

The Electoral  
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Martin Whitfield MSP  
Convener of the Standards, Procedures & Public Appointments Committee  
By email

12 April 2024

Dear Martin,

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence to your Committee on 28 March. We committed to come back to you with some additional information on points of interest for Committee members.

### **Electoral Commission cyber-attack**

The information about each individual elector contained on the reference copies of the electoral registers would not be sufficient to submit a postal vote application. Postal vote applications require the provision of personal identifiers, being a national insurance number and date of birth. If, for any reason, an applicant cannot provide these, they are required to submit identity documents, such as a passport and birth certificate. The registers we hold do not contain dates of birth, national insurance numbers, email addresses, information on chosen voting method (post, proxy, or in person) or any other personal information.

For your information, the information on electoral registers held by us and accessible during the cyber-attack was the following:

- The names and addresses of anyone in Great Britain who was registered to vote between 2014 and 2022, the names of those registered as overseas voters in the same period, and the names and addresses of anyone registered in Northern Ireland in 2018. The details of anonymous voters were not accessible, as we do not hold these.
- Any details provided to us via email or through forms on our website, such as the 'contact us online' form.

### **Rutherglen & Hamilton West recall petition**

In our evidence session we noted that the Commission had published [our report on the 2023 UK parliamentary by-election in Rutherglen and Hamilton West](#). Our report includes recommendations for the UK Government to review the policy and legislation for recall petitions to identify changes that would improve the process for voters and administrators.

## **Public awareness campaigns**

We also noted in our evidence session that the Commission will be launching new voter registration and voter ID public awareness campaigns ahead of the UK parliamentary general election.

Our new voter registration campaign '[Show it off](#)', will launch once the date of the election is confirmed. The campaign highlights registering to vote as something to be celebrated, and will run across TV, radio and digital advertising.

On voter ID, we will launch our '[Note to self](#)' campaign across digital and print advertising in the coming weeks, followed by a full-scale national advertising campaign, including TV, radio and digital advertising, when the date of the election is confirmed.

We are working with Electoral Registration Officers, local authorities and civil society organisations to raise awareness of the need to register to vote and the new voter ID requirement, and we have a range of [voter engagement resources](#) available for them to use across their channels.

I hope the information in this letter has been helpful, but please let us know if the Committee have further questions, or if you would like to arrange a meeting to discuss any issues related to the Commission's work. You can contact Sarah Mackie on 0131 225 0204 or at [smackie@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:smackie@electoralcommission.org.uk).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy O'Neill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small heart-like flourish at the end of the name.

**Andy O'Neill**

**Head of the Electoral Commission, Scotland**