years.</p> <p>The Elections Bill proposes they reapply for their postal vote at least every three years.</p> <p>This will bring additional burden to EROs, creating regular peaks of demand. While this change is administratively manageable, we continue to call for a review of the absent vote application process and consideration of a move away from the current paper-based system.</p> <p>We also call for central and ongoing funding to cover the impact of these changes so that costs are not borne by local authorities.</p>
<p>Should the circumstances and criteria for emergency proxy applications be expanded and should there be an option to replace appointed proxies?</p>	<p>There is currently no facility for an appointed proxy to be changed during the week of a poll, or for an emergency proxy to be appointed other than for medical or employment reasons, such as having to attend a funeral.</p> <p>Emergency proxy applications are only available for situations arising after the deadline for ordinary proxy applications.</p> <p>We believe a full review should be carried out considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ordinary proxy applications and the need for attestation • the ability for an appointed proxy to be changed in cases where they are suddenly unable to act • whether the circumstances and criteria for emergency proxy applications should be expanded to include other unforeseen circumstances, such as an elector having to attend a funeral on polling day or having to go away to care for a relative who has suddenly been taken ill • consideration about whether emergency proxy provision could apply to electors who

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	<p>have not received their postal vote due to a failure by the ERO or RO.</p>
<p>Should there be the option to apply online for an absent vote via Government Digital Service platforms?</p>	<p>While the introduction of IER modernised the electoral registration process, it did not provide the facility to apply for an absent vote online. Instead, the applicant can request that an application form is sent to them by post or email. This takes longer, requires additional processing resources, is inefficient and should be modernised.</p> <p>We believe the next stage of modernising registration provision is consideration of an online absent vote process. This could be an end-to-end facility from the Government Digital Service platforms to EROs electoral management systems.</p> <p>An end-to-end system would ensure the process was secure, quicker and more efficient. It would create increased capacity and resources within electoral services. The online facility should be in addition to a paper application process for those who still wish to use it.</p> <p>There is a very real risk this enhancement could increase volumes of absent vote applications immediately before a poll, including from electors who already have an absent vote. To offset this, we believe the deadline for postal vote applications should be at least five working days earlier in the election timetable, accompanied by work undertaken by the UK Government on behavioural insights to consider the impact of the change on ROs.</p>
<p>Should students/people with second homes be allowed to continue to register at two addresses?</p>	<p>The UK voting system is largely based on trust. With individuals able to register in more than one place where they can demonstrate residence, there is a risk of electors voting more than once when they are not entitled to.</p> <p>If the system were to change, one option would be for electors eligible to register at more than one address to indicate which address they wish to use their vote at as part of their initial application. This would be kept on record, with votes issued accordingly at appropriate elections.</p>

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	<p>We would also highlight the huge resource required to invite students to register to vote, with no option for them to indicate that they do not wish to register at their term-time address. We believe it should be clearer to students, and to other voters with two eligible addresses, that they have a choice about whether to register at a second address.</p> <p>It is a matter for the UK Government and devolved administrations to determine how the electoral system should be administered. However, we have previously recommended that legislation should clearly identify what constitutes a valid second registration. We would also urge the UK Government to define residency as this can cause confusion for both EROs and citizens.</p> <p>We have produced a policy position paper on the need for legislation on second electoral registrations. We believe current legislation should be reviewed to consider whether registration in more than one location should continue. If so, the law should be amended to clearly define 'residency' and what constitutes a 'valid second registration'.</p>
<p>Should there be automatic registration via national data sources as people move address i.e., public utilities data?</p>	<p>Automatic registration, where eligible citizens who interact with government agencies are registered to vote without making an application, is a matter for the UK Parliament and the devolved administrations to determine.</p> <p>Regardless, we believe EROs should have full access to any official records, both local and national, that will help them maintain a complete and accurate electoral register. Full and proper evaluation would be required to ensure public confidence. Any proposed changes would need to be deliverable and avoid any unnecessary bureaucracy, cost and risk.</p>
<p>Should the full electoral register be available for sale to Credit Agencies and other statutory bodies?</p>	<p>We believe current regulations governing access and supply of the electoral register are flawed and should be reviewed, including being clear about exactly what the electoral register is for.</p> <p>We are not opposed to licensed organisations accessing data for credit and security checks, but</p>

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	<p>we do not agree with those organisations then being permitted to use that information - compiled at public cost - for commercial purposes. We firmly maintain that the edited register should be abolished, and no elector details should be available for sale to undefined third parties.</p> <p>We have produced a policy position paper on the sale of the register of electors.</p>
<p>Should there be two versions of the register – full and edited (also known as open)?</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>We believe the electoral register should be compiled for electoral and other limited purposes only such as credit and security checks. We do not support the sale of personal data. Access to the electoral register should be strictly prescribed and controlled, and the edited register dispensed with.</p> <p>We have produced a policy position paper on the sale of the register of electors.</p>
<p>Should the publication of the revised register of electors be delayed in the event of an election being held?</p>	<p>Conducting an annual canvass and an election at the same time creates conflicting challenges for electoral administrators. While this has been an issue over the years with by-elections, the situation was significantly more challenging when the 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election was called during the annual canvass.</p> <p>We have produced a policy position paper on the delay in the publication of the revised register of electors. We believe legislation should be amended to allow for the publication of the revised register of electors to be delayed if the notice of election for any poll is published during the annual canvass period.</p>
<p>3. Other issues</p>	
<p>Should ROs and electoral staff be protected from intimidation?</p>	<p>Provisions relating to intimidation in the Elections Bill only apply to protect candidates, future candidates, campaigners and elected officeholders from intimidation and abuse, both online and in person. We believe this provision should be extended to protect the ROs and their staff in view of the evidence we have received from members.</p>

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<p>What is the AEA's view on the timing of the count at UK Parliamentary general elections?</p>	<p>The requirement to commence the counting of votes at a UK Parliamentary election within four hours of the close of poll should be removed. The RO should have full discretion on when to count.</p>
<p>Should ROs be entitled to personal fees?</p>	<p>We believe ROs, who are independent of their employing local authorities, should be entitled to receive a personal fee at a transparently calculated rate that appropriately reflects the complexity and position of the role, the associated serious personal liabilities and the additional workload.</p>
<p>Does the AEA support the Law Commission's recommendations to bring forward a single Electoral Administration Act?</p>	<p>We consider effecting the Law Commissions' recommendations a priority policy matter. A single Electoral Administration Act should be brought forward to simplify electoral legislation.</p>

Summary of key electoral events and milestones: 2022 - 2025

Date	Event	Key issues / comments	Extent
May 2022	Local government elections including parish and some Mayoral and Combined Authority Mayoral elections		England
	Local government elections	5-year term from 2017 to avoid combination with Scottish Parliament	Scotland
	Local government elections, including community councils	5-year term from 2017 to avoid combination with Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament. Early voting pilots in some areas. First to be run on new boundaries/election arrangements in all 22 local authorities	Wales
	Northern Ireland Assembly elections – 5-year cycle (Northern Ireland Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2014)		Northern Ireland

May 2023	Local government elections, including parish and some Mayoral elections		England
	Local government elections		Northern Ireland
1 July 2023	Date at which the next UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places review must be completed by (review based on the number of registered electors as at 2 March 2020)		UK
May 2024	UK Parliamentary general election (possibly based on new parliamentary boundaries subject to Parliamentary approval) – this will change if the Fixed Term Parliament Act is repealed.	Possible introduction of national electoral ID document subject to legislation. Concerns of significant voter confusion if both national electoral ID document and new Parliamentary boundaries including new constituency/polling places for voters introduced at the same election for the first time.	UK
	Police and Crime Commission elections		E&W

	Local government elections including parish and some Mayoral and Combined Authority Mayoral elections		England
	London Assembly elections		London
	Mayor of London elections		London
May 2025	Local government elections including County Council, some Mayoral and Combined Authority Mayoral elections		England