

Annual Report and Accounts

2023-24



HC 193
ELC/2024/01
GEN-LD16599



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2023-24

For the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Presented to Parliament pursuant to Schedule 1, Paragraphs 20(1) and 18(2)(b) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on 29 July 2024.

Presented to the Scottish Parliament pursuant to Schedule 1, Paragraph 20A(1) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000

Presented to Senedd Cymru (Welsh Parliament) pursuant to Schedule 1, Paragraph 20A(1) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000

HC 193

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ISBN: 978-1-5286-5067-0

E03139195 07/24

Printed on paper containing 75% recycled fibre content minimum.

Printed in the UK by HH Associates Ltd. on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office

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Foreword from our Chair



Preparing for elections in 2023 was a big task, and the Commission's priority was to support voters, campaigners, and the electoral community through a time of change.

The most significant area of focus was the introduction of voter ID at the local elections in England. As well as improving the security of the vote, it was essential that all voters continued to be able to use their vote and that administrators could run the new systems effectively and consistently. Raising public awareness and assisting electoral administrators were top of our agenda. The administration of the polls was smooth across the country, which reflects the dedication of the many staff who went the extra mile to deliver in very challenging circumstances. Our campaign saw awareness rise considerably ahead of the polls and we know that the vast majority of voters were able

to take part.

However, evidence showed that the requirement posed a barrier for some voters. One voter turned away is too many and, working with others across the electoral system, we will need to redouble our efforts for future elections so that no one loses their vote.

Significant work has been done to prepare for elections taking place after the end of the financial year, including for local councils across England, Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales, and the general election.

The UK parliamentary general election is the first cross-UK poll since the Elections Act was introduced. We have had to step up to ensure that everyone involved understands the changes and can to play their part. In addition, the context for the general election has changed markedly since 2019, with increased levels of abuse, intimidation and threats to candidates, and the impact of rapid developments in technology. A significant feature of the work of the Commission, has been to broaden and deepen the partnerships we have with others, including many civil society organisations, law enforcement and other regulators.

There have also been specific developments in the electoral landscape in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland which have required sustained support from the across the Commission, including our teams based in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. Our role engaging with elections in each of the nations of the UK is a particular strength of the Commission seen to good effect this year.

I would like to acknowledge that within the Commission there have also been a number of challenges this year. In August we announced that the Commission had been the victim of

a sophisticated cyberattack, proving how important it is that we all remain vigilant to the risks facing our electoral processes. We paid particular attention to assisting individuals whose personal data had been put at risk and apologise to them for not successfully safeguarding their information. We continue to invest in improvements to our systems to ensure they are secure and protected.

Finally, I want to express my thanks to Shaun McNally and Rob Vincent for their contributions as Chief Executive and Interim Chief Executive respectively. In March we welcomed Vijay Rangarajan, as our new Chief Executive, who brings a great range and depth of understanding of elections, independence and rigour in his thinking and a passion for democracy. I very much look forward to our continued work together.

I would, in addition, like to thank my fellow Commissioners and Commission staff for their dedication, expertise and resilience. The success of the Commission rests on its impartiality, independence and professionalism, and I am confident that we have a team ready to deliver for voters, campaigners and electoral administrators through the busy times ahead.

John Pullinger CB
Chair

A message from our Chief Executive



I was delighted to start as Chief Executive of the Commission in March, just as everyone was working at full steam to prepare for the Local and General Elections.

I have been so impressed by the commitment and enthusiasm of all those who work at the Commission, and by their level of skill and knowledge. And by the range of great partners we have.

It's clear that the introduction of the Elections Act has meant a lot of change. A new statutory code of practice for non-party campaigners, the introduction of the digital imprint regime, Voter ID, the extension of the overseas voting franchise, and changes to postal and proxy voting have all been introduced and a great deal of work has been delivered to ensure smooth implementation.

Guidance, advice surgeries, and information resources have all been created to support the electoral community to understand and prepare for the changes. Many of the early conversations I've had with stakeholders have welcomed the Commission's support and expertise, and our joint work for the elections in 2024.

I have welcomed meeting some of those we work most closely with, including parliamentarians, returning officers and civil society organisations. I hope to have the opportunity to engage with more in the coming months. There are so many important issues and challenges to address together, including candidate intimidation, changes in technology and campaigning, and public confidence in the transparency of the political finance system.

I have particularly enjoyed learning about the work the Commission is doing with young people and educators. Our annual Welcome to your Vote Week saw 440 schools, youth groups and other educational organisations across the UK signed up to take part. Together we celebrated the impact that everyone's voice can have, including with an event in the UK Parliament and a visit by an MP to a local school. It's so important to engage and encourage people from a young age to participate in democracy and voting. I look forward to seeing this work go from strength to strength.

Internally, there is a lot to celebrate at this juncture, but also a lot to do. There have been important investments in areas including IT infrastructure, cyber defences, and upgrades to our offices. I am committed to ensuring that we are in the strongest position to keep and attract a diverse range of talent and experience. We will continue to strengthen our finance, performance management and procurement systems.

I look forward to the year ahead, and working with Commission staff, stakeholders and the wider electoral community to deliver well-run elections across the UK. And to recommend how our systems can be further improved and modernised, to help candidates, parties, campaigners – and particularly voters.

Please do get in touch if you would like to discuss how to safeguard and strengthen the UK's democratic processes.

Vijay Rangarajan
Chief Executive

Performance report



Overview

This section provides an overview of the Electoral Commission, our purpose, our performance during the last year and the key risks to achieving our goals.

We have included summary financial information within the performance report. This is consistent with the financial statements, where more detail is available.

The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) established the Electoral Commission. We are independent of governments and political parties and directly accountable to the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments.

We have prepared our 2023/24 Annual Report and Accounts in accordance with an accounts direction, set out on page 168, issued by HM Treasury under paragraph 17 (2) of Schedule 1 PPERA. We have prepared the powers and sanctions report on page 55 in accordance with paragraph 15 Schedule 19(b) and paragraph 27 Schedule 19(c) PPERA.

Our role

The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK. We work to promote public confidence in the electoral system and ensure its integrity.

Our role across the UK



We deliver for voters across all parts of the UK, with Electoral Commission offices in **Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh** and **London**. We work closely with the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments. We are accountable to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd, and are funded by each of these for the work undertaken on elections under their devolved or reserved powers. Electoral law is not devolved in Northern Ireland and remains reserved to Westminster.

The Commission is a UK-wide organisation, and the Board takes decisions with that approach in mind. Due to legislative requirements, this Annual Report only focuses on the work done in relation to our role and accountabilities to the UK Parliament. Separate information is available in relation to our work on devolved elections in Scotland and Wales, and our accountabilities to those parliaments on pages 61 and 65.

Our year at a glance

Q1

Launched joint guidance with police forces in GB and NI on candidate security and intimidation

Awareness of voter ID in England reached 92% at May elections

May elections in England and Northern Ireland were well run

Published interim analysis of voter ID at the May 2023 polls, providing data on the implementation

All-staff Commission event took place to discuss corporate objectives

First recall petition with voter ID requirement opened

Q2

Published post poll reports for May elections in England and Northern Ireland

Published accuracy and completeness research on the health of the UK's electoral registers

Announced the Commission had been the victim of a cyber-attack, and the action taken

Published statements of accounts for political parties to provide transparency

The Commission's revised Enforcement Policy came into force

Gave evidence to the UK Parliament's Levelling Up Committee on electoral registration

Q3

New digital imprints regime came into force, providing greater transparency to voters

Gave evidence to the Lords Constitution Committee on voter ID implementation

Hosted webinar for Returning Officers across England to support their planning

Changes to postal and proxy voting from Elections Act came into force

Submitted evidence to the Science, Innovation and Technology Committee regarding AI and elections

Three UK Parliament by-elections took place

Q4

The Commission's Welcome to your Vote Week took place across the UK

Launched new-look voter registration campaign, encouraging people to take pride in being registered

Franchise extended to enable all overseas UK citizens to vote, regardless of when they left the UK

Commission announced Vijay Rangarajan as new Chief Executive

New statutory Code of Conduct for non-party campaigners came into force

Gave evidence to Standards Committee on the House of Commons standards landscape

Our year in numbers

296,400 additional voter registrations during our campaign

2022-23: 280,498

86,649 public enquiry responses

2022-23: 11,829

440 organisations participate in Welcome to Your Vote Week

2022-23: N/A

1,500 people provided with regulatory support

2022-23: N/A

81% of party registrations processed within target time

2022-23: 82%

100% of guidance for administrators published on time

2022-23: 100%

£101million worth of donations published

2022-23: N/A

Our strategic objectives

Our vision is to ensure people trust, value, and take part in elections and referendums. We aim to achieve this vision by delivering the strategic objectives set out in our Corporate Plan.

These strategic objectives are the basis on which we evaluate the Commission's performance for the year.



Enabling factors

To ensure we are equipped as an organisation to meet these objectives, we have identified three key enabling activities.

We demonstrate independence and integrity

We continue to demonstrate our independence and integrity by taking decisions on the evidence and being transparent about the reasons for them; basing our policy positions and recommendations on analysis of evidence; effectively communicating our work and views; providing responsive services to those we support; and maintaining effective governance arrangements.

We are a skilled organisation where diversity is valued

We implement refreshed working practices to reflect wider changes in our work environment and culture; attract, retain and develop the people we need; maintain and improve high standards of management, with a focus on developing our people; and further embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work.

We are a learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used effectively

We procure and implement value for money technology that improves service delivery as appropriate; maintain a sound prudent financial strategy; continue to develop techniques to learn from experience, seek continuous improvement and become more efficient and effective; develop a corporate environmental strategy that meets policy and legislative requirements.

Performance analysis



The Commission's Corporate Plan outlines the five **strategic objectives** we are working to achieve over the course of a five-year plan, underpinned by three key **enabling factors**. The following sections outline the work done in 2023-24 to achieve each objective and underpin each enabling factor, along with work that is ongoing or planned in the coming year.

As shown in this section, the key performance indicators show that the Commission is meeting the majority of targets and on its way to achieve the key objectives by the end of the Corporate Plan period.

The indicators show that we achieved many of our annual goals in key areas, including surpassing target voter registration targets, providing timely advice and guidance to our stakeholders, and delivering timely publication of information on the financing of parties and campaigners to ensure transparency into the political finance system.

However, as a result of the announcement of the cyber-attack on the Commission on 8 August 2023, there was a higher number of freedom of information (FOIs) and subject access requests (SARs) than normal, which put the capacity of the team under pressure. Though response times on FOIs remained within target, we did not meet our target for SARs due to an unprecedented increase in requests

Further work is also needed to meet targets for timely publication of party and campaigner registrations, and to maintain staff engagement and wellbeing scores.

Accessible registration and voting

Free and fair elections depend on all people who are eligible and want to vote being able to do so

With this goal, we are striving to:

- increase levels of voter registration, especially amongst groups that currently have difficulty engaging in the process
- remove barriers, especially those that affect people who currently have difficulty trying to cast their vote.

We are working to achieve these outcomes through collaboration with policy makers and other partners, to identify barriers to participation and propose solutions. We are directly supporting people who have difficulty engaging in the process, with tailored accessible information and learning resources, and targeted public awareness activity.



Work done to achieve this aim

- ✓ Over half a million applications were received to register to vote during the Commission's campaign ahead of the May 2023 elections in England and Northern Ireland.
- ✓ Awareness of the need to bring accepted photo ID to the polling station rose from 22% to 92% between the pre- and post-election waves of public opinion tracking in England (excluding London where the campaign did not run as there were no elections).
- ✓ We published an interim analysis on the implementation of voter ID in June, drawing on polling station data and public opinion research to inform debate on future implementation of the measure. The research highlighted what proportion of the electorate found it harder to vote because of the new requirement to show photo ID at polling stations, and how this varied by demographic.
- ✓ In the autumn, we published election reports for England and Northern Ireland, assessing how the May 2023 elections were run. We put forward recommendations, including to improve the accessibility of the ID requirement in Great Britain and the digital registration number (DRN) system in Northern Ireland. The recommendations on voter ID have not been taken forward by the UK Government.

- ✓ We worked to prepare voters, administrators and the wider electoral community for further changes resulting from the Elections Act, including providing guidance and resources around online absent vote applications and the extension of the overseas voter franchise.
- ✓ With elections taking place across England in May 2024, the Commission ran its public awareness campaign to raise awareness of the voter ID requirement. This also launched in Wales for the first time, supporting awareness ahead of the Police and Crime Commissioner elections.
- ✓ We worked with local councils and civil society organisations to support voters less likely to have an accepted form of ID, highlighting the availability of the free ID and encouraging them to apply in time.
- ✓ We launched a new voter registration public awareness campaign, designed to respond to changes in the barriers to registration reported by voters in our research. This was supported by our Your Vote is Yours Alone campaign, which raises awareness of voter fraud and what voters can do about it.
- ✓ We shared details with voters of the new accessibility rules, which mean voters with disabilities have greater choice about who can accompany them in the polling station, and more assistance available to them.
- ✓ We extended our ‘youth voice’ work by building relationships with partners and youth organisations in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to ensure our work on registration and voting reflects the needs and views of young people. Youth groups were consulted on key activity targeting young people, providing useful insight and feedback.
- ✓ Our work promoting political literacy amongst young people continued to increase. Over 440 schools signed up to take part in Welcome to Your Vote Week in January, and we hosted an event with parliamentarians and young people in Westminster.
- ✓ We continued to maintain contingency plans for unscheduled electoral events, including a UK parliamentary general election and a Northern Ireland Assembly election.
- ✓ Published reports following the May elections, including an analysis of the continued implementation of voter ID.

Sessions like this are important because otherwise you could turn 18 and not know how to vote. The conversations we've had today can help young people understand and get more interested in voting and elections.

Student, 15, who took part in one of our school sessions

- ✓ Continued to drive up voter registration with our new look campaign ahead of May & July 2024 elections and evaluate its impact to ensure we are best supporting voters to take part.
- ✓ Extend awareness of voter ID ahead of the May 2024 elections and the first UK general election with the requirement in place, by delivering a public awareness campaign highlighting the change and publicising the availability of free voter ID.

Performance indicators

Indicator	Target	2023-24
Additions to electoral registers during our voter registration campaign	219,592 For 2023/2024	296,400

Ongoing and future work to achieve this aim

- Complement the campaigns using additional resources targeting groups we know are less likely to be registered and who face other barriers to voting. These groups include people experiencing homelessness, people with learning disabilities, Muslim women and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
- Use a suite of tailored materials to help British voters overseas understand the changes to their franchise, and encourage those eligible to register to vote ahead of a general election.
- Produce voter resources on new electoral processes, such as online absent voting and changes to the overseas franchise. Ensure these resources reach target audiences, seeking feedback from partner organisations.

The people we support have campaigned for a more accessible voting system for many years and take great pride in their right to vote. We were delighted to support the Electoral Commission's voter registration campaign which embodies this spirit and we're hoping that it encourages more people with a learning disability than ever to register to vote.

United Response

- Ensure stakeholders are prepared for changes to voting processes from the Elections Act, through clear and accurate resources and guidance.
- Update and publish 500 voter-facing forms to comply with all the requirements of the Elections Act.
- Continue to share voter information ahead of a general election, including through work with the media and the Commission's public information functions.
- Increase understanding and participation among young people by running the next annual Welcome to Your Vote Week throughout the UK, increasing school and youth group sign-ups.
- Encourage news organisations to use our online tools to provide election information and polling station finders directly to their readers and subscribers.

440

schools signed up to
Welcome to your Vote
Week 2024

Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance

It is a fundamental part of the democratic process that campaigners are able to get their messages to voters

Campaigners, including parties, must be able to communicate with voters to explain their views and policies, so that voters are informed when they vote. It's important that voters hear from a wide and diverse variety of campaigners.

We are working to improve the transparency of political campaigning, and help parties and campaigners to comply with the law by:

- ensuring campaigners can access support to understand the law in the way and at the time that works best for them
- ensuring political finance laws are enforced fairly, working with police services and other regulators to support their work in areas outside our legal remit
- publishing complete and accurate political finance data
- providing insights to campaigners and parliaments on how campaigning methods directly affect voter confidence in elections.



Work done to achieve this aim

- ✓ As a result of the Elections Act and following a period of close consultation and engagement with stakeholders and the campaigner community, we developed new statutory guidance on codes of practice for non-party campaigners.
- ✓ We created statutory guidance on the new digital imprint rules, to ensure that the regulated community could clearly understand when and how the requirements applied. We also hosted webinars for political parties to provide a platform for their questions, and have created an online facility for the public to submit digital material that does not have an imprint to check whether it is compliant.
- ✓ We held pre-election webinars to explain the law, as well as virtual advice surgeries for candidates and agents to discuss specific issues with one of our expert advisers. We offered further advice surgeries in advance of the reporting deadlines, to provide practical and ongoing support with spending returns.

- ✓ We introduced a new bulletin for political parties and non-party campaigners, and one for the network of police single points of contact (SPOCs), to support engagement with these key stakeholders. We also held a seminar for SPOCs, focusing on changes from the Elections Act, and we continued to contribute to and support the accredited training courses for police officers on election law.

Your advice has been incredibly helpful. I just want to express my gratitude for the speed at which you responded to my query... this in itself was very helpful and reassuring!

Member of the regulated community

- ✓ Following sector consultation, the Commission's revised Enforcement Policy came into force in September, to provide the basis on which we make enforcement decisions.
- ✓ We continued to advocate for improvements to controls on donations to political parties to prevent the threat of foreign interference and improve the public perception of political transparency.
- ✓ We updated our guidance to reflect changes to the law which increased the spending limits and the reporting threshold, as well as excluding security related expenses from spending rules.
- ✓ We reviewed guidance for candidates on intimidation and harassment, developed jointly with the National Police Chiefs Council, Crown Prosecution Service and the College of Policing. Similar guidance in conjunction with the Police Service of Northern Ireland was also reviewed this year.
- ✓ Delivered guidance for May 2024, using party and campaigner feedback to ensure it is clear and easy to understand.

Indicator	Target	2023-24
Timely publication of donation and loan reports which are received by the statutory deadline	100%	100%
Publication of statements of accounts within 60 working days	100%	100%
Timely progression and conclusion of investigations	90%	94.12%
Timely notification / issuance of decisions on sanctions (final notices) following representations period	90%	100%
Timely notification of outcome of party and non-party campaigner registration applications (for new and change of details)*	90%	80.81%
Timely responses to requests for regulatory advice on financial reporting	90%	96.68%
Effective regulatory guidance products / resources delivered to support compliance with the law	N/A	26
Guidance product related queries that help identify existing and/or new areas of the guidance that provide additional clarity with the law	100%	100%

*The annual target for timely notification of outcome of party and non-party campaigner registration applications was missed due to delays in the decision-making process at certain points in the year, and a higher than usual number of applications and notifications for a non-general election year. A large number of freedom of information (FOI) requests received also had a significant impact on capacity.

Ongoing and future work to achieve this aim

- To support compliance and understanding of the rules in the regulated community, we will continue to offer webinars and advice surgeries. We use feedback gained from these events, to tailor our support, advice, and communication for all elections..
- Deliver bulletins to parties and campaigners during the regulated period before a general election, delivering extra guidance and advice that is designed to meet stakeholder needs throughout the campaign.

- Conclude party registration applications in a timely manner to provide transparency to voters about the parties eligible to stand candidates. We will continue to do likewise with the conclusion of investigations so that parties and campaigners have clarity over their compliance with the political finance laws.
- Publish financial information during and after a general election, including pre-poll donations and spending returns to ensure transparency of political finance.
- Monitor the implementation of the digital imprint regime, and its impact on public confidence in campaigning.
- Continue to monitor and discuss with stakeholders the use of new forms of political campaigning, particularly related to new technology, and work to understand the impact on voters' confidence.
- Continue to make the case for reforms of political finance laws to ensure that the system is better protected against the potential for foreign influence and transparency is delivered for voters.

We found the meeting with [the Commission] very helpful. It gave us a real understanding of the non-party campaigner rules and whether or not we need to register.

Feedback from a user of the advice service

Resilient local electoral services

Local electoral services face significant economic, social, and environmental challenges which risk impacting on their ability to deliver well-run elections and referendums

We are helping local authorities and electoral administrators to respond to these pressures. We are also supporting the consistent delivery of high-quality services for voters, and the development of resilient local electoral services by:

- setting challenging performance standards for local electoral services
- providing accessible guidance and support for electoral administrators
- supporting increased resilience of local electoral services
- ensuring the electoral system works effectively.



Work done to achieve this aim

- ✓ We gathered data from local authorities about the implementation of voter ID at polling stations and surveyed those responsible for delivering elections to understand their experience. This data informed the recommendations we put forward to the UK Government as part of our post-election reporting on the May 2023 polls to improve the accessibility and workability of electoral processes.
- ✓ The implementation of the Elections Act continued to strongly impact electoral administrators, and we worked to support their understanding of and preparation for these changes. This included updating guidance to reflect changes to postal, proxy and overseas voting rules.
- ✓ We produced comprehensive guidance on preparing for and delivering the elections in May 2024, designed to support Returning Officers and electoral administrators. Resources were also developed to help local authorities to communicate the Elections Act changes to their residents.
- ✓ Offered proactive support, resources and advice as the electoral community prepared for May 2024 scheduled polls and the July 2024 general election, particularly in relation to changes from the Elections Act.

24%

of local authorities that responded to our survey experienced **significant issues recruiting polling station staff**

- ✓ Updated guidance for scheduled May 2024 polls and the July 2024 general election, delivered it in HTML format for accessibility, for administrators, candidates and agents.
- ✓ We set up a working group with local authorities to discuss collaboration on communicating changes to the public, and how best to work together.
- ✓ We hosted a webinar for Returning Officers across England in November, providing information about their responsibilities and the challenges facing the sector in the run up to next year's polls.
- ✓ We continued to use the performance standards to support and challenge those running elections, to help ensure the consistent delivery of high-quality electoral services for voters and to address the known resilience challenges.
- ✓ We worked closely with the Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board over the year to identify and help address challenges around resilience and capacity, including in relation to polling station staffing and suppliers.

The election went very smoothly for us, though this was on a low turnout with quite high postal voting rates. The bigger unknown is how we would have dealt with considerably higher numbers for a poll with a much higher turnout, such as a general election.

Electoral administrator

Performance indicators

Indicator	Target	2023-24
Accurate advice to Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, and candidates & agents within three days (Great Britain)	100%	98.63%
Publication of accurate and timely guidance products for electoral administrators	100%	100%

Ongoing and future work to achieve this aim

- Seek feedback on published guidance for May 2024 and identify learning for the future, to ensure we are providing resources to best support administrators.

- Gather data from electoral administrators in our post-election research to understand their experiences so these can be reflected in future recommendations and resources.
- Continue to use performance standards to support consistent delivery from electoral administrators.
- Create new public-facing web pages providing information on working at polling stations, along with resources to support electoral services teams to recruit staff.
- Continue to convene those best placed to support the resilience of administrators, including government bodies.
- Continue to provide polling station finder with election information, and make these available to key media, to relieve pressure on local council customer services teams.

Fair and effective electoral law

Our electoral system is underpinned by a legal framework which establishes how elections are delivered. It sets out who is allowed to vote and the various ways they can cast their vote

The framework sets out who can stand for election, who can campaign and how much they can spend, and it sets out how electoral administrators should deliver elections, including counting and declaring the results.

Given its cross-cutting impact, we want to work with parliamentarians and governments to improve electoral law so that it is fit for purpose; reduces complexity, inefficiency and risk; and enables innovation. We are working with others to reform electoral law by:

- supporting effective consideration and implementation of legislation in the UK's parliaments
- engaging with governments' electoral law reform agendas to ensure that reforms are well-planned and well-implemented
- providing expert advice on the practicability and impact of any changes which could be made to improve the electoral system
- Making the case for future reforms, based on clear evidence of stakeholder views and needs, and of the benefits that proposed changes would deliver.



Work done to achieve this aim

- ✓ We continued to make the case to the UK's governments and parliaments to reform electoral law to make it less complex, and to reduce the inefficiencies and risks to our electoral system.
- ✓ We supported parliamentarians to consider a range of issues relating to the democratic process, including legislative change. We provided written briefings, one-to-one and group briefings, and gave evidence to parliamentary select committees.
- ✓ Following the May 2023 elections in Northern Ireland, we made recommendations on the digital registration number, which is continuing to cause issues for those wanting to vote by post or proxy. In England, we made specific recommendations to the UK Government for improving the accessibility of the voter ID requirement.

- ✓ We put forward policy proposals for improvements to electoral law and political finance regulation for parties to consider as they develop their agendas ahead of a UK general election.
- ✓ We reported on recall petitions and by-elections, advocating for improvements to the process.
- ✓ As the final tranche of Elections Act measures went through UK Parliament, we reviewed and advised on the statutory instruments to ensure they were as clear and effective as possible.
- ✓ We also submitted evidence to the Levelling Up Committee’s enquiry on electoral registration, providing recommendations on modernising the system through more automated processes to improve the accuracy and completeness of the registers.
- ✓ We provided oral and written evidence to the Joint Committee on National Security Strategy inquiry into ‘Defending Democracy’. Our evidence highlighted important issues which those involved in ensuring the integrity of elections need to monitor and address, such as candidates experiencing abuse and intimidation, and concerns about the transparency and accuracy of political campaigning, particularly online.

Elections are the cornerstone of our democracy and yet we are burdened by a system which is both ineffective and inefficient, where millions of people are disenfranchised because they are incorrectly registered or not on the electoral register.

Chair of the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee

Performance indicators

Indicator	Target	2023-24
Timely publication of election / referendum reports	100%	100%
Timely responses to policy proposals and legislative consultations	100%	100%
Responses to elected stakeholder (MP, MSP, MLA & MS) correspondence within 10 working days	100%	98.44%

Ongoing and future work to achieve this aim

- Continue to make the case for electoral reform, including with parties and a new UK Government and Parliament, to ensure they understand the challenges facing the current system and the opportunities for improvement.
- Support parliamentarians to consider reforms to the electoral system, including through briefings and meetings.
- Report on future elections, by-elections and recall petitions, making recommendations on the system as appropriate.
- Review the implementation of measures from the Elections Act and make recommendations as needed.

A modern and sustainable electoral system

Our electoral system needs to keep pace with developments in technology and in the wider environment.

We need to capitalise on the scope for greater compliance, transparency and the financial savings technology can offer, while working to retain voter confidence in the electoral system. We also need to modernise the electoral system to ensure it is environmentally sustainable. We are working towards a modern and sustainable electoral system by:

- harnessing data and technology to meet the needs of voters, campaigners and electoral administrators
- understanding, calling for action and acting on the changing risks to the election system from the misuse of data and technology
- continuing to build strong relationships and streamlining working practices with all bodies that are part of the electoral system
- supporting governments and the wider electoral community to adopt a strategy and implementation plan which meets environmental standards required of our electoral system.



Work done to achieve this aim

- ✓ As well as providing expert advice and recommendations for improving the current system, we continued to explore the feasibility of modernising the voting process.
- ✓ We finalised and published feasibility studies on a range of flexible voting options, exploring how new ways of voting could be implemented.
- ✓ We published our latest accuracy and completeness research, showing that up to 8 million people across the UK are not correctly registered to vote. As part of this work, we set out case studies showing how the electoral registration system could be modernised by using more automatic registration mechanisms. This research supports our calls for more automated registration processes.
- ✓ We have worked to ensure the reports and data we publish are user-friendly and interactive, so that they can be easily understood and used by readers.

Up to **8 million**
people across the UK are not
correctly registered to vote
(March 2023)

- ✓ We continued to invest time and resources in building relationships with other regulators and stakeholders to understand their views and identify opportunities for collaboration.
- ✓ We will be monitoring, advising and supporting electoral reforms across the UK and beyond.

Performance indicators

Indicator	Target	2023-24
Meeting requirements of existing and emerging or new environmental legislation	N/A – This will be developed when the UK Government’s target is published	N/A

This indicator is intended to help the Commission measure and report its environmental impact, and to meet its requirements from existing and new environmental legislation. Targets will be developed and baselined during the first three years of the corporate plan, depending on published government targets.

We thoroughly agree with the Electoral Commission’s analysis regarding our out-of-date electoral registration system. We have long been calling for reforms to ensure as many people as possible are signed up to vote. We believe automatic voter registration, where citizens are automatically enrolled on the electoral register based on information already held on other government databases, is the best approach.

Electoral Reform Society, responding to our accuracy and completeness research, published in September 2023

Ongoing and future work to achieve this aim

- Continue to work with other regulators and stakeholders to understand their views and areas of possible collaboration so that we are working together on issues related to the delivery of elections, campaigning and confidence in the political finance system.
- Continue to monitor issues that impact modern elections and campaigns, including emerging technology such as artificial intelligence.

- Continue to use our accuracy and completeness research to advocate for a more modern voter registration system, particularly in light of the number of people currently not correctly registered.

Independence and integrity

The electoral system depends on the Electoral Commission being an independent non-partisan body, and so we hold ourselves to high standards of integrity

We work hard to ensure we are respected for our expertise, and that our advice and decision making are free from bias. Given our unique role, our integrity needs to be clear and demonstrable. We demonstrate our independence and integrity by:

- taking decisions on the evidence and being transparent about the reasons for them
- basing our policy positions and recommendations on analysis of evidence
- effectively communicating our work and views
- providing responsive services to those we support
- seeking to maintain effective governance arrangements.



Work done to achieve this aim

- ✓ We published information every month on closed investigations, providing transparency and helping to promote compliance.
- ✓ We provided parliamentarians with accurate and impartial briefings to help their consideration of elements in the Elections Act. We also worked closely with officials in the Department of Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities to assist their thinking on the details of secondary legislation.
- ✓ We responded to queries from members of the public, parliamentarians, administrators, and regulated community, providing information and advice on the electoral system and democratic participation.
- ✓ We received 182 freedom of information (FOI) requests. We aim to respond to 90% of requests within the 20 working days statutory timeframe, and this year we responded to 90.9% within that timeframe. We were asked to conduct internal reviews into seven of our responses during the year, and all of these were responded to within agreed timeframes.
- ✓ On 8 August 2023, the Commission announced that it had been the victim of a sophisticated cyber-attack. In line with data protection requirements, a public notification was published on our website to inform members of the public whose information may have been accessed, and a separate notification was issued to

Commission staff and Commissioners. A question-and-answer document was also published and information on ways to contact the Commission with any concerns or questions.

- ✓ We received 415 subject access requests (SAR) and 64 requests for erasure under the UK General Data Protection Regulation. Due to high volumes, 6.79% were responded to within the statutory response time frame of one calendar month. SAR and right to erasure (RTE) figures were significantly higher due to the public announcement of the cyber-attack on the Commission.
- ✓ We handled 13 complaints, compared to 28 in 2022/23. Of these, one was still under consideration at the end of the year. Of those completed, 12 were not upheld.
- ✓ Our dedicated public information service responded to 14,699 public enquiries during the year, received by phone, post and email. Through this service, we answered questions on a range of topics, including voter ID, voter registration and postal voting. We also responded to over 71,950 queries received via social media.
- ✓ We responded to 36 parliamentary questions at Westminster during 2023/24, including questions on voter ID – such as voters being turned away and its impact on particular demographic groups – political finance regulation, spending limits, and misinformation.
- ✓ Cat Smith MP and Owen Thompson MP, members of the Speaker’s Committee, were our spokespeople in the UK Parliament and answered questions on our behalf during the year.

Performance indicators

Indicator	Target	2023-24
Timely ¹ responses to social media enquiries	100%	100%
Timely responses to public enquiries via calls, letters and emails	100%	99.12%

¹ Within target timeframe

Timely responses to valid subject access requests ²	100%	6.79%
Timely responses to valid freedom of information requests	90%	90.9%

Ongoing and future work to achieve this aim

- We will have due regard to the UK Government’s Strategy and Policy Statement, alongside all other relevant considerations, and will report on how we have done so to the Speaker’s Committee. We will continue to operate independently and transparently and be accountable to Parliament, ensuring we are contributing to public confidence in the democratic system.
- Publish post-poll reports following the May 2024 polls and a general election that provide an evidence-based assessment of their delivery and use the evidence to make recommendations for improvement.
- Continue to provide impartial, accurate and timely information and advice to our stakeholders, including voters. These services are particularly relied upon in the run up to a general election, so staffing levels will be ready to reflect that.

² Subject access requests were considerably higher than in past years following the public announcement that the Commission had been the subject of a complex cyber-attack, and not reported on for the full financial year.

A skilled organisation where diversity is valued

The Electoral Commission is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity, the value of diversity, and the benefits of inclusion

We are committed to promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion because innovation, talent and creative workforces thrive in diverse, well-led teams. Increasing the diversity of the Commission will demonstrate that we are capable of evolving to meet the requirements of a changing world and also remain representative of the society that we serve. We also serve a diverse democracy across the UK, and we are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in all the activity we do directly with voters and other stakeholders.

Like any organisation, we have a range of statutory obligations to ensure we promote equality, diversity and inclusion, in line with our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, which includes the Public Sector Equality Duty, and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which prohibits discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity and good relations across a range of protected characteristics. But equality, diversity and inclusion are not just matters of compliance. We know there is always more we can do to reflect fully the diversity of the electorate in our work to support democracy, and we actively work to advance those aims.

What we are working to achieve

We want our workforce to feel valued and be supported to achieve their potential. We are working to:

- implement refreshed working practices to reflect wider changes in our work environment and culture
- attract, retain and develop the people we need
- maintain and improve high standards of management, with a focus on developing our people
- further embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work.



Work done to achieve this aim

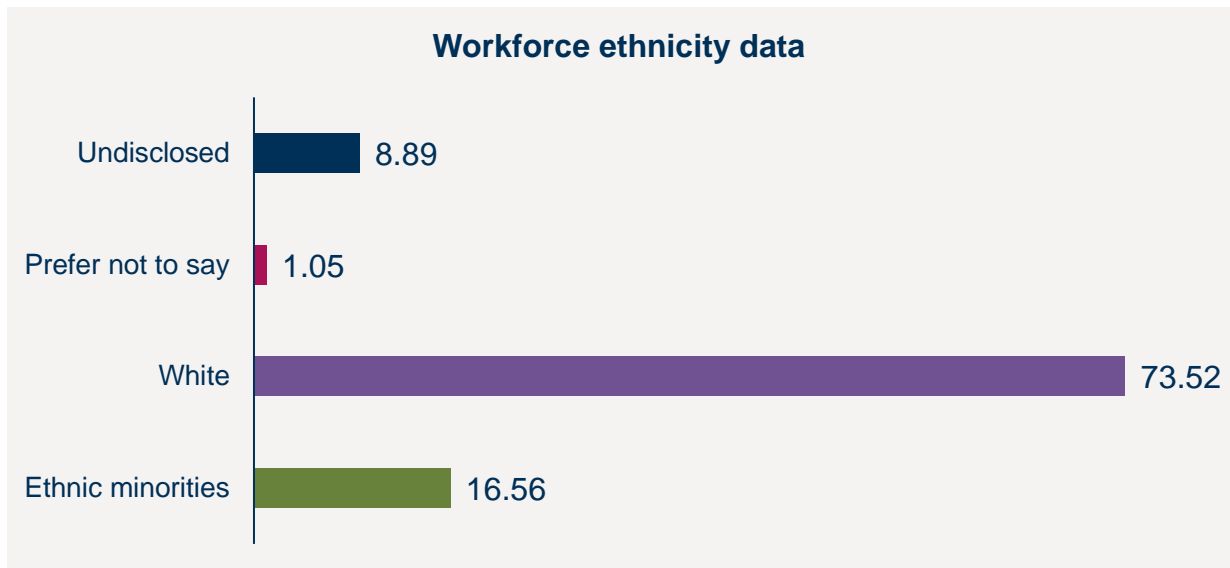
- ✓ We continued to implement our People Strategy, which underpins our Corporate Plan and establishes inclusive ways of working that apply to everyone. This included

streamlining our approach to recruitment, improving our induction process, and offering staff more development opportunities and internally-run learning hours.

- ✓ We refreshed our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) action plan to make it more action-oriented, evidence-based and outcome-focused. Through the plan we aim to mainstream EDI into everything we do.
- ✓ We will be looking to increase awareness amongst disabled voters of the support and equipment available, especially in polling stations, and ensure that EDI is embedded in our policies, such as the Voter Engagement Strategy.
- ✓ We have partnered with Inclusive Employers, providing staff with access to online webinars, blogs, factsheets and much more. We are also committed to the Race at Work Charter and the Disability Confident Scheme.
- ✓ We conducted a post-implementation review of our equality screening guidance and template, to ensure it remains fit for purpose and will be introducing additional training to embed equality screening further.
- ✓ We have introduced an inclusion calendar, celebrating important events for our staff, examples include Diwali, Ramadan, LGBT+ history month and International Women's Day.
- ✓ Staff have been provided with training on EDI topics, such as menopause, diversity data, inclusive recruitment and unconscious bias.

Performance indicators

Indicator	Target	2023-24
Completion rate for equality monitoring data	85%	91.18%

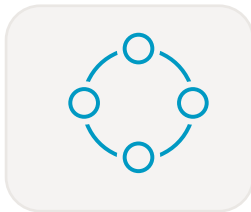


Ongoing and future work to achieve this aim

- Continue to support staff to undertake training relevant to their skill set and experience.
- Undertake talent and succession planning conversations to shape the future of our talent pipeline, ensuring business continuity and a readiness for teams and individuals to step up when required.
- Roll-out 'new manager' training, equipping newly recruited and existing managers with the skills they require to lead a team.
- Introduce mentoring and coaching schemes, tailored to the needs of the Commission, particularly focussing on reverse mentoring, 'preparing for a step-up' coaching and return to work coaching for anyone returning from long term absence such as maternity, paternity or sickness.
- Launch a new HR and applicant tracking system, to strengthen our ability to track and monitor applications and improve the success of applicants from under-represented groups.
- Continue working closely with recruitment agencies and executive search firms to ensure our commitment to EDI is at the top of their search, with only diverse and inclusive shortlists accepted.
- Continue our commitment to anonymous recruitment, where any identifiable personal data such as name, gender, mandatory educational dates are removed from their application before being sent to the hiring manager.
- Require any manager involved in recruitment to undertake new recruitment training and unconscious bias training.

- We will continue to make progress against our commitments under the Race at Work Charter and Disability Confident Scheme.
- We will launch an EDI information hub on our intranet pages – providing information and resources on a range of topics, including UK Equality legislation, protected characteristics, equality screening, sharing personal stories and much more.

EDI on the democratic process



We are here to ensure that everyone who is eligible can participate in the democratic process – whether as a voter, campaigner or candidate. So recognising and responding to the needs of a diverse population and electorate is at the heart of our work and is what we are committed to do.

We continued to serve a diverse democracy in our external, voter-facing activity, including:

- ✓ Our public-facing voter engagement work includes targeted support for different communities across the UK, both directly and through partners. In conjunction with local authorities and civil society partner organisations, we have worked to reach a diverse range of voters to ensure they had the tailored information they needed to take part, in the formats and languages they can access.
- ✓ This has included ongoing work with partners representing groups with low ID ownership to support their audiences to understand the voter ID requirement, such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, and trans and non-binary people.
- ✓ We have also worked with disability charity partners to research the barriers their audiences face and identify actions we can take to remove them through our communications and education work. This includes projects looking at the needs of people with a mental illness (with Centre for Mental Health), people with a learning disability and/or autism (with Mencap), and blind and partially-sighted people (with the Royal National Institute for Blind People).
 - We have worked to ensure our public awareness campaign material reflects the diversity of the audiences we represent, and is as representative and inclusive as possible. This includes in our new-look voter registration campaign and resources which showcase members of the public representing groups we know are typically under-registered and/or who face additional barriers to participation, including people experiencing homelessness and people with a learning disability.
- ✓ We work to ensure our website and our publications are as accessible as possible.

A learning organisation where improvement is continuous and resources are used efficiently

We aim to be rigorous in learning from experience and seek continuous improvement in all that we do

With ongoing needs to ensure we deliver value for money, it is crucial that we continue to manage our costs and make effective use of our technology, funding, time and resources. We are working to:

- procure and implement value for money IT systems that improve service delivery
- maintain and improve our financial strategy to keep the Commission within approved budgets
- to build on our financial controls to ensure efficient audits
- continue to develop techniques to learn from experience, seek continuous improvement and become more efficient and effective
- develop a corporate environmental strategy that meets policy and legislative requirements for reduced environmental impact.



Work done to achieve this aim

- ✓ The Commission had a change in leadership, with Rob Vincent taking up the role as Interim Chief Executive in December 2023. His priorities were to support Commission staff to prepare for the 2024 polls and to continue implementation of the remaining Elections Act measures. Vijay Rangarajan joined the Commission as Chief Executive in March 2024.
- ✓ We continued to invest in our digital infrastructure, including work to improve the resilience, security, and reliability of our services. We continued to take steps to improve our digital systems following a cyber-attack. We upgraded IT systems and mobile working infrastructure, as well as improving multi-factor authentication to give high levels of assurance that access to our systems and data is secure.
- ✓ We have worked on the discovery phase for the new Political Finance Online project. While there have been delays in delivering the project, we remain committed to providing a system that is better for its users. Our in-house project team has

completed work with external consultants to decide the way forward, including gathering feedback from parties.

- ✓ We moved to new premises in Belfast and Cardiff following the expiry of our leases, alongside planning upgrades our Edinburgh office to support more flexible working.

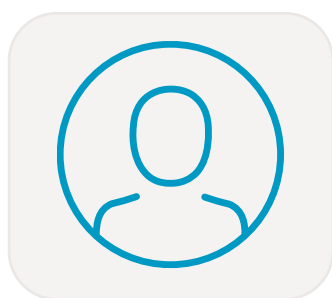
Ongoing and future work to achieve this aim

- Apply lessons learnt over the last financial year in relation to our financial planning and procurement processes by increasing our resilience within the finance and procurement teams.
- Introduce the Commission's new apprenticeship framework, broadening the plan to external apprentices joining the Commission on an established apprenticeship scheme, which supports social mobility and provides opportunities to those from a less privileged background to start a career with us.
- Continue to attract and retain the most skilled talent, by considering the findings of an extensive pay review carried out by an independent pay and reward specialist. This work will tell us whether our remuneration is in line with the market in which we operate.
- Procure and implement a new Learning Management System, which will enable better collaboration, collection, and delivery of training.
- Continue to offer staff 'learning hours', which cover everything from health and wellbeing to financial awareness, and a broad range of skills and subjects.

Using our resources to support the delivery of our goals

Our people

Staff relations and engagement



The Commission's dedicated and expert staff are based across our four offices or are home-based. Weekly newsletters and chief executive updates, all staff events, 'lunch and learns' and the internal intranet allow staff to remain connected and share corporate updates.

A staff engagement group (SEG) meets every six weeks to discuss corporate issues and Commission culture, seeking to capture views and insight from all teams and levels. This is supported by regular cross-team project meetings, team meetings, and line management check ins.

In June 2023 the Commission held an all-staff event, which allowed the organisation to meet and discuss its goal and priorities and celebrate successes.

The Commission has an active union. While there was an official trade dispute in relation to pay settlements this year, there was frequent dialogue with management on issues important to staff and members.

We completed our latest staff survey in November 2023 and 85% of employees responded. Our employee engagement score was 63 (out of 100), which is slightly lower than last year but in line with the Civil Service average (61). Our scores compared favourably to the Civil Service benchmark (2022) in areas such as our people agreeing that:



- they are proud to tell others that they work for the Commission (71% compared to 60%)
- they would recommend the Commission as a place to work (68% compared to 56%).

The areas where we compared less positively to the Civil Service benchmark, and we need to improve, include people agreeing that:



- they believe the Commission is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace (65% compared to 78%)
- They believe there are opportunities to develop their career at the Commission (46% compared to 57%)

Performance indicators

	Target	2023-24
Maintained staff wellbeing score in staff survey	77%	77%
Maintained staff engagement score in staff survey	67%	66%

Occupational health and safety



We review our health and safety policy annually. We also have procedures, guidance and risk assessments in place to cover our core activities. A health and safety group oversees our arrangements. They meet regularly and report to our senior leadership group. However, primary responsibility for health and safety sits with people managers.

We initiate independent health and safety audits of our premises each year, which involves inspecting working environments and reviewing safety management systems. These audits tell us if our arrangements are suitable and highlight any improvements we need to make. In 2023/24 we:

- installed new surge protection devices at the London office
- held three days of portable appliance testing of staff laptop cables in London
- installed new LED lighting and air-conditioning at the new Northern Ireland and Wales offices
- provided members of staff with orthopaedic chairs following Occupational Health assessments
- identified rooms at our London, Belfast and Cardiff offices for female members of staff to privately breast feed/express milk
- installed new blinds at the London office that are designed to reflect the sun's light outwards to help reduce the temperature in the office.

Sustainability report



The Electoral Commission remains dedicated to protecting and creating a sustainable workplace. We recognise that delivering our activities has an impact on the environment and we continue to work towards minimising this impact.

We lease office space in four cities from a combination of public and private sector property owners. We do not have direct control of utility supplier and waste disposal targets and management at our premises. All of our offices the property owner manages energy and water consumption as well as waste disposal and recovers costs through a consolidated service charge.

Offices in Cardiff and Belfast have relocated with more environmentally efficient premises in the last year. We completed the renewal of the lease for our London office in 2020 and all offices now have energy efficient LED lighting. As a result of this switch in our London office our electricity consumption was down 49% since April 2023. The Climate Related Financial Disclosures do not apply to the Commission but we seek to be committed to operating in a sustainable way, making environmentally friendly choices, and reducing our carbon footprint where possible.

Performance, where available, is presented against each of the Greening Government Commitments (GGC) reporting areas. We have included the data for three prior years for comparison against the baseline year.

Further information is available at the GGC page on the [government website](#).

The following GGC reporting areas are not applicable to the Commission:

- Nature recovery and biodiversity action planning – the Commission does not have any landholdings or natural capital.
- Travel car fleet – the Commission does not own any fleet vehicles, all travel is completed through public transport or employee vehicles.
- Direct greenhouse gas emissions – the Commission does not own any direct emissions equipment.
- Waste minimisation and management – the Commission does not use any consumer single use plastics (CSUP).

Mitigating climate change

Greening Government Commitments

Metric	Measure	2023/24	2022/23	2017/18 baseline	%
Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e)	Scope 2 (energy indirect) emissions	99	99	198	50%
	Scope 3 (official business travel - domestic) emissions	30	26	37	19%
	Scope 4 (official business travel - international) emissions	-	0	0	0%
	Total greenhouse gas emissions	129	125	235	45%
Kilowatt hours (kWh)	Mains standard grid electricity consumption (scope 2 & 3)	375,818	Not recorded	487,611	23%
	Heating systems	188,854	Not recorded	211,990	11%
	Total related energy use	564,672	Not recorded	699,601	19%
£000	Expenditure on energy use	Not available*	Not available*	NA	
	Expenditure on official business travel domestic	76	Not recorded	114	33%
	Expenditure on official business travel international	-		-	
	Total related expenditure	76	Not recorded	114	33%
Waste minimisation and management					
Tonnes	Confidential waste (recycled)	0.00	1.00	2.81	100%
	General waste (Including recycled)	2.84	4.08	7.26	61%
	Total waste	2.84	5.08	10.07	72%
£000	Total waste cost	2	0	1	(100%)
Finite resource consumption					
Metres cubed	Water consumption	Not available*	Not available*	-	
£000	Total water cost	Not available*	Not available*	-	
Paper usage					
Reams	Paper procured (A4 equivalent)	105	150	650	84%

*As we are in shared rented accommodation from a private landlord expenditure on energy use and water consumption is not available as it is not technically feasible to gain the data.



GGC target: reduce overall emissions by 52% and reduce direct emissions by 20% from the 2017-18 baseline by 2024-25, with a view to net zero by 2050

We work to decrease our fossil fuel consumption year on year, an ongoing effect of the property owner's introduction of measures to reduce levels of electricity consumption, including lower 'out of hours' operation of plant and machinery and the introduction of energy-efficient lighting. This year saw a 47% reduction from the 2017-18 baseline.

GGC sub-target: reduce emissions from domestic business flights by at least 30% from the 2017-18 baseline by 2024-25

The use of domestic air travel allows employees to visit the Northern Ireland and devolved offices, that would otherwise be inefficient use of time. The maximum emissions from our domestic flights this year were 31CO₂e, with the distance travelled 106,860km.

GGC sub-target: report the distance travelled by international business flights, with a view to better understanding and reducing related emissions where possible

Distance travelled by international business flights were minimal within the Commission, information for previous years is not available. This year the distance travelled was 0km.

GGC target: reduce the overall amount of waste generated by 15% from the 2017 to 2018 baseline

General waste and recycling figures are based on a proportion of total building waste and are not directly controllable by us. Confidential waste disposal for the organisation is handled separately from that for other building occupants. We shred the confidential waste we generate on-site before it is recycled into low-grade paper. All general waste produced in the building, including that generated by us, is sent to a nearby energy-from-waste plant, instead of landfill sites.

The introduction of hybrid working, has contributed to a significant reduction in paper usage and waste since 2017/18.

Procuring sustainable products and services

The Commission continues to work with all suppliers in accordance with the Government Buying Standards and in alignment with the GGC. We are committed to sustainability in the way goods and services are procured and work with existing and prospective suppliers to improve performance along with achieving value for money. This is done through:

- ✓ effectively capturing any environmental impacts at the business case stage
- ✓ ensuring that customers incorporate sustainability factors in the development of commercial requirements

- ✓ using evaluation criteria which include social and economic factors in addition to environmental factors.

Reducing environmental impacts from ICT and digital



The Commission ICT equipment is made from recycled plastics and items are routinely recycled amongst employees until they become operationally obsolete or no longer compatible for the Commission's needs.

We have further improved our environmental impact by:

- ✓ reducing printed resources provided to electoral administrators and other groups, focusing on electronic provision wherever possible
- ✓ the introduction of hybrid/remote working reduces carbon footprint
- ✓ encouraging the use of video and teleconferencing to avoid unnecessary travel with consequential CO2 emissions
- ✓ operating recycling facilities in all our offices.

Using our financial resources efficiently

Our resource funding is provided by three parliaments – the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Senedd.

The combined resource made available to the Commission was £30.7m voted activity. We also received non-voted funding of £225k to pay Commissioners’ fees.

Our final budget breakdown

	Voted £m	Non-Voted £m	Total £m
Departmental Expenditure Limit			
Resource	30.7	0.2	30.9
Capital	1.5	0.0	1.5
Annually Managed Expenditure			
Resource	0.0	0.0	0.0
Capital	0.1	0.0	0.1
Total Net Budget			
Resource	30.7	0.2	30.9
Capital	1.6	0.0	1.6
Net cash requirement	32.5	-	32.5

The £2.0m from the Scottish Parliament and £1.5m from the Senedd budget is shown as income throughout the accounts and Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply (SoPS). The remainder of the budget drawn down from Scottish Parliament and the Senedd that is not spent is included as deferred income in the Statement of Financial Position.

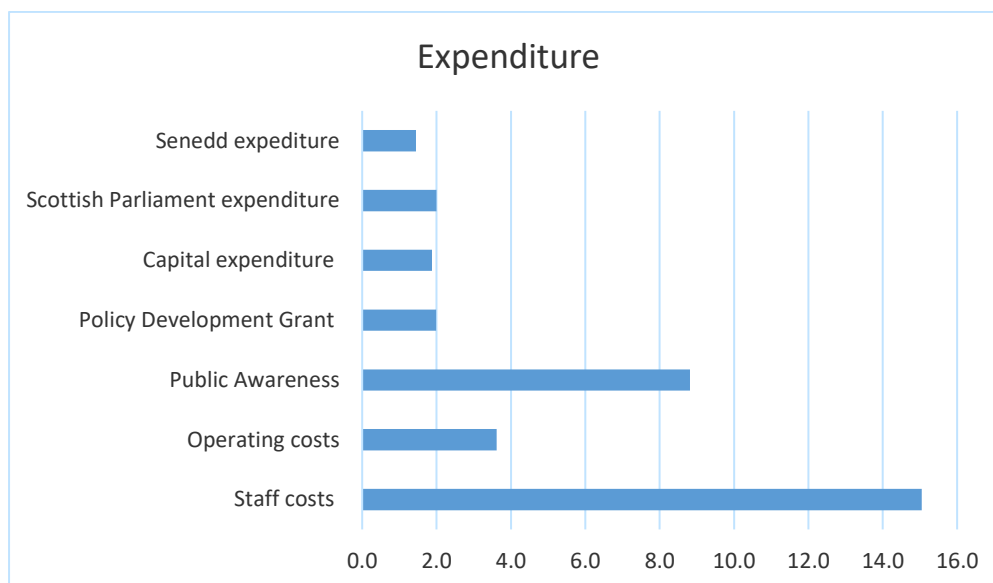
In achieving our objectives, we have used £29.3m worth of our resource budget for the whole year. This was out of the available sum of £30.9m approved by the UK Parliament for the net resource voted requirement, net of income received from the devolved authorities. The graphic below summarises our financial performance on the ‘voted’ element of our budget.

Financial performance 2023/24

Our financial performance follows our strategic performance. For the year 2023/24:

- our staff costs represented 46% of our resource expenditure, which is an increase of 4% from 2022/23 due to additional staffing across the Commission
- our capital expenditure increased by £1.16M from 2022/23 due to the fit out of two new offices.

Overall expenditure



The Scottish Parliament and Senedd expenditure in the table above are a subset of the overall cost.

Underspend

- unused funds set aside for NI Assembly elections and July 2024 general election early preparations
- depreciation

Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL)

The Resource DEL voted outturn for the year was £29,148,000 against a voted limit of £30,669,000 an underspend of £1,521,000. Capital DEL voted outturn for the year was £1,877,000 against a voted limit of £1,455,000 and was overspent by £422,000. Further details of excess vote can be found on page 124.

The Electoral Commission implemented International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS 16) within its 2022/23 financial statements, with effect from 1 April 2022. During the

2023/24 financial year, the Commission took on two new leases. It did not correctly factor in the budget requirements for the recognition of the Right of Use of these assets within its 2023/24 Main and Supplementary Estimates. Doing so within the Outturns against Estimate has led to an overspend within the Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (C-DEL) and an excess vote of £422,000, which is reflected in the Statement of Parliamentary Spend (SoPS).

Management acknowledges this is a budgeting error and has implemented measures to prevent its recurrence. The decision to terminate two leases and start two new leases was to ensure value for money and secure suitable facilities to conduct its work.

The Electoral Commission will seek parliamentary approval by way of an Excess Vote in the next Supply and Appropriation Act.

Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)

Our resource AME budget is used against any provisions with the budget including the cost of the previous Commissioner's pension. This year due to interest rates for pension and our Cardiff and Belfast offices not utilising the provision for dilapidation we are showing a credit balance of £132k.

Our capital AME budget is used for the new building leases. This year there were two new leases for our offices in Cardiff and Belfast. The provision for dilapidations for these leases was £91k, £9k under our budget limit.

The details can be found in our SoPs report and note 11 within the accounts.

Our income in the accounts relates to charges for registering political parties.

We also report and are accountable to the Llywydd's Committee in the Senedd and the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body. The income recognised in the accounts is predominately for devolved elections work. All income is recognised in note 4 of the accounts.

We collect fines raised against political parties and individuals for failure to comply with the rules on party and election finance and then surrender these to the Consolidated Fund as required by law.

In addition to monitoring performance against budgets, we also managed our cash limits set by the UK Parliament. We required cash amounting to £28.8m to finance our voted activities, which was £2.2m less than the sum of £31.2m approved by the UK Parliament in our Supplementary Estimate. The reconciliation of net resources outturn to net cash requirement, within the accountability report, provides a reconciliation from our outturn to the net cash we required in-year.

The Statement of Cash Flows shows that the cash balance as at 31 March 2024 was £84k.

The Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2024 shows deficit on taxpayers' equity. These liabilities will be met through future provision of supply funding.

Supplier payments

Although we are independent of government, we aim to comply with the Prompt Payment Code that operates across the public sector. The target is to pay undisputed invoices within 30 days. In 2023-24, we paid a total of 1616 invoices, 96% were paid within 10 days, 100% within 30 days.

Supply estimate for 2024/25

Our Main Supply Estimate for 2024/25 (HC734) provides for a net resource requirement of £46.0m. This is an 48% increase from 2023/24 mainly due to the inflationary increases and parliamentary events. Our Main Estimate is broken down as follows:

	Voted £m	Non-Voted £m	Total £m
Departmental Expenditure Limit			
Resource	45.7	0.3	46.0
Capital	2.2	0.0	2.2
Annually Managed Expenditure			
Resource	0.0	0.0	0.0
Capital	0.1	0.0	0.1
Total Net Budget			
Resource	45.7	0.3	46.0
Capital	2.3	0.0	2.3
Net cash requirement	46.5	-	46.5

The Speaker's Committee approved this on 6 March 2024, and it was laid before the House of Commons on 2 May 2024. The Commission is established by legislation and following the principles of the FReM there is an assumption of continued provision of service, there is nothing to suggest services provided by the Commission will cease or future funding will not be provided.

Powers and sanctions report

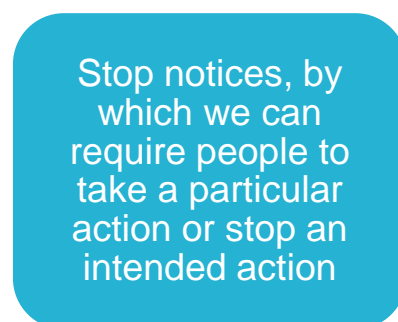
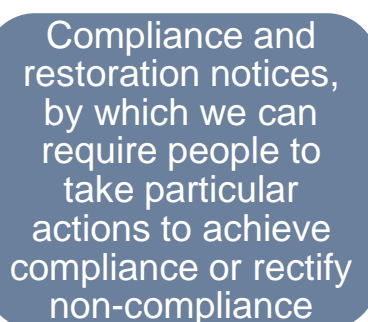
Use of our powers and sanctions between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024

We encourage those we regulate to comply with the law by providing support and guidance. However, where proportionate to do so, we take action when they do not follow the law.

PPERA provides us with investigation powers, including the ability to:

- require information (through an investigation notice) from anyone where we suspect there has been a breach of the law or (through a disclosure notice) where we do not suspect an offence but require information in order to fulfil our functions
- require suspects or witnesses to attend for interview
- take action if people do not co-operate with our requirements
- in certain circumstances, enter premises (through an inspection warrant from a Justice of the Peace)

We also have a range of sanctions, including:



These sanctions apply to most, but not all, PERA offences. There are some offences – generally those involving an element of deliberate dishonesty – for which we cannot issue fines, but we can notify the police or relevant public prosecutor.

We are also able to consider ‘enforcement undertakings’ from those we regulate, where for example a party may report an offence voluntarily and propose actions it will take to put things right, avoiding the need for the party and us to go through potentially time-consuming investigations.

Use of investigatory powers

We are required to report on our use of investigatory powers, specifically cases in which:

- we issued a disclosure or investigation notice
- premises were entered using an inspection warrant issued by a Justice of the Peace
- we applied to a court for an order for disclosure.

We are not required to include information where, in our opinion, to do so would or might be unlawful, or might adversely affect any current investigation or proceedings.

We did not issue any disclosure notices during 2023/24, but we did issue one investigation notice.

We did not use our powers to apply for an inspection warrant to enter premises or apply for any court orders for disclosure.

Concluded investigations

We concluded 17 investigations during 2023/24, compared with 34 in the previous year.

We continued to regulate and take enforcement action where it was reasonable and in the public interest to do so. Our work to support parties and campaigners to comply with electoral law, and an absence of significant regulated elections were all factors in this reduced number of cases. Electoral events tend to drive our investigatory work, and with a general election in July 2024, an increase in the number of investigations for 2024/25 is likely.

Use of civil sanctions

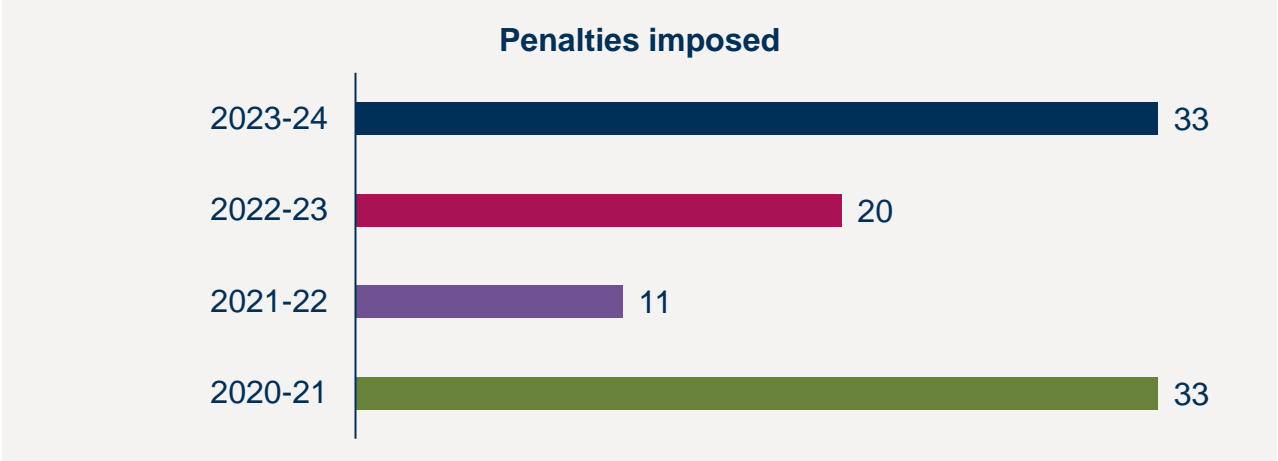
We are required to report on our use of civil sanctions, specifically cases in which:

- a fixed monetary penalty or discretionary requirement was imposed or a stop notice served (other than cases in which the penalty, requirement or notice was overturned on appeal)
- liability for a fixed monetary penalty was paid before a notice imposing it was issued
- an enforcement undertaking was accepted

14 investigations led to considerations of sanctions, and we imposed 33 penalties across 11 cases. In total, £27,000 of sanctions were imposed.

Details of all penalties imposed during 2023/24 are available on our website.

No enforcement undertakings were offered to us during 2023/24. We did not serve any stop notices up to and including 31 March 2024. No appeals were made against decisions to impose civil sanctions.



Northern Ireland annual report

Our work in Northern Ireland over the last year focused on delivering the May 2023 Northern Ireland local elections and preparing for a UK general election. This work was delivered against a backdrop of change and uncertainty, with the ongoing implementation of the Elections Act and the return of the Assembly in February 2024 following a two-year suspension.

During this period, we supported the Chief Electoral Officer, political parties, candidates, voters and the wider electoral community across Northern Ireland to understand and prepare for the Election Act changes and maintained up to date contingency plans for an unscheduled election.

Work done to achieve our aims

- ✓ We supported the successful delivery of the May 2023 Northern Ireland local elections. Our research found that 97% of voters were satisfied with the process of voting.
- ✓ We ran a voter registration campaign ahead of the local elections, taking in paid for advertising, press and partnership activity. A total of 1,380,372 people were registered to vote, up from 1,305,553 at the last local council elections in 2019.
- ✓ Following the Northern Ireland local elections, we published a report reflecting data and evidence gathered on voting, campaigning and delivering the election. This included recommendations for improving the system further.
- ✓ We published our assessment of the accuracy and completeness of the electoral register in Northern Ireland in September 2023.
- ✓ In partnership with the Electoral Office, we produced a factsheet to support voters and campaigners to understand and prepare for Elections Act changes.
- ✓ We moved to a new modern workspace in Belfast following the expiry of the lease in our previous office.
- ✓ We developed new resources for democratic engagement with schools and other learning providers. Welcome to Your Vote Week took place at the end of January 2024, with involvement of over 20 schools, universities and youth groups across Northern Ireland.

1.38m

People registered to vote during Commission campaign

- ✓ Our May 2023 election report found candidates in Northern Ireland continue to raise concerns about harassment. Building on the joint guidance published to help candidates recognise and respond to intimidatory and criminal behaviour. We drafted, in partnership with the Electoral Office, a new code of conduct for campaigners. Consultation on the Code commenced in March 2024. When published, the updated Code will provide political parties with agreed standards on what is acceptable behaviour both before and during polling day.
- ✓ Despite the absence of a functioning Assembly, the Northern Ireland Political Parties Panel continued to meet during the year. The panel provides an important link for sharing information between the Commission, the Chief Electoral Officer, and political parties.
- ✓ Run our new look voter registration campaign ahead of the UK general election.

Ongoing and future work

- Build on the work we have already done to provide educational resources and seek to establish new partners to promote and improve political literacy across demographics less likely to be engaged in the democratic process.
- Continue to support parties and campaigners to comply with the law through the delivery of guidance seminars and advice surgeries.
- Support a transparent political finance system through the timely publication of political party donation and loans and annual statement accounts.
- In partnership with the Electoral Office, publish an updated code of conduct for campaigners that will provide political parties with agreed standards on what is acceptable behaviour both before and during polling day.
- Continue to provide support and guidance to the Electoral Office as preparations for a UK general election continue, particularly in relation to changes from the Elections Act.
- Continue to provide expert advice and recommendations for improving the current system, including making the case for reform of the canvass, the Digital Registration number and the wider electoral registration process in Northern Ireland.

Commitment to EDI



The Electoral Commission serves a diverse democracy in Northern Ireland, and we are committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion. Our programme of partnerships aims to work with under registered groups and inform voters how to cast their vote with confidence.

Under new legislation, Ulster-Scots and Irish language commissioners are expected to be appointed by the First and Deputy First Minister, and will be tasked with developing best practice standards and promoting the services provided by public authorities. The Commission will monitor this in relation to its own work and services.

Wales annual report

This report provides an overview of our work on devolved matters in Wales and looks at our performance during the last year.

We have included summary financial information within the performance report. This is consistent with the financial statements, where more detail is available.

The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) established the Electoral Commission. We are independent of government and political parties and directly accountable to the UK, Scottish and Welsh parliaments.

Amendments made to the Government of Wales Act 2006, by the Wales Act 2017, transferred responsibility for devolved Welsh elections and referendums from the UK Parliament to the Senedd. The Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 sets out the funding and accountability arrangements for the Electoral Commission's devolved activities in Wales.

Work done to achieve our aims

During 2023-24 much of our work focussed on supporting the programme of electoral reforms being delivered by Welsh Government:

- ✓ Worked closely with Welsh Government officials on policy development.
- ✓ Provided comprehensive written evidence on the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections Bill), the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Bill and the Senedd Cymru (Electoral Candidate Lists) Bill.
- ✓ Appeared before Senedd Committees to give evidence on the three bills.

Throughout the year we focussed activity on our advice and support service to our stakeholders, including electoral administrators and candidates, agents and parties:

- ✓ Worked with the Wales Electoral Coordination Board (WECEB), the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and electoral administrators to ensure that the impact of divergence in electoral systems as a result of provisions introduced in the Elections Act 2022 were mitigated.
- ✓ Used our performance standards frameworks to support and monitor Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers throughout the year on election and electoral registration to ensure voters receive high quality and consistent service.
- ✓ Worked with parties to help them understand new rules around digital imprints.

- ✓ Delivered training to candidates and agents via virtual briefing sessions and party conferences.
- ✓ Delivered training to third sector organisations who intend to campaign at reserved elections.
- ✓ Worked with police forces in Wales to address concerns raised by candidates about abuse and intimidation at elections.
- ✓ Delivered two new campaigns to raise awareness of the voter ID requirement and voter registration ahead of the May 2024 elections.

We have continued to expand our programme of democratic engagement work in Wales:

- ✓ Published guidance for primary and secondary schools on how to embed democratic education within the Curriculum for Wales.
- ✓ Launched a new resource on how to hold an in-school referendum.
- ✓ Recruited Children in Wales as our new youth voice partner.
- ✓ Delivered Welcome to Your Vote Week with over 60 schools and youth groups across Wales.
- ✓ Briefed over 20 partner organisations supporting those least likely to own an accepted form of ID ahead of the May elections.

60

schools signed up to
Welcome to your Vote

Other developments during the year

- In September 2023 the lease on our office at Companies House expired and we extended our stay while we looked for alternative office space. We moved into the new office, James William House, in March 2024. The new premises offers the space to work as a team, the potential for future growth in staff numbers, and supports us to host meetings of various stakeholder groups.
- We engaged with the Senedd’s Llywydd’s Committee and gave evidence in November 2023 during its scrutiny of our 2024/25 supply estimate.
- We held the November 2023 Board meeting in Cardiff and, as well as the meeting itself at the Senedd, there was a programme of partner activities arranged for Board members, including sessions with the Counsel General, the WECB and a local youth forum.
- The Welsh Language Commissioner conducted their bi-annual monitoring of the Electoral Commission’s compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. The

Commission scored highly or moderately in the compliance testing in nearly all areas tested. Work is underway to further improve compliance even further.

Ongoing and future work

- Continue to seek feedback from educators in Wales to better understand their training needs. We will explore establishing a teachers' forum to improve the delivery and consistency of democratic education across Wales. With support from Welsh Government and the Senedd Commission, the group will focus on building knowledge amongst teachers and pupils of all ages ahead of a UK general election and devolved elections in 2026 and 2027.
- Introduce a new partnership grant scheme, which will provide funding for projects that aim to increase knowledge and understanding of the democratic system amongst under-registered groups.
- Work with the new Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru and the WECB as it transitions to become a statutory Electoral Management Board in early 2025.
- Continue to provide advice on new legislation including secondary legislation arising from the bills which will set out the detailed rules for the 2026 Senedd elections.
- Continue to support Returning Officers, electoral administrations, candidates, and agents.
- Support and evaluate the introduction of the new electoral reforms, such as piloting of automatic registration.
- Continue to work with governments across the UK and the wider electoral community to consider the risks around cyber-security and disinformation. This includes working with voters to ensure they are confident about who is targeting them and why, so they can be alert to the risks of disinformation in all forms.

Commitment to EDI



The Electoral Commission serves a diverse democracy in Wales, and we are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. Ahead of the May 2023 elections we ran briefing sessions with 18 organisations supporting those less likely to be registered to vote and own an accepted form of ID, such as disabled people, people experiencing homelessness and ethnic minority communities. Partner organisations included Mencap Cymru, Cymorth Cymru and the Older People's

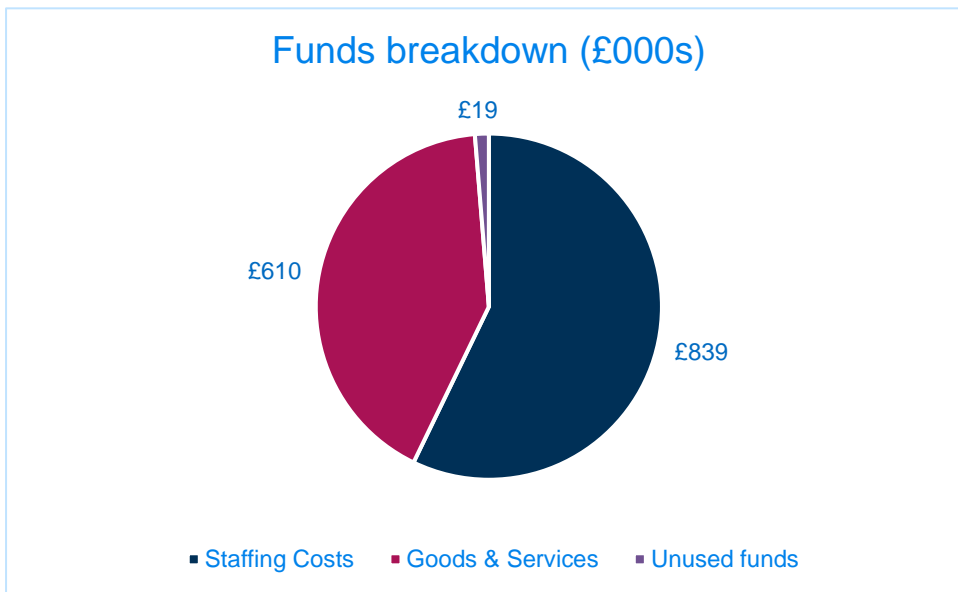
Commissioner for Wales.

In the year ahead, we will also be working closely with representatives from the electoral community to explore how we can improve the accessibility of the electoral process for people who experience barriers to participating in elections.

We are committed to providing all guidance and resources on our website in Welsh as well as English, and will continue to review our translation processes to ensure that information is accessible to all.

Resources

During 2023/24 we utilised 96.6% of £1.5m of budget available. This was predominately staffing £0.9m (60%); the remaining amounts represent the Senedd contribution to common activities and corporate overheads. Our segmental reporting on page 154 shows the breakdown between direct and indirect costs.



Governance

The Commission is formally accountable to, and receives funding from, the Senedd in respect of its functions in relation to devolved Welsh elections and referendums. We report to the Llywydd's Committee which was established for this purpose.

In September 2023 we submitted our fourth estimate to the Senedd enabling the UK Treasury to transfer the agreed level of funding to the Welsh Consolidated Fund. This process followed the "Statement of Funding Principles", which was agreed with the Senedd in early 2021.

We also submitted a supplementary estimate for 2023/24 to cover a staff pay award in response to the cost-of-living increase faced by staff, and the costs of addressing a cyber-security attack on the Commission. This was approved by the Llywydd's Committee in January 2024.

Scotland annual report

This report provides an overview of our work on our devolved functions in Scotland and looks at our performance during the last year.

We have included summary financial information within the performance report. This is consistent with the financial statements, where more detail is available.

The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) established the Electoral Commission. We are independent of government and are directly accountable to the Scottish, Welsh and UK parliaments.

The Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 sets out the funding and accountability arrangements for the Electoral Commission's devolved activities in Scotland.

Work done to achieve our aims

Our work this year has focused on providing expert advice and evidence on the Scottish Government's agenda for electoral reform, continuing to support stakeholders in the electoral community to meet their statutory responsibilities, and expanding our engagement work with communities most at risk of democratic exclusion.

Our work to support electoral reform in Scotland:

- ✓ Worked closely with the Scottish Government to provide evidence-based advice on their proposals for electoral reform in Scotland. Our expert advice helped to shape the Bill introduced into the Scottish Parliament in January 2024.
- ✓ Submitted comprehensive written evidence on the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Bill to the Standard's, Procedures and Public Appointment's Committee of the Scottish Parliament and providing oral evidence to the Committee.
- ✓ Published robust research on the accuracy and completeness of Scotland's electoral registers, including evidence-based proposals for future reforms to support the quality and integrity of the registers. We also published analysis of the 1 December electoral registers in Scotland, looking at how the 2022 canvass in Great Britain was run and considering how the electoral registers have been affected by the canvass reforms introduced in 2020.
- ✓ Conducted research into how flexible voting options could work across Scotland and the wider UK. This research is designed to inform debate about the modernisation of voting.

We continue to monitor and support electoral administrators, candidates, parties and campaigners to comply with their responsibilities under electoral law:

- ✓ Provided advice and guidance to electoral administrators, candidates and agents at the 10 council by-elections held across Scotland in 2023/24 and observing by-elections to identify areas for improvement.
- ✓ Worked jointly with the Electoral Management Board in Scotland (EMB) to provide guidance and advice to electoral administrators in Scotland to support them in preparing for and delivering the polls. This included delivery of a joint conference in October 2023 focused on preparedness for the UK Parliament election held on July 2024 but also managing divergence between Scottish devolved and UK electoral legislation.
- ✓ Worked with the EMB to consult the electoral administration community on challenges around sector capacity and resilience and developing strategies for supporting the sector.
- ✓ Used our performance standards frameworks to support and monitor Returning Officers (ROs) during the Scottish council by-elections and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) on their year-round activities to maintain accurate and complete electoral registers.
- ✓ Held a webinar for Scottish political parties, to help them understand the digital imprint requirements that came out of the Elections Act 2022 and currently sit alongside the existing Scottish digital imprint regime.
- ✓ Built upon our established relationship with Police Scotland, holding regular engagements to facilitate information sharing and discuss opportunities for joint working, including strategies to address the intimidation of candidates at Scottish elections.
- ✓ Held a joint webinar with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) to reach members of Scotland's third sector organisations, to help them understand electoral law and how it may apply to their campaigning work.
- ✓ Provided support and advice to the Petition's Officer and campaigners at the Rutherglen and Hamilton West recall petition and publishing a report on the petition. Our report and evidence inform any discussions in Scotland around proposals for a recall process for the Scottish Parliament.

The EC resources have been great and encouraged us to think out of the box a bit more about how we can engage with others.

Electoral administrator, Scotland

We have continued to expand our programme of democratic engagement work in Scotland:

- ✓ Worked with councils, EROs, and education bodies to deliver Welcome to Your Vote Week in January 2024, where 160 schools and other organisations signed up to deliver democratic education activities using our learning resources. As part of the campaign, we launched a new resource to support organisations to run a real vote on a topic that matters to young people, to help them understand the voting process and create opportunities for them to have their say.
- ✓ This year we began working with Children in Scotland to establish a youth voice network, made up of young people from across Scotland, to inform the Commission's work to engage with young people. The group has provided feedback on our learning resources and generated ideas for Welcome to Your Vote Week.
- ✓ Participated in a working group made up of teachers and other stakeholders established by Education Scotland to review the current political literacy curriculum in Scotland, with the aim of creating a new framework for political literacy education to ensure consistent and effective delivery.
- ✓ Supported EROs in their work to engage under-registered groups by establishing a network for council staff leading on communications and outreach work to provide a forum for sharing ideas and best practice, which meets quarterly.
- ✓ Worked closely with council communications teams to ensure voters receive clear messages by sharing information and resources with teams through the local authority communications network throughout the year, including on Welcome to Your Vote Week.

160

schools signed up to
Welcome to your Vote
Week 2024

Ongoing and future work

- Continue to provide expert advice to the Scottish Government and Parliament on the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Bill. We will work with electoral administrators and campaigners to develop and consult on any additional guidance required on changes arising from any resulting legislation.
- Through advice, training and briefing sessions, support parties and campaigners to comply with the law, while continuing to ensure political finance is transparent.
- Work with parties in Scotland to update our Code of Conduct for campaigners at devolved elections.
- Work with Police Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, the Electoral Management Board, and the Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) to deliver a briefing session for Police Scotland's divisional SPOCs (Single Points of Contact)

across Scotland so that they are confident in the application of electoral law in their work around elections.

- Continue to work with governments across the UK and the wider electoral community to consider the risks posed by cyber-security and disinformation. This includes working with voters to ensure they are confident about understanding who is targeting them and why so they can be alert to the risks of disinformation in all forms.
- Continue our work with partner organisations to reach out to various campaigning organisations based in Scotland to ensure they are aware of non-party campaigning rules and how they apply to the different elections in Scotland.
- Work with the EMB to support ROs and EROs to help them meet the challenges they face in delivering well-run electoral services which continue to meet voters' needs. This will be particularly important in the context of the turnover of senior staff in electoral administration across the country. Our work will continue to include identifying opportunities to strengthen the resilience of electoral administration teams and exploring options for modernising the voting process.

We will continue to expand our support for democratic engagement in Scotland:

- We look forward to developing our work with Children in Scotland and our youth voice network to create youth-friendly resources for Welcome to Your Vote Week 2025 and the 2026 Scottish Parliament election.
- We will continue to contribute to Education Scotland's review of political literacy and development of a new framework, including exploring whether the Commission should develop additional learning resources and teacher training to support effective delivery of the new framework.
- We recognise the important role charities and other civil society organisations can play in increasing registration amongst under-registered groups, and will therefore be establishing a process to commission democratic engagement projects and initiatives. By providing funding to test out innovative approaches to democratic engagement we hope to build our understanding of what works in supporting participation amongst under-registered groups.
- The Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Bill includes provision to create a grant making power for Scottish Ministers to increase democratic engagement. We will work with Scottish Government to ensure we avoid duplication and confusion for organisations who may wish to apply for funding.

We will continue to address the barriers that people face in standing for election:

- In May 2024 we hosted a session in Edinburgh with the Electoral Commission Board focused on barriers to electoral office. This included participants representing groups of people who may face particular challenges, including intimidation, when standing for election. Participants in the discussion will include those representing disabled people,

‘New Scots’, women, and transgender people. This will inform the Board’s ongoing discussions on how these barriers may be most effectively addressed both by the Commission and wider society.

We will also commence a project, drawing in stakeholders from amongst those administering Scottish council elections and those who campaign in these elections, to identify strategies for improving voter understanding of the single transferable vote system, with the aim of lowering the level of rejected ballots at Scottish council elections. This work was due to commence in 2023/24 and was paused due to the workloads of electoral administrators in preparing for the changes introduced by the UK Elections Act.

Commitment to EDI



The Electoral Commission serves a diverse democracy in Scotland and we are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We have continued to be an active participant in the EMB’s accessibility sub-group working on strategies to ease the process of voting and accessing relevant election information for disabled people in Scotland. This has included supporting the delivery of guidance setting out short, medium and long term objectives for the electoral community in Scotland to address barriers to voting for disabled people.

In 2023/24 we have provided funding to support learning disability charity Enable to develop Easy Read resources and plan engagement activity. While this work focused on supporting people to participate in the UK general election held on July 2024, we will work with Enable to build on this work ahead of the elections in 2026 and 2027.

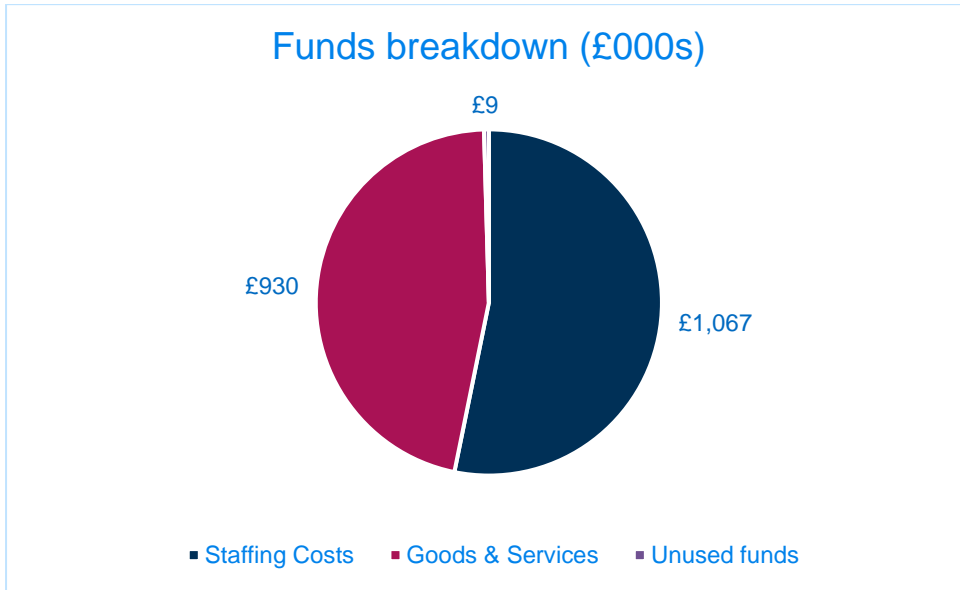
People with a learning disability are amongst the least likely groups to take part in elections.

Working in close partnership with the Electoral Commission has allowed us to pool our knowledge which has led to the production of impactful materials and an active engagement project

Enable Scotland

Resources

During 2023/24 we utilised 99.8% of £2m of budget available. This was predominately staffing £1.1M (57%); the remaining amounts represent the Scottish Parliament contribution to common activities and corporate overheads. Our segmental reporting on page 154155 shows the breakdown between direct and indirect costs.



Governance

The Commission is accountable to the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB) for our work on devolved Scottish purposes. We continue to report to other committees for our work in different policy areas, most notably the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee.

In September 2023, we submitted our fourth estimate to the SPCB for the funding of our work in the year 2024/25. The process for developing the estimate followed the ‘Statement of Funding Principles’, which we agreed in 2021 with both the Scottish, Welsh and UK Parliaments.

We also submitted a supplementary estimate for 2023/24 to cover a staff pay award in response to the cost-of-living increase faced by staff, and the costs of addressing a cyber-attack on the Commission. This was approved by the SPCB in December 2023.

In 2023/24 the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee introduced an annual reporting session for the Electoral Commission. We were pleased to meet with the Committee in November 2023 for the first of these sessions which created an opportunity to engage with the Committee on the broad range of the Commission’s work in Scotland.

Vijay Rangarajan
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
25th July 2024

Accountability report



Corporate governance report

The Directors' report

The Commission Board comprises 10 Commissioners appointed by Royal Warrant to exercise our functions as described in PPERA.

The Board appoints the Chief Executive to lead and manage our organisation and the Chief Executive appoints a leadership team of Executive Directors.

Details of Commissioners and Executive Directors are set out in the governance statement.

Register of interests

Commissioners and directors have to complete a declaration of interests that they did not hold any significant company directorships or other interests that may have conflicted with their responsibilities. No Commissioner or director had any other related party interests. We update the register of interests regularly throughout the year and publish this on our website.

Going concern

Our Main Estimate has received approval for the resources we require in 2024/25. As a public body established by legislation and following the principles of the FReM there is an assumption of continued provision of service, there is nothing to suggest services provided by the Commission will cease or future funding will not be provided.

Auditors

The Comptroller and Auditor General is appointed as our external auditor under Schedule 1 of PPERA.

Our current internal auditors are RSM UK, and from 1 April 2024 the new internal auditors will be BDO LLP.

Full details of remuneration for both audit and non-audit work are in the financial statements.

Other disclosures

Some disclosures required in the directors' report have been included elsewhere in the Annual Report and Accounts. We have reported personal data related incidents in the governance statement. Disclosures on employment and engagement with staff are in the

'our people' section of the performance report. Additional information is included in the remuneration report.

No significant events affecting us have occurred since the reporting date and we have disclosed future developments affecting us in the 'Using our financial resources efficiently' section of the Performance Report.

Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities

Under PPERA, I am required to prepare accounts for each financial year, detailing the resources acquired, held, or disposed of during the year and the use of resources by us during the year.

The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the organisation and of its net resource outturn, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual prepared by Her Majesty's (HM) Treasury, and in particular to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by HM Treasury including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis
- make judgments and estimates on a reasonable basis
- state whether applicable accounting standards, as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual, have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the accounts
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis

In accordance with paragraph 19(1) of Schedule 1 to PPERA, the Speaker's Committee has designated the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer of the Electoral Commission, with responsibility for preparing the accounts and for transmitting them to the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer – including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which an Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and safeguarding the Electoral Commission's assets – are set out in Managing Public Money published by HM Treasury.

The Accounting Officer confirms that, as far as he is aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the entity's auditors are unaware
- they have taken all the steps that he ought to have taken to make himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the entity's auditors are aware of that information

I hereby confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable, and that I take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that they are fair, balanced and understandable.

Disclosure of information to the National Audit Office

The Accounting Officer, who held office at the date of approval of this report, confirms that, as far as the directors are each aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the external auditors are unaware
- each director has taken all the steps required to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the external auditors are aware of that information

Governance statement

The Electoral Commission was set up under PPERA. In accordance with Schedule 1(19) of PPERA, the Speaker's Committee has appointed me as Accounting Officer of the Electoral Commission. My responsibilities in this role are set out separately under The Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities. As Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, I have gained assurance that the frameworks, control environment, processes and scrutiny set out in this statement have been effective throughout the financial year by review of documentation, discussions with Commissioners, the independent advisor to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and staff and meetings with internal and external auditors and other external stakeholders.

Board members are non-executive and are obliged to report all potential conflicts of interest. All members complete a related party annual declaration. I can confirm that all returns have been reviewed and there are no conflicts of interest.

This governance statement is in accordance with HM Treasury guidance and provides a summary of the procedures, processes and support structures that are maintained to effectively manage and control the resources made available to me by the UK Parliament.

The Electoral Commission is also directly accountable to the Scottish Parliament and Senedd in relation to the exercise of its devolved Scottish and Welsh functions, following amendments of PPERA by the Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 and the Elections (Wales) Act 2020. The Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB) and the Senedd's Llywydd's Committee provide scrutiny of the Commission.

Our Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, Shaun McNally left the organisation on 30 November 2023. From 1 December 2023 Rob Vincent, a former Commissioner, became the Interim Chief Executive Officer until I was appointed as Chief Executive and Accounting Officer on 4 March 2024. During the transition period between Shaun McNally's departure and my arrival, David Moran, Interim Director of Finance, was the organisation's Accounting Officer.

As the Accounting Officer, I am accountable to the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB) and the Senedd's Llywydd's Committee, in the same manner to which I am accountable to Speaker's Committee.

Under new powers in the Elections Act 2022, the Speaker's Committee has a role in examining the Commission's performance in having due regard to the forthcoming Strategy and Policy Statement.

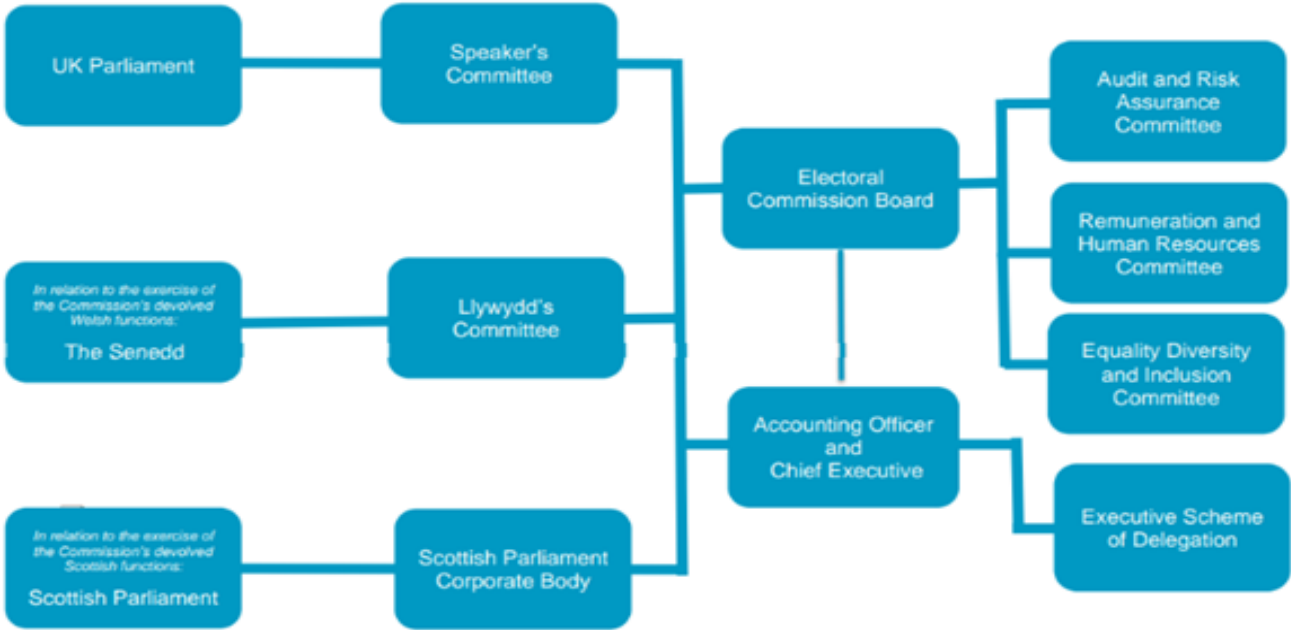
Accountability to the UK Parliaments and our internal governance framework

Elections in the United Kingdom are delivered through a mix of devolved and retained powers. Elections for the UK Parliament, English local government, Police and Crime Commissioner (in England and Wales), and Northern Ireland Assembly and local elections are reserved to the UK Parliament. Responsibility for parliamentary and local elections in Scotland and Wales are devolved matters for the respective parliaments.

Since 2022/23, the Electoral Commission has been accountable to each parliament for our work on elections under their powers. We are funded by each parliament for the work undertaken on the related elections with common costs, including shared work and corporate costs shared according to population.

The diagram below shows how delegation and accountability work in the organisation.

Electoral Commission – delegation of powers and duties



The Speaker's Committee

The Speaker's Committee is established under Section 2(1) of PPERA to perform the functions conferred on it by PPERA. These functions include:

- examining our annual resource estimates and laying them before the House of Commons, with or without modification
- examining our five-year plans and laying them before the House of Commons, with or without modification
- receiving our accounts
- designating our Accounting Officer
- reporting to the House of Commons, at least once a year, on how we carried out our functions.

Members of the Speaker's Committee from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, Speaker of the House of Commons (Chair)

Felicity Buchan MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities)

Lee Rowley, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (until January 2024)

Kirsty Blackman MP (SNP) (from September 2023)

Simon Hoare MP (Conservative) Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Local Government (from January 2024)

Rachel Hopkins MP (Labour)

Craig Mackinlay MP (Conservative)

Cat Smith MP (Labour) (Committee spokesperson)

Owen Thompson MP (Scottish National Party) (until September 2023)

Rt Hon William Wragg MP (Independent) (until March 2024)

The five appointed members are Members of the House of Commons who are not Ministers. The Speaker of the House of Commons makes these appointments.

The Clerk of the Speaker's Committee is Kevin Candy.

The Speaker's Committee agreed our Supply Estimate (HC734) was laid before the UK Parliament on 02 May 2024.

The Llywydd's Committee

The Llywydd's Committee discharges similar functions in relation to our financial accountability to the Senedd as the Speaker's Committee does for the UK Parliament.

Members of the Llywydd's Committee from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

David Rees MS, Deputy Presiding Officer and Chair

Janet Finch-Saunders MS, (Welsh Conservative Party)

Llyr Gruffydd MS (Plaid Cymru)

Peredur Owen Griffith MS (Chair of the Finance Committee)

Joyce Watson MS (Welsh Labour)

The committee agreed our supply estimate for 2023-24 in February 2023 and our supplementary estimate in March 2023.

Scottish Parliament Corporate Body

The Scottish Parliament Corporate Body oversees the operation of the Scottish Parliament and provides support to MSPs to enable them to carry out their parliamentary duties. It also funds a small number of parliamentary commissioners and related bodies, including the Electoral Commission's activities in relation to Scottish devolved elections.

Members of the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

Rt Hon Alison Johnstone Presiding Officer (Chair)

Claire Baker MSP (Scottish Labour)

Jackson Carlaw MSP (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party)

Maggie Chapman MSP (Scottish Green Party)

The Committee agreed our supply estimate for 2023-24 on 28 February 2023 and our supplementary estimate on 19 December 2023.

Commission Board and leadership team

The Commission Board



The Commission Board meets on a regular basis to consider our strategic direction and objectives and to review our performance. All members of our Executive Team and other relevant staff attend the Board's formal meetings.

His Majesty the King appoints our Chair and Commissioners on the recommendation of the House of Commons. By custom, His Majesty normally appoints Commissioners for a period not exceeding four years in the first instance, with the possibility of reappointment.

A Commissioner may cease to serve or be removed in accordance with the grounds set out in Schedule 1, paragraphs 3–5 of PPERA. Unless His Majesty reappoints a Commissioner before their period ends, their appointment terminates at the end of the specified period. A Commissioner may also ask to terminate their appointment.

Two new Commissioners, Sheila Ritchie and Carole Mills, were appointed during the year. Rob Vincent's term came to an end in 2023 as a Commissioner, in December 2023 he took on the role as Interim Chief Executive until March 2024. Alex Attwood's term ended in 2024 and Dame Susan Bruce's term was extended for a further two years in 2024. The Board's appointed Independent Adviser on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Sal Naseem completed his 12-month term in 2023.

John Pullinger CB has been Chair of the Board since his appointment on 1 May 2021, working two days each week for the Commission. The other Commissioners spend an average of three days per month fulfilling their duties. The table below shows the Commissioners who served during the year, with their terms in office indicated. The Speaker's Committee has started considering the re-appointment or recruitment to Commissioner roles, where the Commissioner resigned or where they are near the end of their current terms of office.

Committees are established to support the Board's work, with remits specified by terms of reference. The Board appoints the chairs of its committees and approves the appointment of independent advisers, taking advice from the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee. Committee members normally serve for three years, unless a member ceases to be a Commissioner or asks to stand down. The Board may reappoint them for a further period, normally not exceeding three years.

Committees make minutes of their meetings available to the Board, regularly report back to the Board and present an annual summary of the committee’s achievements over the year.

During the year, the Board delegated specific activities to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, the newly established Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee.

The Board also implemented the agreed actions from the previous Board effectiveness review and internal audit on governance. The Board reviewed its performance and effectiveness in January 2024 and instigated a fully engaged board coaching process for development purposes. No undue concerns have been raised.

Commissioners serving in 2023/24

Name	Term of office commencing	Term of office terminating	Committee membership		
			ARAC	EDI ³	RemCo
John Pullinger CB Chair of the Board of Commissioners & EDI	1 May 2021	30 April 2025		●	
Alex Attwood	1 February 2021	31 January 2024			
Dame Susan Bruce (Commissioner, and ARAC Chair)	1 January 2017	31 December 2026 (<i>extended term</i>)	●		
Sarah Chambers (Commissioner, and RemCo Chair from February 2024)	31 March 2018	30 March 2026		●	●
Roseanna Cunningham	1 October 2022	30 September 2026			
Lord (Stephen) Gilbert ⁴	1 November 2022	31 October 2026	●		

³ All appointments to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee commenced from September 2023

⁴ Baron Gilbert of Panteg (Lord (Stephen) Gilbert)

Carole Mills ⁵	1 January 2024	31 December 2027		•
Dr Katy Radford MBE	1 September 2021	31 August 2025		• •
Sheila Ritchie	1 February 2024	31 January 2027		
Chris Ruane	1 November 2022	31 October 2026		
Professor Elan Closs Stephens DBE	13 March 2017	12 March 2025	•	
Rob Vincent CBE ⁶ (Commissioner, and RemCo Chair to December 2023)	1 January 2016	31 December 2023		•

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee supports the Board and the Accounting Officer in discharging their formal accountability responsibilities for ensuring the adequacy of risk management, internal controls, efficient and effective use of public funds and financial governance arrangements within the Commission.

The Commission's internal and external auditors routinely attend all meetings, along with the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and relevant staff.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee is responsible for:

- Overseeing the adherence to accounting policies, reviews the annual report, and evaluates the NAO management letters
- Reviews audit plans and reports, and ensuring management's responses to audit findings are adequate and timely
- Reviewing the strategic processes for risk management, control, assurance, and governance
- Oversight of information governance
- Promoting appropriate ethics and values
- Ensuring lessons are learned for major projects and these are integrated into future planning.

⁵ Carole Mills was appointed to the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee from February 2024

⁶ Rob Vincent's appointment to the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee ended in December 2023

- Reviewing and recommending the approval of the Annual Governance Statement by the Accounting Officer.
- Approving and oversees the implementation of key governance policies.
- Agreeing on strategic and annual internal audit plans and reviews the internal audit service reports along with management responses.
- Submitting an annual report to the Commission Board detailing its work, findings, and recommendations, thereby enhancing accountability and continuous improvement within the Electoral Commission.

Through these responsibilities, ARAC is ensuring robust governance, financial integrity, and risk management within the Commission, and is promoting transparency, accountability, and ethical standards.

ARAC comprises three Commissioners and is required to meet at least three times a year. The Board approves the appointment of a suitably qualified independent adviser, a person who has no connection with the Electoral Commission. The independent adviser has the right to attend any Commissioner meetings.

The Chair of ARAC during the 2023/24 financial year was Dame Sue Bruce. The independent adviser was Paul Redfern.

ARAC held six meetings in 2023/24, fulfilling its remit and approved and monitored an audit programme and reviews of the controls environment.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee

In 2023, the Board established the EDI Committee to support the Board and the Accounting Officer in promoting cultural change and delivering the Commission's commitments and obligations in equality, diversity and inclusion.



The EDI Committee is responsible for:

- strategic oversight and challenge of advice on the delivery of the Commission's EDI Strategy and NI Single Equalities Scheme, monitoring progress on delivery of actions
- working with the Executive Team to embed new initiatives and ways of working to enhance the Commission's focus on EDI, supporting them in embedding EDI throughout policies and procedures
- ensuring that risks are identified, managed and reported to board committees and the Board, for assurance and for cross-committee information flow and joined up working on the People Strategy. As well as compliance with the Commission's statutory and regulatory responsibilities, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), publication of equalities information, and compliance with mandatory reporting and action planning

- supporting the Executive Team and reporting to the Board in maintaining focus on an approach which embeds and communicates equality, diversity and inclusion in the Commission's work with voters, campaigners and those standing for office.

The EDI Committee comprises three Commissioners and meets at least three times a year. The Chair of the EDI Committee during the 2023/24 financial year was the Chair of the Board.

This year the EDI Committee commenced its work and met on three occasions. It began to review progress against the Commission's equality, diversity and inclusion strategy, monitoring EDI performance data designed to track change over time.

Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (RemCo)

The Remuneration and Human Resources Committee advises the board on remuneration and human resources strategy.

The Remuneration and Human Resources Committee is responsible for:

- approval of significant changes to organisational structure and/or overall staff terms and conditions of employment and any impact of the change such as termination of contracts
- approval of significant changes to the structure of the Executive Team, supporting the Chair in the recruitment of the Chief Executive and recommending to the Board the framework for the remuneration of the Chief
- agreeing the annual negotiating remit for staff pay awards (including the Executive Team)
- making recommendations to the Board on the appointment of the Independent Adviser to and Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- advising on the extent to which organisational development and strategic human resource matters support the Board's strategic direction for the Commission.

The Remuneration and Human Resources Committee comprises three Commissioners and meets at least three times a year. The Committee met five times in 2023/24, fulfilling its remit. It looked at progress against the People Strategy, the Commission's People Survey and EDI-related aspects of the People Strategy and pay awards.

Review of Board and Committee performance during 2023/24

The Board's forward programme of meetings is aimed at engaging at a strategic level, giving support and challenge. During the year, the Board focused on topics within corporate plan objectives, considering research, reports published and impact analysis. The Board had in-depth sessions on the following matters:

- public awareness campaigns
- preparations for elections held in 2023/2024
- improvements to registration and voting for increasing resilience and participation
- public attitudes to online political campaigning
- new enforcement policy in political finance
- implementation of Elections Act 2022 measures, including voter ID and the Strategy and Policy Statement
- reviewing the organisation's resilience including its cyber security and digital arrangements
- development of the next Corporate Plan.

The Board held an off-site event at Cardiff in November 2023, and explored in the detail the topics of Welsh electoral reform, and democratic education and youth voices in Wales. The session set out to give Commissioners insights into the opportunities presented by the electoral reform agenda in Wales, including innovations in electoral registration, flexible voting models, and the consolidation of electoral law. The Board met stakeholders in Wales and Commissioners heard presentations about:



- the challenges and risks for practitioners in Wales posed by tight timescales for reform, alongside ongoing Elections Act implementation and growing complexity of electoral law
- the lived experience of young people in Wales, to understand the barriers young people face to participating in democracy, and the experiences of educators in Wales and the challenges they face in delivering democratic education.

Board and Committee attendance 2023/24

The table below shows Board and Committee meeting attendance during 2023/24 (the maximum possible attendance is in brackets).

Name	Commission Board	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee	Remuneration and Human Resources Committee
John Pullinger CB (Chair)	10/(10)	-	2/(3)	-
Alex Attwood	10/(10)	-	-	-
Dame Susan Bruce	10/(10)	6/(6)	-	-
Sarah Chambers	10/(10)	-	3/(3)	5/(5)
Roseanna Cunningham	10/(10)	-	-	-
Lord (Stephen) Gilbert	9/(10)	6/(6)	-	-
Carole Mills	2/(2)	-	-	1/(1)
Sheila Ritchie	1/(1)	-	-	-
Dr Katy Radford MBE	10/(10)	-	3/(3)	5/(5)
Chris Ruane	10/(10)	-	-	-
Professor Elan Closs Stephens DBE	7/(10)	5/(6)	-	-
Rob Vincent CBE	10/(10)	-	-	4/(4)

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is responsible for our organisation overall, including management and staffing and for financial, conduct and discipline matters. Shaun McNally's appointment ended on 30 November 2023 and Rob Vincent was appointed as interim

Chief Executive Officer from 1 December 2023 until 27 March 2024, whilst recruitment took place. Vijay Rangarajan was appointed as the new Chief Executive on 4 March 2024.

Executive Team

Our Executive Committee, which comprises the Chief Executive, Directors and some members of the Senior Leadership team, meets formally once a month to manage the delivery of the organisation’s objectives in line with the strategic direction set by our Board. They address ongoing issues and risks in the process.

The Executive Team, which comprises the Chief Executive and Directors, meets weekly to discuss current issues and coordinate required activities.

The Directors have delegated authority for day-to-day management with the Chief Executive. These delegations are formally set, recorded, and reviewed on an annual basis.

The Executive Team receives monthly reports on performance, finance and risk management across the organisation and on progress with key projects and initiatives. As well as frequent informal discussions, the Chief Executive meets each member of the Executive Team at least once a month to review and challenge operational and financial performance.

Members of the Executive Team during 2023/24

Chief Executive and Accounting Officer Until 30 November 2023	Shaun McNally
Chief Executive from 1 December 2023 to 3 March 2024	Rob Vincent (CBE)
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer from 4 March 2024	Vijay Rangarajan
Director of Regulation	Louise Edwards
Director and General Counsel for Legal Services and Reform from 1 January 2024	Binnie Goh
Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance from 1 December 2023 to 31 December 2023	Ailsa Irvine
Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance from 23 January 2024	Jackie Killeen

Interim Finance Director from 24 April 2023 (Accounting Officer from 1 December 2023 to 3 March 2024)	David Moran
Director of Finance and Corporate Services from 1 March 2018 to 30 April 2023	Kieran Rix
Director of Communications, Policy and Research	Craig Westwood

Kieran Rix left the organisation on 30 April 2023 and an interim Finance Director, David Moran, was appointed with effect from 24 April 2023 whilst recruitment for a replacement was considered. Ailsa Irvine left the organisation on 31 December 2023 and Jackie Killeen was appointed as Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance on 23 January 2024. Binne Goh was appointed as Director and General Counsel for Legal Services and Reform from 1 January 2024.

Organisational structure as at 31 March 2024



Risk management, internal control and assurance

We maintain and review the effectiveness of our control framework through the arrangements below.

Corporate governance

The Board reviews our corporate governance framework annually, ensuring that we adopt best practice. The Legal and Governance team are responsible for the operation of the scheme of corporate governance, to ensure we give full effect to the principles of the framework.

Risk management

We have designed our risk management processes to:

- maintain a clear framework across the organisation within which threats and opportunities are identified, assessed, managed and regularly reviewed in line with the organisation's guidance on risk appetite
- assign specific responsibility for managing risks in their areas of responsibility to individual Executive Team members (including managing risks to significant projects)
- ensure that the likelihood and impact of risks are assessed on a consistent basis
- ensure that existing risks are regularly reviewed and that new risks are identified and managed
- provide the Chief Executive, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Board with assurance that the risks are being managed appropriately.

We identify and evaluate risks by:

- taking all key decisions following consideration of risks and associated mitigations, which are separately identified in papers for the Board and those taking delegated decisions
- the Executive Team considering whether new risks should be added to the organisational risk register, and whether the existing risks' profiles need to be changed, as part of their quarterly review of risk
- the Executive Team completing a full and comprehensive review of risk at the start of each year, to ensure that the organisational risk register captures risk to the delivery of goals in our Corporate Plan

- presenting a full risk report to each meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and also annually to the Board
- managers and staff identifying risks in their projects or areas of work
- identifying risk through our planning process, audit, review of operations and training activities
- assigning owners to risks who formally review their likelihood, potential impact and the mitigations in place each quarter and reviewed by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The strategic risks we monitored and managed in 2023/24

Financial control and compliance



There are several potential causes of this risk including inadequate financial control measures, including systems and internal processes, which lead to insufficient safeguards of resources and non-compliance with statutory accounting standards. Weaknesses of financial controls and accounting exceeds an acceptable level resulting in accounts qualification.

The key mitigating activities undertaken were:

- ✓ appointed a Financial Accountant and a Compliance Accountant to assist with controls and compliance
- ✓ implemented system changes to limit access and override of access controls, and implement accounts receivable functionality
- ✓ introduced a new Fixed Asset Register reconciled to the General Ledger and final accounts
- ✓ implemented or have work in progress to address the findings on the Commission's financial controls from the National Audit Office's 2022-23 management letter
- ✓ increased capability of the Finance team.

Affordability and resource allocation



There are several potential causes of this risk including inadequate financial resources to meet operational and capital expenditure requirements in the current and future years. Also, the risk of suboptimal resource allocation and budgeting decisions, leading to inefficiencies, missed opportunities, and budget overruns. The risk relates to suboptimal investment decisions and ineffective asset management.

The key mitigating activities undertaken were:

- ✓ increased capability of the Finance team
- ✓ successfully agreed with the devolved nations (Wales and Scotland) and Westminster to ensure funding
- ✓ funding for 2024/25 is aligned to expectations of the Commission and all identifiable priorities are affordable
- ✓ the decision-making necessary to align rest of year spending to the budget available for 2023/24 including supplementary bids.

Procurement and value for money



There are several potential causes of this risk including ineffective procurement processes that may hinder the organisation's ability to obtain goods and services at the best possible value for money, compromising financial efficiency and effectiveness.

The key mitigating activities undertaken were:

- ✓ appointment of permanent Senior Procurement Advisor
- ✓ increased capability of Procurement team.

Cyber security



Cyber Security fluid and developing risk area for all organisations. Cyber-attacks can cause loss of information and infrastructure having a direct affect on operational performance. Loss of personal data can have regulatory financial impact on the organisation. The key risks are infiltration for cause (State Actors) or purpose (Hacktivists), theft of data or financial gain, supply chain compromise, malware insertion all of which can cause reputational and financial damage. Causes of risk include long-term lack of investment in IT systems and security, low awareness and training in relation to cyber risk at all levels of the organisation, lack of training for technical staff and lack of maturity in Business Continuity and Incident Management handling policies.

The key mitigating activities undertaken were:

- ✓ learning the lessons from the 2023 cyber attack
- ✓ cyber security audits and remediation
- ✓ implementation of upgraded firewalls to monitor network traffic and fine-tuned firewall rules
- ✓ implementation of 24/7 external security monitoring and alerting services.
- ✓ Review and changes to DMARC and DKIM settings for incoming email.

- ✓ Mandatory organisation-wide online training and internal communications campaigns about cyber security.
- ✓ Horizon scanning for developing threats and targeted quarterly threat hunts

Information Technology and Management



There are several potential causes of this risk including technical issues that disrupt the accomplishment of our work. Underinvestment can lead to poor IT system performance or emergency maintenance prevent access to key systems and processes, adversely impacting operational performance or productivity. The potential impacts of this risk occurring could be but are

not limited to:

- damage to reputation
- Commission staff unable to undertake or progress work
- loss of access to information
- information security breach.

The key mitigating activities undertaken were:

- ✓ worked toward business continuity
- ✓ maintained and improved web functionality and content
- ✓ cyber security testing and compliance.
- ✓ delivered a project to implement our Technology Modernisation Plan to modernise the Commission's technical infrastructure by upgrading and moving it to an externally managed, cloud-based service
- ✓ commenced CRM Dynamics 365 Upgrade project
- ✓ commenced a project to upgrade SharePoint upgrade SharePoint Online and redesign our intranet.

Electoral Guidance



There is a risk that electoral guidance issued from the Commission is not specific in certain key areas, that allows ambiguity and differing interpretation. The potential impacts of this risk occurring could be, but are not limited to, a challenge to the integrity of the electoral process and the potential for reputational damage to the Commission.

The key mitigating activities undertaken were:

- ✓ provided advice, guidance and support to regulated community

- ✓ supported electoral administrators in Scotland and Wales
- ✓ delivered an effective electoral observer scheme across the UK
- ✓ raised awareness amongst CEO, parties and campaigners on the impact of the Elections Act in Northern Ireland
- ✓ updated guidance for electoral administrators in Northern Ireland ahead of a general election
- ✓ provided advice, guidance & support to regulated community ahead of the Northern Ireland local government election in 2023.

People



There are several potential causes of this risk including inability to maintain the appropriate workforce, skills, or leadership capability. The potential impacts of this risk occurring could be but are not limited to:

- damage to reputation
- reduced quality of service to public
- inadequate staffing levels lead to a failure to meet business requirements or objectives
- staff working in other areas diverted to cover the public information function
- reduced capacity to provide advice and maintain stakeholder networks
- Commission is seen as inefficient.

The key mitigating activities undertaken were:

- ✓ commenced a project to implement our People Strategy
- ✓ delivered access to civil service learning training and report management information data
- ✓ advocated for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- ✓ implemented training needs analysis tools/process
- ✓ developed an apprenticeship plan for internal staff
- ✓ delivered learning hours programme.

Failure of technology



There are several potential causes of this risk including technical issues that disrupt the accomplishment of our work. The potential impacts of this risk occurring could be but are not limited to:

- damage to reputation
- Commission staff unable to undertake or progress work
- loss of access to information
- information security breach
- Commission unable to provide guidance and support to regulatory community
- Commission is criticised for not carrying out its functions.

The key mitigating activities undertaken were:

- ✓ worked toward business continuity
- ✓ maintained and improved web functionality and content
- ✓ introduced of Multi-Factor authentication
- ✓ regular cyber security testing & compliance
- ✓ implemented new firewalls in all offices and introduced an external managed service for the network
- ✓ commenced a project to upgrade SharePoint Online and redesign our intranet
- ✓ upgraded our Office365 licenses from E3 to E5 (Security Plan 2) to enhance our monitoring, auditing and security
- ✓ introduced a new backup service for Office365, which scans files for Malware before backing up the files
- ✓ implemented security monitoring software which scans for vulnerabilities and suspicious activity
- ✓ introduced mandatory data protection training for all staff.

Failure of stakeholder relationships



There are several potential causes of this risk including poor engagement with stakeholders or not meeting stakeholders needs. The potential impacts of this risk occurring could be but are not limited to:

- reputational damage
- damages stakeholder relations
- the reach and impact of Commission's work is restricted
- the reach of work with under-registered groups is restricted.

The key mitigating activities undertaken were:

- ✓ built new and develop existing partnerships with those representing under-registered groups
- ✓ built partnerships with education partners and produced education resources for young people.

Physical Safety and Security



There are several potential causes of this risk including ineffective or inefficient safety management. The potential impacts of this risk occurring could be but are not limited to:

- Commission is unable to meet business needs
- non-compliance with health and safety at work causing harm and suffering to employees, contractors, service users or the public
- data breach or loss
- damage to reputation
- security of staff and assets.

The key mitigating activities undertaken were:

- ✓ planned physical security risk assessments
- ✓ security advice provided on our intranet
- ✓ information management and security policies in place

- ✓ health and safety policies and guides available on intranet
- ✓ Mental Health First Aiders programme
- ✓ regular external health and safety assessments of Commission offices.

Democratic & electoral system



There are several potential causes of this risk, including a major electoral event being badly run because of poor Commission action or inaction, including (interpretation of) guidance or inaccurate registers of political parties. The potential impacts of this risk occurring could be but are not limited to:

- damage to Commission operations and reputation
- significant drop in confidence in political finance and campaigning because of inadequate regulation by the Commission.

The key mitigating activities undertaken were:

- ✓ undertook wide but targeted consultation on its core guidance
- ✓ provision of accurate advice and support
- ✓ ensured quality assurance process for advice were in place for the Regulatory Support team
- ✓ ensured Disaster Recovery facilities were in place and annually tested
- ✓ developed a resource allocation strategy to enable movement of skills and capacity between functions to meet demand.

Reputation



There are several potential causes of this risk including alleged bias, poor performance, lack of proactivity, inadequate staff capability or knowledge, or lack of suitably trained staff. The potential impacts of this risk occurring could be but are not limited to:

- destruction of trust and stakeholder relations
- negative media coverage
- potential litigation
- allegations of bias
- undermining of Commission decision-making.

The key mitigating activities undertaken were:

- ✓ developed a communications plan and messaging around the UK Government's Strategy and Policy Statement, that make clear the Commission's ongoing commitment to its impartiality and independence
- ✓ reviewed programme and project management framework
- ✓ Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Board were actively engaged in monitoring strategic risks
- ✓ application of the Commission procurement policy
- ✓ reviewed partnership strategy.

Legal



There are several potential causes of this risk including legal challenges arising from decisions made or changes to policy direction, incorrect interpretation of law, not fulfilling statutory requirements (including data protection, freedom of information, etc). The potential impacts of this risk occurring could be but are not limited to:

- Commission could be sanctioned, and stakeholders could raise concerns about non-compliance
- damage to reputation
- potential litigation
- negative media coverage
- breach of our public sector equality duties
- loss of credibility.

The key mitigating activities undertaken were:

- ✓ maintaining an in-house legal team
- ✓ knowledge-sharing on legal duties and obligations.

Operational risks reflect the strategic risks identified above and operational risk management contributes to mitigating those risks. Operational risks are managed day-to-day through established processes, line management and review, and through management reporting.

In particular, we use quality management and review processes to provide assurance that our regulatory activity complies with legal and other requirements, and to ensure we commence, conduct and conclude our investigations properly. These processes include separation between investigators and decision-makers. Legal advice and review is included in the process at all relevant stages in the process.

The management processes, risk reviews and mitigations put in place for 2023/24 have assured the Accounting Officer that we have maintained an appropriate risk management regime.

New operational risks for 2023/24 were agreed and signed off by directors. For 2024/25 new strategic risks have been agreed to replace the current set in 2023/24 and the strategic risks assessment will be more dynamic, taking into consideration risk appetite and monthly analysis of how the underlying very high and high operational risks relate to the assessment of strategic risks.

Since 2023/24 the strategic risk assessments have been completed monthly, have been more dynamic, taking risks appetites into consideration. During quarter one 2023/24, a new cluster of risks has been identified relating to financial activities. New internal controls have been put in place and tighter mitigations were developed. These risks are:

SR1a Financial Control and Compliance

SR1b Affordability and Resource Allocation

SR1c Procurement and Value for Money

External audit

The Comptroller and Auditor General is the head of the National Audit Office and our external auditor, as set out under Schedule 1 of PPERA. The National Audit Office did not provide any non-audit services in 2023/24.

The National Audit Office provides management letters, planning, update and completion reports as part of the statutory audit process that also informs the Accounting Officer of observations made.

Internal audit

Our internal auditors in 2023/24 were RSM UK.

RSM completed audits in accordance with their methodology, which aligns with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Their reports offer an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of our control systems. Our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee approved the agreed risk-based audit programme.

RSM completed the following internal audit reports:

- Performance Monitoring and Reporting review
- Follow- Up 2023/24.

Audits planned for 2023/24 but concluded in 2024/25

- Learning & Development – Training
- Contract Management
- Procurement.

For each of the completed audits, the internal auditors provided a report that included their key findings, an indication of the level of assurance from their findings and recommendations for action to strengthen any control weaknesses.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee monitors how we implement report recommendations. The Audit Opinion considered our governance, risk management and internal control arrangements as substantial in their overall adequacy and effectiveness.

The Audit Opinion considered there are weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could become, inadequate and ineffective. Management accepts the findings and is taking comprehensive measures to enhance procurement capabilities and practices, including the introduction of centralised and standardised approaches to supplier selection, and enhanced records management. Contract management is being enhanced through improved oversight and reporting mechanisms for supplier contracts. These changes will ensure greater efficiency, compliance, and value for money in our procurement activities.

Excess Vote

The Electoral Commission implemented International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS 16) within its 2022/23 financial statements, with effect from 1 April 2022. During the 2023/24 financial year, the Commission took on two new leases. It did not correctly factor in the budget requirements for the recognition of the Right of Use of these assets within its 2023/24 Main and Supplementary Estimates. Doing so within the Outturns against Estimate has led to an overspend within the Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (C-DEL) and an excess vote of £422,000, which is reflected in the Statement of Parliamentary Spend (SoPS).

Management acknowledges this is a budgeting error and has implemented measures to prevent its recurrence. The decision to terminate two leases and start two new leases was to ensure value for money and secure suitable facilities to conduct its work.

The Electoral Commission will seek parliamentary approval by way of an Excess Vote in the next Supply and Appropriation Act.

Policy development grants

We provide policy development grants to qualifying political parties, as outlined at note 3 to the accounts. We maintain control over grant payments through a comprehensive claim and review process. All parties submitted expenditure returns resulting in payments of £1,984,911 with no issues identified.

Information governance

Our management of information risk is an ongoing process. We inform and measure our approach against the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the management of records, the Cabinet Office's Security Policy Framework (SPF), Govs007: Security and the Cyber Essentials Standard for Information Security.

Executive responsibility lies with the Director of Regulation and Digital Transformation in their role as Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee oversees our strategic approach to managing information risk. Consistent with Cabinet Office guidelines, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Chief Executive receive an annual report of information risk management from the SIRO.

For 2023/24, the focus of technical upgrades of systems has been migration to the cloud and improving technical control measures. The annual report covered the improvements made, risk management, transparency, incident management and procedures to ensure continuing awareness of risks and responsibilities.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Chief Executive considered and were satisfied with the SIRO assessment of the effectiveness of overall information risk management including assessment against relevant guidance and frameworks.

Personal data related incidents

In 2023/24 there were five personal data incidents, including two physical devices stolen from the organisation and 3 near misses.

Review of effectiveness

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the control environment. In completing this review, I consider:

- the work of managers who have responsibility for developing and maintaining the control framework
- the work of the internal auditors
- comments made by our external auditors in their reports to those charged with the governance of our organisation.

I have gained sufficient assurance and information from ARAC, Board, other executive team members and from the previous Accounting Officer to review the effectiveness during 2023/24.

During 2022/23 the Commission faced a number of challenges. In August we announced that the Commission had been the victim of a sophisticated cyber-attack and we received a comprehensive management letter from the NAO.

The Commission has worked hard in 2023/24 to address these challenges by implementing upgraded firewalls to monitor network traffic, fine-tuned firewall rules and the implementation of 24/7 external security monitoring and alerting services. We have also implemented system changes to limit access and override of access controls to address the management letter issues.

In 2023/24 our Internal Auditors gave a limited opinion as they considered there are weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it could become, inadequate and ineffective. Management have agreed with this opinion and are focused on reviewing these areas during 2024/25.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee advises me on the effectiveness of my control systems. I am satisfied that the annual assessment of information risk, as received by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, highlighted no areas of undue concern. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee confirmed that it was satisfied with the assessment of the effectiveness of overall information risk management, including assessment against relevant guidance and frameworks.

The Board and its committees reviewed their performance and effectiveness during 2023/24. No undue concerns were raised by this review.

I am satisfied that no control weaknesses identified during the year were sufficient to introduce significant risks to our policies, aims and objectives, or material errors in our financial statements. I am also satisfied that the weaknesses that were identified have been, or are being, addressed through appropriate action.

The review of effectiveness includes consideration of our whistleblowing policy. This provides employees and workers with alternative routes to disclose malpractice, illegal acts or concerns about wrong doings. There were no instances of whistleblowing during 2023/24 and I am satisfied sufficient controls are in place.

- leadership is articulated in a clear vision from the Chair, Board and Executive Team, monthly meetings contribute to achieving our goals, including our risk appetite
- effectiveness is met through the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, regular meetings are held throughout the year with an independent adviser present.
- accountability, the Commission prides itself on promoting transparency throughout its work and reporting.
- sustainability, the Electoral Commission produces a 5 year Corporate Plan which maps out our long-term goals and plans. Page 47 in the performance report shows our commitment to sustainability and the Government's Greenhouse Commitments.

Remuneration and staff report

Chair and Commissioners' remuneration

Commissioners are appointed by Royal Warrant to exercise their functions as described in PPERA. John Pullinger was appointed as Chair of Commissioners on 1 May 2021.

The House of Commons has resolved that fees for the Commissioners shall increase on 1 April each year, by the percentage increase paid for High Court judges in that year. In accordance with this arrangement, fees increased by 6.8%.

The Chair's salary and Commissioners' fees are paid out of the Consolidated Fund, as may be specified in a resolution of the House of Commons. The fee for each day worked in the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 increased to £438 (2022/23: £410).

Commissioners are paid in arrears based on the actual days worked and on submission of claims from the Commissioners. The table below presents the fee payments each Commissioner received on a cash-basis to match the funding from the Consolidated Fund during the 2023/24 financial year. The salary for the Chair of the Commissioners is also included. The House of Commons provides for Commissioner pensions in a resolution.

Salary and fee payments to Commissioners in 2023/24 (Subject to audit)

Name	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
John Pullinger CB	90,560	80,916
Alex Attwood (From 1 February 2021 to 31 January 2024)	10,185	13,604
Dame Susan Bruce	13,729	9,859
Sarah Chambers	10,949	7,167
Roseanna Cunningham	963	5,104
Lord (Stephen) Gilbert	8,920	9,373
Carole Mills (From 1 January 2024)	1,391	0

Alasdair Morgan ⁷ (From 12 May 2014 to 30 September 2022)	138	4,945
Dr Katy Radford MBE	13,592	13,053
Sheila Ritchie (From 1 February 2024)	0	0
Chris Ruane	13,124	4,651
Professor Elan Closs Stephens DBE	5,100	12,373
Rob Vincent CBE (From 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2023)	10,747	7,778
Joan Walley ⁸ (From 1 November 2018 to 31 October 2022)	216	8,692

All figures shown above are inclusive of Employers' National Insurance to match funding from Consolidated Fund.

The figures shown reflect what was paid and not what was due for their time in office during 2023/24.

The remuneration for the independent adviser to the audit and risk committee, as set by the Remuneration and Human Resources Committee, is the same as the daily rate for Commissioners.

Our independent advisers, Paul Redfern and Sal Naseem received £6,616 and £3,485 respectively, for their roles in respect of 2023/24 (2022/23: Paul Redfern £3,488, Sal Naseem £5,373). Reasonable travel and subsistence expenses actually incurred are paid in accordance with our travel and subsistence policy. No pension arrangements are in force for these roles.

Business expenses: travel and accommodation (subject to audit)

Name	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
John Pullinger CB (Chair)	749	3,033
Alex Attwood (From 1 February 2021 to 31 January 2024)	5,122	4,338
Dame Susan Bruce	4,164	1,225

⁷ Comprises arrears from 2022-23

⁸ Comprises arrears from 2022-23

Sarah Chambers	213	588
Roseanna Cunningham	1,843	1,703
Lord (Stephen) Gilbert	268	776
Carole Mills (From 1 January 2024)	683	0
Alasdair Morgan (From 12 May 2014 to 30 September 2022)	0	1,511
Dr Katy Radford MBE	7,141	3,741
Sheila Ritchie (From 1 February 2024)	447	0
Chris Ruane	2,445	1,032
Professor Elan Closs Stephens DBE	135	990
Rob Vincent CBE (From 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2023)	1,368	1,362
Joan Walley (From 1 November 2018 to 31 October 2022)	0	1,219

Reimbursed business expenses are non-taxable and do not form part of any benefits in kind payment.

Chief Executive and Executive Team remuneration

During 2023/24 our Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, Shaun McNally, our Finance and Corporate Services Director, Kieran Rix and our Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance, Ailsa Irvine left the Commission. Shaun left the organisation in November 2023, Kieran left in April 2023 and Ailsa in December 2023.

David Moran was appointed to the role of Interim Finance Director in April 2023, and temporarily took on the role of Acting Accounting Officer in December, after Shaun's departure.

Rob Vincent, a former Commissioner, became the Interim Chief Executive Officer in December. On 4 March, Vijay Rangarajan was appointed as Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

The Remuneration and Human Resources Committee is responsible for advising the Board on the remuneration of the chief executive and agreeing the annual negotiating remit for staff pay awards (including the executive team). Details of the Committee's responsibilities and membership are in the governance report.

We are not part of the Civil Service and therefore not bound by the Civil Service pay guidance. However, Schedule 1 of PPERA requires that we shall have regard to the desirability of keeping staff terms and conditions of employment broadly in line with those of the Civil Service. The Remuneration and Human Resources Committee also takes account of wider economic considerations and the affordability of their recommendations.

Chief Executive and director remuneration is funded through the Supply Estimate and accounted for in the resource accounts.

The people covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended, although staff have the option to retire and draw pension from the age of 60 or 65 dependent on their particular pension scheme rules. Early termination with qualifying service, other than for misconduct, would normally result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

Remuneration (including salary, benefits in kind and pensions)

Single total figure or remuneration (Subject to audit)

	Salary £000s		Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)		Pension benefits ⁹ (to nearest £1000)		Total £000	
	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23 ¹⁰	2023/24	2022/23
Directors								
Vijay Rangarajan Chief Executive (From 4 March 2024)	10-15 (195-200 FYE)	N/A	200	N/A	136	N/A	145-150	N/A
Rob Vincent CBE Interim Chief Executive (From 1 December 2023 to 3 March 2024)	40-45 (130-135 FYE)	N/A	200	N/A	N/A	N/A	40-45	N/A
Shaun McNally¹¹ Chief Executive (From 1 April 2022 to 30 November 2023)	215-220 (170-175 FYE)	165-170	200	100	0	25	215-220	190-195
Louise Edwards Director of Regulation and Digital Transformation	105-110	100-105	200	100	46	38	150-155	140-145

⁹ The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increases exclude increases due to inflation or any increase or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.

¹⁰ The pension benefits of any members affected by the public service pensions remedy which were reported in 2022-23 on the basis of alpha membership for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 are reported in 2023-24 on the basis of PCSPS membership for the same period.

¹¹ Shaun McNally is not part of the Civil Service pension scheme therefore the data above is the Commission's contributions paid into the partnership pension. Shaun left the Electoral Commission on 30th November 2023 and received a compensation payment. Further details under Compensation on early retirement or for loss of office, page 114.

Binnie Goh	25-30	N/A	200	N/A	30	N/A	55-60	N/A
Director of Legal Services and Reform								
(From 1 January 2024)	(110-115 FYE)							
Ailsa Irvine	85-90	100-105	200	100	67	18	155-160	120-125
Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance								
(From 1 December 2003 to 31 December 2023)	(110-115 FYE)							
Jackie Killeen	20-25	N/A	200	N/A	22	N/A	40-45	N/A
Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance								
(From 23 January 2024)	(110-115 FYE)							
David Moran¹²	55-60	N/A	200	N/A	26	N/A	80-85	N/A
Interim Director of Finance and Corporate Services								
(From 24 April 2023)	(135-140 FYE)							
Kieran Rix¹³	90-95	100-105	200	100	60	16	150-155	115-120
Director of Finance and Corporate Services								
(From 1 March 2018 to 30 April 2023)	(100-105 FYE)							

¹² David Moran was also interim Accounting Officer from 1 December 2023 to 3 March 2024. For the period 24 April 2023 to 15 October 2023, David Moran was employed through an agency, with the total amount paid (including agency cost) for that period totalling £119k. The salary stated above is the amount received as an employee of the Electoral commission for the period 16 October 2023 to 31 March 2024.

¹³ Kieran Rix left the Electoral Commission on 30 April 2023 and received a compensation payment. Further details under Compensation on early retirement or for loss of office, page 114

Craig Westwood	105-110	100-105	200	100	58	23	165-170	130-135
Director of Communication, Policy and Research								

Salary

Salary includes gross salary, overtime, reserved rights to London weighting or London allowances, recruitment and retention allowances, severance pay and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation. This report is based on accrued payments made by the Electoral Commission and thus recorded in these accounts.

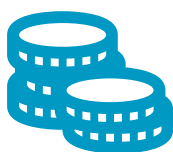
Benefits in kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the Commission and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument. Executive Team members' benefits in kind include Benenden Healthcare membership, for which we also make a payment to HMRC. The value of these benefits for each Executive Team member for 2023/24 was £153.60 (2022/23 was £142). All staff receive these benefits.

Instant thank you rewards

The Electoral Commission no longer pays bonuses based on a performance appraisal process. Instead, since 2020-21 employees below Executive Team level are eligible to be nominated for an 'instant thank you' reward of between £25 and £500.

Civil Service Pensions



Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. From 1 April 2015 a new pension scheme for civil servants was introduced – the Civil Servants and Others Pension Scheme or alpha, which provides benefits on a career average basis with a normal pension age equal to the member's State Pension Age (or 65 if higher). From that date all newly appointed civil servants and the majority of those already in service joined alpha. Prior to that date, civil servants participated in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). The PCSPS has four sections: three providing benefits on a final salary basis (classic, premium or classic plus) with a normal pension age of 60; and one providing benefits on a whole career basis (nuvos) with a normal pension age of 65.

These statutory arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions payable under classic, premium, classic plus, nuvos, and alpha are increased annually in line with Pensions Increase legislation. Existing members of the PCSPS who were within 10 years of their normal pension age on 1 April 2012 remained in the PCSPS after 1 April 2015. Those who were between 10 years and 13 years and five months from their normal pension age on 1 April 2012 were switched

into alpha sometime between 1 June 2015 and 1 February 2022. From 1 April 2022, all members were moved to the alpha scheme regardless of how near they were to their normal pension age. All members who switch to alpha have their PCSPS benefits 'banked', with those with earlier benefits in one of the final salary sections of the PCSPS having those benefits based on their final salary when they leave alpha. (The pension figures quoted for officials show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes.) Members joining from October 2002 may opt for either the appropriate defined benefit arrangement or a 'money purchase' stakeholder pension with an employer contribution (partnership pension account).

Employee contributions are salary-related and range between 4.6% and 8.05% for members of classic, premium, classic plus, nuvos, and alpha. Benefits in classic accrue at the rate of 1/80th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years initial pension is payable on retirement. For premium, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike classic, there is no automatic lump sum. Classic plus is essentially a hybrid with benefits for service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per classic and benefits for service from October 2002 worked out as in premium. In nuvos a member builds up a pension based on their pensionable earnings during their period of scheme membership. At the end of the scheme year (31 March) the member's earned pension account is credited with 2.3% of their pensionable earnings in that scheme year and the accrued pension is uprated in line with Pensions Increase legislation. Benefits in alpha build up in a similar way to nuvos, except that the accrual rate is 2.32%. In all cases members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the Finance Act 2004.

The partnership pension account is a stakeholder pension arrangement. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member) into a stakeholder pension product chosen by the employee from the appointed provider - Legal and General. The employee does not have to contribute, but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally-provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement £21,486).

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of classic, premium and classic plus, 65 for members of nuvos, and the higher of 65 or State Pension Age for members of alpha. (The pension figures quoted for officials show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes, but note that part of that pension may be payable from different ages).

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETV)

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies.

The figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the member has transferred to the Civil Service pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their buying additional pension benefits at their own cost. CETVs are worked out in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

The real increase in the value of the CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV that is funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

For 2023/24, employer's contributions of £2,545,415 were payable to the Schemes (2022/23; £2,166,278) at one of four rates in the range 26.6% to 30.3% (2022/23; 26.6% and 30.3%) of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The Scheme's Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. The contribution rates reflect benefits as they accrue, not the costs as they are actually incurred, and reflect past experience of the scheme.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £45,147 (2022/23; £25,576) were paid to an appointed stakeholder pension provider. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% of pensionable pay. Employers also match employee contributions up to 3% of pensionable pay. In addition, employer contributions of £1,495 being 0.5% of pensionable pay, were payable to the PCSPS to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill-health retirement of these employees.

Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the Statement of Financial Position date was nil. Contributions prepaid at that date were nil.

We did not pay any pension contributions to Commissioners during the period. However, we are required to pay pensions to certain former Commissioners of the Local

Government Commission for England (LGCE). The total provision for these costs has reduced to £9k at 31 March 2024 (£126k at 31 March 2023).

CETV figures are calculated using the guidance on discount rates for calculating unfunded public service pension contribution rates that was extant at 31 March 2024. HM Treasury published updated guidance on 27 April 2023; this guidance will be used in the calculation of 2023-24 CETV figures.

Pension information for directors (£000) (Subject to audit)

Directors	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/3/24 and related lump sum	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age	CETV at 31/3/24	Restated CETV at 31/3/23 ¹⁴	Real increase in CETV
Vijay Rangarajan Chief Executive	50 - 55 plus a lump sum of 130 - 135	5 - 7.5 plus a lump sum of 7.5 - 10	1,125	N/A	N/A
Rob Vincent CBE Interim Chief Executive	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Shaun McNally Chief Executive	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Louise Edwards Director of Regulation and Digital Transformation	25-30	2.5-5	336	272	26
Binnie Goh¹⁵ Director of Legal services and Reform	30 - 35 plus a lump sum of 75 - 80	0 - 2.5 plus a lump sum of 0 - 2.5	636	N/A	N/A

¹⁴ The pension benefits of any members affected by the public service pensions remedy which were reported in 2022-23 on the basis of **alpha** membership for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 are reported in 2023-24 on the basis of PCSPS membership for the same period.

¹⁵ Binnie Goh started working as a director from 1 January 2024, therefore only the pension data for the period 2023/24 is disclosed.

Ailsa Irvine					
Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance	40-45	2.5-5	672	590	46
Jackie Killeen					
Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance	40 - 45 plus a lump sum of 75 - 80	0 - 2.5 plus a lump sum of 2.5 - 5	846	N/A	N/A
David Moran					
Interim Director of Finance and Corporate Services & AO	0-5	0-2.5	24	-	20
Kieran Rix					
Director of Finance and Corporate Services	45-50	2.5-5	888	814	58
Craig Westwood					
Director of Communication, Policy and Research	30-35	2.5-5	617	525	39

Notes

- Shaun McNally is not part of the Civil Service pension scheme, therefore no data is available. The Commission pays a contribution into a partnership pension, this is noted in the Remuneration table of page 111
- CETV is the Cash Equivalent Transfer Value
- The accrued pension quoted in the table above is the pension the member is entitled to receive when he or she reaches 60 for 'Classic', 'Classic Plus' and 'Premium' pension schemes, 65 for the 'Nuvos' pension scheme, and at state pension age (or 65 if later) for the 'Alpha' pension scheme.

Compensation on early retirement or for loss of office (Subject to audit)

Kieran Rix left under severance terms on 30 April 2023. He received a compensation

payment of £46,648 and payment in lieu of notice of £33,490.

Shaun McNally left under severance terms on 30 November 2023. He received a compensation payment of £51,528 and payment in lieu of notice of £43,472.

Fair pay disclosure (to nearest £1000) (Subject to audit)

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid director in their organisation and the lower quartile, median and upper quartile remuneration of the organisation's workforce. No bonuses are payable to any director or other staff in the Commission.

	2023/24	2022/23	Changes %
Highest paid director remuneration	195-200	165-170	18.5%
Average percentage change from the previous financial year of salary and allowances (all other staff)			5.7%
Upper quartile remuneration (all other staff)	60	53	14.0%
Median remuneration (all other staff)	47	43	9.2%
Lower quartile remuneration (all other staff)	39	34	15.3%
Ratio (upper quartile)	3.3	3.2	
Ratio (median)	4.2	3.9	
Ratio (lower quartile)	5.0	4.9	

Pay multiples

The banded remuneration of the highest-paid director in the financial year 2023/24 was £195k-200k (2022/23, £165k-170k). This was 4.2 (2022/23 3.9) times the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £47k (2022/23, £43k).

In 2023/24 and 2022/23, no employee received remuneration in excess of that of the highest-paid director. Remuneration rates for staff other than the highest paid director (based on full-time equivalent rates) ranged from £25-30k to £175-180k (2022/23: £25-30k to £105-110k).

Total remuneration includes salary and benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

The remuneration of the highest paid director was increased by 18.5% during 2023/24, which was consistent with all other staff apart from those on the lowest salary. All staff are now paid £15.00 per hour as a minimum, this was applied to the lowest paid staff. The remuneration report shows highest paid director information.

Staff report

Staff composition

The number of directors employed during the period was six, of which two was a fixed term appointment (three of whom were male and three female).

The number of Commissioners and staff in post and appointed during the year was as follows:

	Female	Male	Totals
Chair and Board*	7	3	10
Directors/Heads (permanent staff)	16	10	26
Directors/Heads (temporary/fixed term staff)	0	1	1
Other staff (permanent)	88	64	152
Other staff (temporary/fixed term)	17	11	28
Contract/Agency	2	7	9
Total	130	96	226

*includes an independent adviser for equality, diversity and inclusion

Staff costs (to nearest £000) (Subject to audit)

	Permanently employed staff	Others	2023/24 Total	2022/23 Total
Wages and salaries	10,149	907	11,056	8,808
Social security costs	1,443	-	1,443	1,037
Other pension costs	2,545	-	2,545	2,192
Total net costs*	14,137	907	15,044	12,037

*In 2023/24 no additional staff costs were capitalised (In 2022/23 £166k additional staff costs capitalised).

Average number of persons employed (Subject to audit)

During 2023/24, the average number of full-time equivalent persons (FTE) employed was 190 (2022/23: 169). In addition, there was an average of 7 FTE (2022/23: 11) temporary staff covering established posts or staff working on projects outside the establishment.

	2023/24	2022/23
Full time equivalent - Permanently employed staff	190	169
Temporary staff	7	11
Total	197	180

Staff turnover

Our staff turnover for 2023/24 was 13.8% (2022/23, 21%) (unaudited). This is based on our average headcount and leavers for that period.

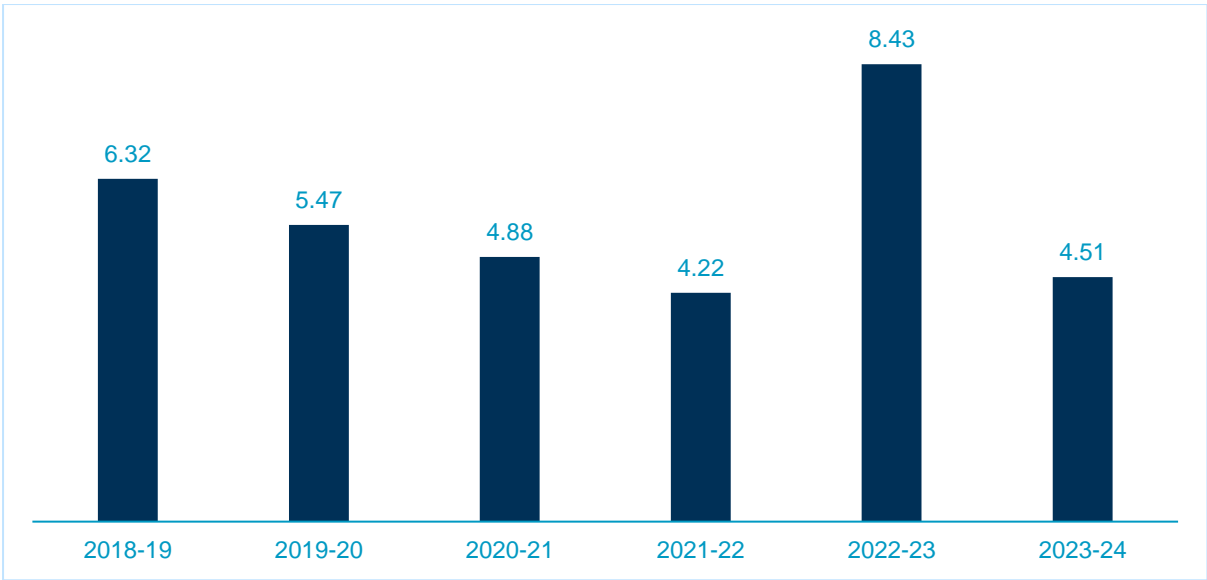
Sickness absence

In 2023/24, the average number of day's sickness absence was 4.51 per person compared to 8.43 per employee in the previous year.

The human resources function will continue to focus on supporting managers in the management of both short and long-term absence in 2024/25, including ensuring all staff have an effective return to work discussion with their line manager upon return, and

effective monitoring and support during long-term absence. In addition, managers are being provided with regular reports on absence levels within their teams to enable them to intervene at the earliest opportunity to support employee health and wellbeing. We are committed to the health and wellbeing of all staff and promote a balanced lifestyle, including a corporate membership with Benenden Healthcare. There is a comprehensive sickness absence policy and guidance for managers on dealing with staff absence.

Average sickness absence rate per employee



Staff policies

We applied staff policies consistently during the year when we considered applications for employment and recruiting staff. We ask all applicants to provide equality monitoring data, which is withheld from the panel, and we therefore shortlist candidates based on their skills and experience relevant to the role.

Staff who declare a disability or become disabled in line with the definition of the Equality Act 2010, are given the opportunity to request reasonable adjustments should they be required. Occupational Health may be consulted to make recommendations and health and safety risk assessments are carried out. Flexible working will also be considered as part of reasonable adjustments. Training is provided, as required, to all staff in the required format.

Expenditure on consultancy

Expenditure on consultancy was £495k for 2023/24 (2022/23: £361k).

Off-payroll engagements

There were 5 off-payroll engagements during the financial year 2023/24 (2022/23: 1). These were for short-term specialist roles within the Commission. All roles were paid over £245 per day.

Temporary off-payroll worker engagements as at 31 March 2024	Number
Existing engagements as of 31 March 2024	5
Of which...	
Have existed for less than one year at time of reporting.	4
Have existed for between one and two years at time of reporting.	1
Have existed for between two and three years at time of reporting.	0
Have existed for between three and four years at time of reporting.	0
Have existed for four or more years at time of reporting.	0

All temporary off-payroll workers engaged at any point during the year ended 31 March 2024.	Number
Off-payroll workers engaged during the year ended 31 March 2024	5
Of which...	
Determined as in-scope of IR35	0
Determined as out-of-scope of IR35	5
Engagements reassessed for compliance or assurance purposes during the year	0
Of which: no. of engagements that saw a change to IR35 status following review	0
Engagements where the status was disputed under provisions in the off-payroll legislation	0
Of which: no. of engagements that saw a change to IR35 status following review.	0

In line with the current Declaration of Interests policy for special advisers, all special advisers have declared any relevant interests or confirmed they do not consider they have any relevant interests. The Accounting Officer has considered these returns and there are no relevant interests to be published.

All off-payroll workers are assessed using HMRC’s “Check Employment Status for Tax” before any contract is authorised.

Exit packages (Subject to audit)

During 2023/24 three employees left under severance terms. The table below shows the payments made.

Exit package cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies		Number of other departures agreed		Total number of exit packages by cost band	
	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23
<£10,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£10,000 - £25,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£25,000 - £50,000	-	-	1	-	1	-
£50,000 - £100,000	-	-	2	-	2	-
£100,000 - £150,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£150,000 - £200,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total number of exit packages	-	-	3	-	3	-
Total cost /£	-	-	203,508	-	203,508	-

Redundancy and other departure costs are paid in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme, a statutory scheme made under the Superannuation Act 1972, or by negotiation of settlement agreements.

There was one ill-health retirement in 2023/24 resulting in additional accrued superannuation liabilities of £27k (2022/23 nil). Ill health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme.

Parliamentary accountability and audit report

Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply (SOPS)

In addition to the primary statements prepared under IFRS, the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRM) requires the Electoral Commission to prepare a Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply (SOPS) and supporting notes.

The SOPS and related notes are subject to audit, as detailed in the Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Houses of Parliament. The SOPS is a key accountability statement that shows, in detail, how an entity has spent against their Supply Estimate. Supply is the monetary provision (for resource and capital purposes) and cash (drawn primarily from the Consolidated fund), that Parliament gives statutory authority for entities to utilise. The Estimate details supply and is voted on by Parliament at the start of the financial year.

Should an entity exceed the limits set by their Supply Estimate, called control limits, their accounts will receive a qualified opinion.

The format of the SOPS mirrors the Supply Estimates, published on gov.uk, to enable comparability between what Parliament approves and the final outturn.

The SOPS contain a summary table, detailing performance against the control limits that Parliament have voted on, cash spent (budgets are compiled on an accruals basis and so outturn won't exactly tie to cash spent) and administration.

The supporting notes detail the following: Outturn by Estimate line, providing a more detailed breakdown (note 1); a reconciliation of outturn to net operating expenditure in the SOCNE, to tie the SOPS to the financial statements (note 2); a reconciliation of outturn to net cash requirement (note 3); and, an analysis of income payable to the Consolidated Fund (note 4).

The SOPS and Estimates are compiled against the budgeting framework, which is similar to, but different to, IFRS. An understanding of the budgeting framework and an explanation of the key terms is provided on page 50 in the financial review section of the performance report. Further information on the Public Spending Framework and the reasons why budgeting rules are different to IFRS can also be found in chapter 1 of the Consolidated Budgeting Guidance, available on gov.uk.

The SOPS provides a detailed view of financial performance, in a form that is voted on and recognised by Parliament. The financial review, in the Performance Report, provides a summarised discussion of outturn against estimate and functions as an introduction to the SOPS disclosures.

The Electoral Commission implemented International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS 16) within its 2022/23 financial statements, with effect from 1 April 2022. During the 2023/24 financial year, the Commission took on two new leases. It did not correctly factor in the budget requirements for the recognition of the Right of Use of these assets within its 2023/24 Main and Supplementary Estimates. Doing so within the Outturns against Estimate has led to an overspend within the Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (C-DEL) and an excess vote of £422,000, which is reflected in the Statement of Parliamentary Spend (SoPS).

Management acknowledges this is a budgeting error and has implemented measures to prevent its recurrence. The decision to terminate two leases and start two new leases was to ensure value for money and secure suitable facilities to conduct its work.

The Electoral Commission will seek parliamentary approval by way of an Excess Vote in the next Supply and Appropriation Act.

Summary table 2023/24

All figures presented in £000s

Type of Spend	SoPS note	Outturn			Estimate			Outturn Vs Estimate, savings/ (excess)		Prior year outturn Total 2022/23
		Voted	Non-Voted	Total	Voted	Non-Voted	Total	Voted	Total	
Departmental Expenditure Limit										
- Resource	1.1	29,148	180	29,328	30,669	225	30,894	1,521	1,566	25,312
- Capital	1.2	1,877	-	1,877	1,455	-	1,455	(422)	(422)	812
Total		31,025	180	31,205	32,124	225	32,349	1,099	1,144	26,124
Annually Managed Expenditure										
- Resource	1.1	(82)	-	(82)	50	-	50	132	132	(161)
- Capital	1.2	91	-	91	100	-	100	9	9	-
Total		9	-	9	150	-	150	141	141	(161)
Total Budget										
- Resource	1.1	29,066	180	29,246	30,719	225	30,944	1,653	1,698	25,151
- Capital	1.2	1,968	-	1,968	1,555	-	1,555	(413)	(413)	812
Total Budget Expenditure		31,034	180	31,214	32,274	225	32,499	1,240	1,285	25,963

All operating income and expenditure in budgets are classified as programme

Figures in the areas outlined in thick line cover the voted control limits voted by Parliament. Refer to the Supply Estimates guidance manual available on gov.uk, for the details on the control limits voted by Parliament.

Our estimate values are driven by the election activity throughout the year and therefore vary year-on-year. Note 2 of the accounts shows an analysis of costs for our key deliverables.

Net Cash Requirement 2023/24

All figures presented in £000s

Item	SoPS note	Outturn	Estimate	Outturn VS Estimate, saving/ (excess)	Prior Year Outturn total, 2022/23
Net Cash Requirement	3	28,798	31,197	2,399	22,489

Explanations of variances between estimate and outturn are in the performance report.

Notes to the Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply 2023/24 (£000s)

SoPS 1. Outturn detail, by Estimate Line

SoPS1.1 Analysis of resource outturn by Estimate line

Type of Spend [Resource]	Resource Outturn Programme			Estimates			Outturn vs Estimate, saving/(excess)	Prior year outturn Total 2022/23
	Gross	Income	Net Total	Total				
Spending in Departmental Expenditure Limit [DEL]								
Voted expenditure:								
A. Electoral Commission	23,689	(3,470)	20,219	21,373			1,154	17,762
B. The Elections Bill	6,944	-	6,944	7,296			352	5,381
C. Policy Development Grants	1,985		1,985	2,000			15	1,991
Non-voted expenditure								
D. Commissioners fees	180	-	180	225			45	178
Total spending in DEL	32,798	(3,470)	29,328	30,894			1,566	25,312

Voted expenditure:								
E. Provision created or utilised in the year	(82)	-	(82)	50			132	(161)
Total spending in AME	(82)	-	(82)	50			132	(161)
Total resource	32,716	(3,470)	29,246	30,944			1,698	25,151

SoPS 1.2 Analysis of net capital outturn by Estimate Line

Type of Spend [Capital]	Outturn			Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate, saving/(excess)	Prior year outturn Total 2022/23
	Gross	Income	Net Total	Net Total		
Spending in Departmental Expenditure Limit [DEL]						
Voted:						
A. Electoral Commission	1,877	-	1,877	1,455	(422)	812
Total spending in DEL	1,877	-	1,877	1,455	(422)	812
Spending in Annually Managed Expenditure [AME]						
Voted expenditure:						
C. Provisions created or utilised in the year	91	-	91	100	9	-
Total spending in AME	91	-	91	100	9	-
Total capital	1,968	-	1,968	1,555	(413)	812

SoPS 2. Reconciliation of outturn to net operating expenditure

Item	Reference	Outturn total	Prior year outturn Total, 2022/23
Total Resource outturn	SOPS 1.1	29,246	25,151
Less: Income payable to the Consolidated Fund	SOPS 4	-	
Net Expenditure in the Statement Comprehensive Net Expenditure	SOCNE	29,246	25,151

As noted in the introduction to the SOPS above, outturn and the Estimates are compiled against the budgeting framework, which is similar to, but different from, IFRS. Therefore, this reconciliation bridges the resource outturn to net operating expenditure, linking the SOPS to the financial statements.

SoPS 3. Reconciliation of net resource outturn to net cash requirement

Item	Reference	Outturn total	Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate, savings/ (excess)
Total Resource outturn	SOPS 1.1	29,246	30,944	1,698
Total Capital outturn	SOPS 1.2	1,968	1,555	(413)
<i>Adjustments to remove non-cash items:</i>				
Depreciation/amortisation	3	(1,064)	(1,836)	(772)
Auditors' remuneration	3	(100)	(50)	50
New provisions and adjustments to previous periods	11	(22)	(50)	(28)
Right of use asset addition	7	(665)	-	665
<i>Adjustments to reflect movements in working balances:</i>				
Increase/(decrease) in receivables	8	127	-	(127)
(Increase)/decrease in payables	10	(1,089)	859	1,948
Use of provision	11	14	-	(14)
Repayment of capital on Leases	7	563	0	(563)
Total		28,978	31,422	2,444
Removal of non-voted budget items:				
Consolidated Fund Standing Services	SOPS 1.1	(180)	(225)	(45)
Total		(180)	(225)	(45)
Net cash requirement		28,798	31,197	2,399

As noted in the introduction to the SOPS above, outturn and the Estimates are compiled against the budgeting framework, not on a cash basis. Therefore, this reconciliation bridges the resource and capital outturn to the net cash requirement.

SoPS 4. Amounts of income to the Consolidated Fund

The amounts shown in the table below are amounts collected by the Commission where it was acting as agent for the Consolidated Fund rather than as principal. The amounts collected are for fines and penalties from political campaigners. Full details can be seen in the Powers and Sanctions report on page 55 of the Performance Report.

Item	Outturn total	Prior year Outturn Total 2022/23
Fines and penalties	27	16
<hr/> Amount payable to the Consolidated Fund <hr/>	27	16
Balance held at the start of the year	5	-
Payments into the Consolidated Fund	(22)	(11)
Balance held on trust at the end of year	10	5

Notes

All receipts for fines and penalties received by 31 March 2024 were surrendered to the Consolidated Fund, as required by law.

Parliamentary Accountability Disclosures

Losses and special payments (subject to audit)

There were no special payments which require disclosure for the Electoral Commission for 2023/24 (2022/23 £0).

There were no single losses over £300,000 during 2023/24. (2022/23 £1.8m).

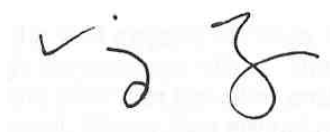
Losses Statement (£'000)	2023/24	2022/23
Total number of losses	NIL	26
Total value of losses (£000)	NIL	1,823
Cash losses	NIL	44
Fruitless payments PFO project	NIL	1,779

*The fruitless payments loss was due to of unsuccessful delivery of the current Political Finance Online project during 2022-23.

Remote Contingent Liabilities (subject to audit)

In addition to contingent liabilities disclosed in the financial statements, the Commission also reports liabilities for which the likelihood of the transfer of economic benefit in settlement is remote but are still in scope of IAS37.

There were no remote contingent liabilities to report for Parliamentary reporting and accountability purposes in 2023/24 (2022/23 £0).



Vijay Rangarajan
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
25th July 2024

The Certificate of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Houses of Parliament, Scottish Parliament and Senedd

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Electoral Commission for the year ended 31 March 2024 under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

The financial statements comprise the Electoral Commission's

- Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2024;
- Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year then ended; and
- the related notes including the significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the financial statements is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards.

In my opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Electoral Commission's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and its net expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and HM Treasury directions issued thereunder.

Qualified opinion on regularity

In my opinion, except for the excess capital expenditure described in the basis for qualified opinion paragraph below, in all material respects:

- the Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply properly presents the outturn against voted Parliamentary control totals for the year ended 31 March 2024 and shows that those totals have not been exceeded; and
- the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis for qualified opinion on regularity

Parliament authorised a Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit for the Electoral Commission of £1.455 million. Against this limit, the Electoral Commission incurred an outturn of £1.877 million, exceeding the authorised limit by £0.422 million due to the recognition of right of use assets, as shown in the Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply.

Further details can be found in my report.

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom (2022). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate.

Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2019. I am independent of the Electoral Commission in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK. My staff and I have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the Electoral Commission's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Electoral Commission's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

The going concern basis of accounting for the Electoral Commission is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual, which requires entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it is anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

Other Information

The other information comprises information included in the Annual Report, but does not include the financial statements and my auditor's certificate and report thereon. The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my certificate, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion the part of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with HM Treasury directions issued under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit have been properly prepared in accordance with HM Treasury directions made under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000; and
- the information given in the Performance and Accountability Reports for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Electoral Commission and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance and Accountability Reports.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the Electoral Commission or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or

- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual have not been made or parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited is not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for:

- maintaining proper accounting records;
- providing the C&AG with access to all information of which management is aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
- providing the C&AG with additional information and explanations needed for his audit;
- providing the C&AG with unrestricted access to persons within the Electoral Commission from whom the auditor determines it necessary to obtain audit evidence;
- ensuring such internal controls are in place as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view in accordance with HM Treasury directions issued under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000;
- preparing the annual report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, in accordance with HM Treasury directions issued under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000; and
- assessing the Electoral Commission's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by the Electoral Commission will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations including fraud

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud. The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud is detailed below.

Identifying and assessing potential risks related to non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, I:

- considered the nature of the sector, control environment and operational performance including the design of the Electoral Commission's accounting policies;
- inquired of management, the Electoral Commission's head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to the Electoral Commission's policies and procedures on:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations including the Electoral Commission's controls relating to the Electoral Commission's compliance with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, and Managing Public Money;
- inquired of management, the Electoral Commission's head of internal audit and those charged with governance whether:

- they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- they had knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud; and
- discussed with the engagement team regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, I considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the Electoral Commission for fraud and identified the greatest potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, posting of unusual journals, complex transactions, and bias in management estimates. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), I am required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

I obtained an understanding of the Electoral Commission's framework of authority and other legal and regulatory frameworks in which the Electoral Commission operates. I focused on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the Electoral Commission. The key laws and regulations I considered in this context included the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, Managing Public Money, the Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act 2023, employment law, pension legislation and tax legislation.

Audit response to identified risk

To respond to the identified risks resulting from the above procedures:

- I reviewed the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described above as having direct effect on the financial statements;
- I enquired of management, the Audit and Risk Committee and in-house legal counsel concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- I reviewed minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Board and internal audit reports; and
- I addressed the risk of fraud through management override of controls by testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements on estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential risks of fraud to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my certificate.

Other auditor's responsibilities

I am required to obtain appropriate evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply properly presents the outturn against voted Parliamentary control totals and that those totals have not been exceeded. The voted Parliamentary control totals are Departmental Expenditure Limits (Resource and Capital), Annually Managed Expenditure (Resource and Capital), Non-Budget (Resource) and Net Cash Requirement.

I am required to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control I identify during my audit.

Gareth Davies

Date: 26th July 2024

Comptroller and Auditor General

National Audit Office
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road
Victoria
London
SW1W 9SP

The Report of The Comptroller and Auditor General to The Houses of Parliament, Scottish Parliament and Senedd

Introduction

The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK. The Electoral Commission is accountable to the UK Parliament, the Scottish parliament and the Senedd and is funded by each of these parliaments for the work undertaken on elections under their devolved or reserved powers. Electoral law is not devolved in Northern Ireland and remains reserved to the UK Parliament.

The net expenditure of the Electoral Commission is authorised by the annual Supply and Appropriation Acts of Parliament and their associated Supply Estimates. These Acts set a series of expenditure limits on the spending of government departments and other entities in receipt of supply funding, in addition to a net cash requirement limit. Expenditure beyond any of these limits is considered a breach of a control total and results in an 'Excess Vote'. Such expenditure potentially undermines parliamentary control over public spending. Where these limits are breached, I qualify my regularity opinion on the financial statements.

Parliament authorised a Capital Departmental Expenditure (CDEL) limit of £1.455 million for the Electoral Commission in 2023-24. This limit means that the Electoral Commission was required to incur CDEL expenditure of no more than £1.455 million. However, the outturn against the CDEL limit was £1.877 million, and the authorised limit was therefore breached by £0.422 million. I have therefore qualified my regularity opinion on the Electoral Commission's financial statements in this respect.

Explanation for qualified audit opinion in respect of Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Electoral Commission operates from offices in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London. During 2023-24, the Electoral Commission entered into two lease agreements for office space in Belfast and Cardiff. In accordance with International Financial Reporting Standard 16 Leases, the Electoral Commission has recognised within its Statement of Financial Position, right of use assets totalling £0.665 million and the associated lease liabilities at the date the lease agreements became effective. The Electoral Commission has also recognised dilapidations provisions amounting to £0.091 million for the estimated

obligation to reinstate both offices at the end of the lease agreements, and has capitalised these provisions as a further addition to the right of use assets.

Under the Consolidated Budgeting Guidance issued by HM Treasury, the initial recognition of a right of use asset at the start of a lease is classified as CDEL and the capitalised dilapidation provision is classified as Capital Annually Managed Expenditure (CAME).

Government departments and other entities in receipt of supply funding, such as the Electoral Commission, prepare and agree two Supply Estimates during the year, the Main Estimate in or around May each year and the Supplementary Estimate before the year-end, in or around February each year. The Supply Estimates for the Electoral Commission are subject to scrutiny by the Llywydd's Committee of the Senedd and the Scottish Parliament, in addition to being approved by the Speaker's Committee before presentation to Parliament. The Electoral Commission failed to account for the budgetary impact of the new leases appropriately in either its Main or Supplementary Estimates and sought a £0.550 million reduction of its 2023-24 CDEL budget in the Supplementary Estimate related to re-profiling of other capital expenditure. As a result, the final authorised CDEL limit for 2023-24 was too low for the activity committed. This breach causes an Excess Vote from HM Treasury and leads to a qualification of my audit opinion on regularity.

Gareth Davies

Date 26th July 2024

Comptroller and Auditor General

National Audit Office
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road
Victoria
London
SW1W 9SP

The financial statements



Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

For the year ended 31 March 2024	Note	2023/24	2022/23
		£000	£000
Operating income – Scottish Government	4	(1,997)	(2,047)
Operating income - Senedd	4	(1,449)	(1,512)
Other operating income	4	(24)	(21)
Total operating income		(3,470)	(3,580)
Staff costs	3	15,044	12,037
Purchase of Goods and Services	3	14,484	11,559
Depreciation and amortisation charges	3	1,064	1,105
Impairment of assets	3	-	1,779
Provision Expense	3	(95)	36
Other operating expenditure	3.1	1,985	1,991
Total operating expenditure		32,482	28,507
Net operating expenditure		29,012	24,927
Commissioners' fees		180	178
Finance Costs for leases		54	46
Net expenditure for the year		29,246	25,151
Other comprehensive net expenditure			
Items which will not be reclassified to net operating expenditure:			
Actuarial gain/loss on pension scheme liabilities	11	-	(22)
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		29,246	25,129

The 'Notes to the Resource Accounts' on pages 156 to 158 form part of these accounts.

Statement of financial position

As at 31 March 2024	Note	31 March 2024 £000	31 March 2023 £000
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	5	1,426	558
Intangible assets	6	499	601
Right of Use Assets	7	4,522	4,384
Total non-current assets		<u>6,447</u>	<u>5,543</u>
Current assets:			
Trade and other receivables	8	934	803
Cash and cash equivalents	9	84	9
Total current assets		<u>1,018</u>	<u>812</u>
Total assets		<u>7,465</u>	<u>6,355</u>
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10	(4,123)	(2,953)
Provisions	11	-	(64)
Lease Liabilities	7	(606)	(430)
Total current liabilities		<u>(4,729)</u>	<u>(3,447)</u>
Total assets less total current liabilities		<u>2,736</u>	<u>2,908</u>
Non-current liabilities			
Lease Liabilities	7	(3,742)	(3,817)
Provisions	11	(764)	(692)
Other payables	10	-	(1)
Total non-current liabilities		<u>(4,506)</u>	<u>(4,510)</u>
Total Assets less liabilities		<u>(1,770)</u>	<u>(1,602)</u>
Taxpayers' equity			
General fund		(1,770)	(1,602)
Total taxpayers' equity		<u>(1,770)</u>	<u>(1,602)</u>



Vijay Rangarajan
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer 25th July 2024

The 'Notes to the Resource Accounts' on pages 159 to 166 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Cash Flows

As at 31 March 2024	2023/24	2022/23
	£000	£000
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net operating expenditure	(29,012)	(24,927)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	3	2,863
Commissioners' Fees	(180)	(178)
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	8	72
Increase in trade payables	10	498
Less items reclassified as financing activities	(3,474)	(3,480)
<i>Less movements in receivables and payables relating to items not passing through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure</i>	(82)	602
Use of provisions	11	(14)
Net cash outflow from operating activities	(30,655)	(24,564)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	5	(114)
Purchase of intangible assets	6	(698)
Movement in Capital Accruals	27	(159)
Net cash outflow from investing activities	(1,185)	(971)
Cash flows from financing activities		
From the Consolidated Fund (Supply) - current year	28,873	21,880
Repayment of principal on leases	(563)	(567)
Interest payable on finance leases	(54)	(46)
From the Consolidated Fund (Non-Supply)	180	178
From Devolved Administrations	3,474	3,480
Net cash inflow from financing activities	31,910	24,925
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period before adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund	70	(610)
Fines and penalties received on behalf of the Consolidated Fund	27	11
Payments of amounts to the Consolidated Fund	(22)	(11)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period after adjustment for receipts and payments to the Consolidated Fund	75	(610)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	9	619
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	84	9

The 'Notes to the Resource Accounts' on pages 156 to 166 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity

Financial year ended 31 March 2024	Note	General Fund £000
Balance at 1 April 2022		755
Net Parliamentary Funding – drawn down		21,880
Net Parliamentary Funding – deemed		619
Consolidated Fund Standing Services (non-supply) Current Year		178
Supply Payable adjustment	10	(9)
Comprehensive net Expenditure for the Year	SoCNE*	(25,129)
Non-Cash Adjustments:		
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration	3	104
Balance at 31 March 2023		<u>(1,602)</u>
Net Parliamentary Funding – drawn down		28,873
Net Parliamentary Funding – deemed	10	9
Consolidated Fund Standing Services (non-supply) Current Year	SoCNE*	180
Supply Payable adjustment	10	(84)
Comprehensive net Expenditure for the Year	SoCNE	(29,246)
Non-Cash Adjustments:		
Non-cash charges – auditor's remuneration	3	100
Balance at 31 March 2024		<u>(1,770)</u>

The 'Notes to the Resource Accounts' on pages 156 to 164 form part of these accounts.

* Commissioners' fees

Notes to the Resource Accounts

1. Accounting policies, key accounting estimates and judgements

1.1. Statement of accounting policies

The statements are prepared in accordance with the 2023/24 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by HM Treasury.

The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Accounting Standards as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Electoral Commission for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected.

The particular policies adopted by the Electoral Commission are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

1.2 Basis of preparation

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, except as otherwise set out in the accounting policies. Figures are presented in pounds sterling and are rounded to the nearest £1,000.

They are prepared in accordance with an Accounts Direction given by HM Treasury in accordance with Paragraph 17(2) of Schedule 1 to the Political Parties, Elections and Referendum Act 2000.

1.3. Issued accounting statements not yet effective

There is one accounting standard issued but not yet effective:

- IFRS17 (Insurance Contracts)

IFRS17 (effective in the FReM 2025-26) identifies insurance contracts those contracts under which the entity accepts significant insurance risk from another party. The Commission does currently not hold any such contracts and it is not anticipated that it will be affected by the implementation of this standard.

Accounting policies for expenditure

1.4 Programme expenditure

We have produced these Accounts with sufficient detail to provide a true and fair view of our operations.

For budgeting purposes, we distinguish between our core operating costs and event related activities. In these accounts, we have reported the core running costs as expenditure (note 3) and we have reported event related activities as other operating costs (note 3.1).

The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure includes both costs incurred and any associated operating income.

1.5 Staff costs

Staff costs include wages and salaries, social security costs and pension costs. All short-term staff costs payable at the year-end, which will be paid within one year from the date of reporting, are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. These include any accrued leave entitlements.

1.6 Pensions

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). PCSPS is a multi-employer defined benefit scheme and it is not possible to identify the Commission's share of the assets and liabilities, it is therefore accounted for as a defined contribution scheme with payments recognised in the period they fall due.

Refer to note 11.1 for the accounting treatment of the pension for ex-employees of the Local Government Commission for England due to the transfer of its functions to the Electoral Commission on 1 April 2002 and the incorporation of its assets and liabilities as at that date.

1.8 Research and development

Expenditure on research is charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure in the year in which it is incurred. Development expenditure is also recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure when incurred unless it meets the specific criteria for capitalisation as per IFRS standards.

1.9 Grants payable

Grants payable are recorded as expenditure in the period that the underlying event or activity giving entitlement to the grant occurs. The only grant we currently pay is the Policy Development Grant which is set out in note 3.1.

1.10 Value Added Tax (VAT)

The work carried out by the Electoral Commission is performed under statute and outside the scope of output VAT. Input VAT is charged to the relevant expenditure category, or if appropriate capitalised with additions to non-current assets. Income and expenditure are reported inclusive of VAT.

Accounting policies for income

1.11 Income

The Scottish and Welsh Governments provide funding to the Commission for costs incurred in relation to devolved elections and referendums in Scotland and Wales. This funding is considered to be analogous to a government grant under IAS 20 as the Commission has an entitlement to income where it has incurred costs in the delivery of those objectives. Cash is drawn down against a budget representing forecast expenditure throughout the year.

The Commission recognises the funding received as income in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to the extent that it has financed the Commission's direct expenditure and apportioned indirect expenditure as agreed within the Statement of Funding Principles. Where the amount of cash drawn down exceeds the expenditure this difference is recognised in the Statement of Financial Position as deferred income.

Operating income does not include income collected for fines and penalties from political parties, as these are fully payable to the Consolidated Fund on receipt.

Accounting policies for assets and liabilities

1.12 Property, plant and equipment and intangible assets

Expenditure of £1,000 or more on property, plant and equipment or intangible assets is capitalised where it is expected to bring benefit over future years. On initial recognition, assets are measured at cost and include all costs directly attributable to bringing them into working condition.

All non-current assets are reviewed annually for impairment and are carried at depreciated historic cost. Property, plant and equipment is depreciated, and intangible assets amortised, on a straight-line basis over their useful lives.

Assets under construction are capitalised when they can be available for use and will generate future economic benefits.

1.13 Depreciation and amortisation

Buildings, plant and machinery are stated at their cost value. All non-property operational assets are valued based on depreciated historic cost as a proxy for fair value. This is

because these are relatively short-life or low-value assets whose values do not fluctuate significantly over the period they are in use.

An intangible asset is an asset that is not physical in nature. In The Electoral Commission, intangible assets consist of licences for the rights to use software or the costs of developing our own software. Intangible assets are amortised on a straight-line basis over their useful economic life.

Asset lives are:

Leasehold Property/Improvement	10
Office Equipment	5
IT Hardware	3
Fixtures and fittings*	10
Intangibles (information technology, software licenses & websites)	3
In-house intangibles	10

*The exception is office chairs that are depreciated over 3 years.

Software licenses

When we purchase perpetual software licenses that are owned outright, the licenses are recognised as an intangible asset at the point the licenses are delivered and we can obtain benefit from them.

Internally developed software

When we develop our own software, an intangible asset is recognised in line with IAS 38 (Intangible Assets) when we can demonstrate:

- It is technically feasible to complete the software and it available for use
- it will be available for use and will generate future economic benefits; and
- the costs of the development can be measured reliably

Research costs associated with development projects are expensed as incurred; this includes any market engagement and analysis activities and any related procurement or project management costs associated with the research phase.

Cloud computing services

When we make payments in respect of the use of cloud computing services purchased from a third-party service, then these are not capitalised as we have no legal title to, or rights to control of, the underlying assets associated with these services. This includes associated implementation costs, such as customisation, configuration or training services, which enable us to benefit from the cloud computing service.

1.14 Leases

IFRS 16 requires an entity to recognise an asset in the Statement of Financial Position relating to contracts which are, or contain, a lease of an identified asset, such as property, vehicles or equipment. A corresponding lease liability is recognised at the same time, measured using the present value of the lease payments not yet paid.

Right of use assets/ lease liability:

Initial recognition:

Where a lease has been identified, the Electoral Commission recognises a right-of-use asset and corresponding lease liability, based on the present value of future cash flows for each lease over the applicable lease term. Adjustment is made to the right of use asset for prepayments. Dilapidations are not part of the right of use assets that were recognised at the date of implementation at 1 April 2022, however under IFRS16, dilapidations on new leases should be capitalised into the right of use asset.

The lease payments for short term leases, those leases under 1 year, and leases for which the underlying asset is of low value are expensed. The Electoral Commission has applied a threshold of £5,000 for low-value assets.

Where the interest rate in a lease cannot be readily determined, the Electoral Commission calculates the liability using the HM Treasury discount rates promulgated in the PES papers as the incremental borrowing rate. For leases that commence or are remeasured in 2023-24 this rate is 4.72%. The Electoral Commission does not apply IFRS 16 to leases of Intangible assets and recognises these in accordance with IAS 38 where appropriate.

Subsequent measurement:

As permitted by the FReM, right-of-use assets are subsequently measured using the cost model as a proxy for the measurement of the value in use. This is because lease terms require lease payments to be updated for market conditions, for example, rent reviews for leased properties.

We currently have our four property leases, that are valued at cost, 3 Bunhill Row London, James William House Cardiff, City Chambers Edinburgh and 49 Queen's Square Belfast. Our property leases are for 10 years with break agreements at the mid-way point. We assume that our leases will continue for the full term of the lease. The lease liabilities unwind over the lease term as payments are made and finance costs released. See note 7.

There were no remeasurements of continuing leases during 2023/24.

1.15 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise current balances held at the Government Banking Service.

1.16 Financial instruments

Financial assets

Trade and other receivables are recognised under IFRS 9. They generally have 30-day terms and are recognised and carried at original invoice amount less an allowance for any uncollectible amounts based upon an assessment of expected credit loss over the lifetime of the debt. At 31 March 2024, no provision for credit losses is required.

Financial liabilities

We initially recognise trade and other payables at cost, where the time value of money is material, we subsequently measure payables at amortised cost.

As our cash requirements are met through the estimates process financial instruments are of less importance and less risk than in a non-public sector body of a similar size.

We do not have powers to borrow or invest surplus funds. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts for non-financial items in line with our expected purchase and usage requirements; therefore we are exposed to minimal credit, liquidity or market risk.

We do not hold any complex financial instruments. The only financial instruments other than cash included in these accounts are receivables and payables (see notes 8 and 10)

Accounting estimates and judgements

1.17 Accounting estimates and judgements

We have discussed and agreed the development, selection and disclosure of significant accounting estimates and judgements and the application of these judgements with the Audit and Risk Committee.

Note 1.14 discloses the key judgements for the recognition and measurement of right of use assets and lease liabilities.

As outlined in Note 11.2, we recognise a liability to make dilapidation payments to the property owners of our office premises on expiry of individual leases. Such payments reflect the expected cost of full reinstatement of tenant alterations and decorations at the times of departure. Management has assessed the level of provision based on a professional assessment of future costs by a chartered surveyor.

1.18 Contingent assets and liabilities

Contingent assets and liabilities are disclosed in accordance in International Accounting Standard 37 (Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets).

Where the time value of money is material, contingent liabilities which are required to be disclosed under IAS 37 are stated at discounted amounts.

A contingent asset is disclosed when a possible asset that arises from past events and whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the entity.

1.19 Provisions for liabilities and charges

We provide for legal or constructive obligations which are of uncertain timing or amount at the Statement of Financial Position date on the basis of the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation. Such provisions are discounted to present values where the time value of money is material.

Following the transfer of the functions of the Local Government Commission for England to the Electoral Commission on 1 April 2002 and the incorporation of its assets and liabilities as at that date using IAS19, a provision has been established to meet its obligations with respect to pension payments to certain former Commissioners of that entity, relevant disclosures are shown in note 11.1

1.20 Going concern

These accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2024 shows there is net liability position. These liabilities will be met through future provision of supply funding.

Our Main Estimate was laid before Parliament on 2 May 2024 for the resources we require in 2024/25 and our Corporate Plan until 2025/26. As a body established by legislation and following the principles of the FReM there is an assumption of continued provision of service, there is nothing to suggest services provided by the Commission will cease or future funding will not be provided.

2. Statement of Operating Costs by Operating Segments

We report expenditure between our core objectives. In addition, the analysis identifies the marginal costs of the following key deliverables that we manage through formalised segments and project management arrangements. These are set out below.

The elections and local referendums segment governs our work ensuring well-run elections and referendums, providing guidance and assistance to electoral administrators, candidates and agents, developing and monitoring performance standards for Returning Officer (Ros) and producing reports on the administration of elections and referendums. The electoral registration activity supports our research and design work on forms for voters.

We do not attribute staff costs and corporate overheads to programme or project activity, but for the purposes of this note, we have either directly allocated or apportioned these costs as appropriate, between party election finance and electoral administration activity. We only report the marginal costs of delivery by programme and project to the Commission Board and Executive Team.

	2023/24					
	Elections and Local Referendums	Electoral Registration	Elections Act	Electoral Administration	Regulation	Total
£000						
Gross Expenditure	4,602	230	6,944	9,005	11,935	32,716
Income	(388)	(53)	-	(1,395)	(1,634)	(3,470)
Net Expenditure	4,214	177	6,944	7,610	10,301	29,246

	Elections and Local Referendums	Electoral Registration	Elections Act	Electoral Administration	Regulation	2022/23 Total
£000						
Gross Expenditure	3,564	556	5,381	8,272	10,958	28,731
Income	(1,118)	(75)	-	(1,184)	(1,203)	(3,580)
Net Expenditure	2,446	481	5,381	7,088	9,755	25,151

As a further breakdown, the below table shows the expenditure and income breakdown between UK Parliament, Scottish Parliament and Senedd.

	UK Parliament	Scottish Parliament	Senedd	2023/24 Total
£000				
Direct Expenditure	21,365	1,181	964	23,510
Indirect Expenditure	7,905	816	485	9,206
Income	(3,470)	-	-	(3,470)
Net Expenditure	25,800	1,997	1,449	29,246

	UK Parliament	Scottish Parliament	Senedd	2022/23 Total
£000				
Direct Expenditure	19,604	1,495	1,192	22,291
Indirect Expenditure	5,568	552	320	6,440
Income	(3,580)	-	-	(3,580)
Net Expenditure	21,592	2,047	1,512	25,151

Indirect expenditure is indirect staffing costs and depreciation. Income is received from Scottish Parliament and the Senedd to the UK Government.

3. Expenditure

	2023/24 £000	2022/23 £000
Staff costs**		
Wages and salaries	11,056	8,808
Social security costs	1,443	1,037
Other pension costs	2,545	2,192
	15,044	12,037
Expenditure on leases		
Property rent	135	123
Equipment	7	23
Interest on leases	54	46
Purchase of goods and services		
Section 13 expenditure	8,811	6,233
Section 10 expenditure	370	730
Research	434	922
Consultancy	495	361
Recruitment	289	187
Staff training and development	253	309
Travel subsistence and hospitality	150	119
Travel and subsistence – Commissioners	26	19
Accommodation, maintenance	797	752
Publicity and publications	400	215
Conference/public meeting	47	31
Office supplies, books and journals	122	125
Warehouse and Archiving	113	82
IT/Telephone	1,793	1,265
Bank and Payroll charges	71	68
Internal audit fees	45	52
	14,412	11,662
Non-cash items		
Depreciation	874	881
Amortisation	190	224
Impact of discounting	27	(161)
National Audit Office Auditors' fees*	100	104
Provisions made in year	(95)	36
Impairment of Assets	-	1,779
	1,096	2,863
	30,552	26,562

* No non-audit services provided by the NAO

**In 2023/24 no staff costs were capitalised (2022/23 £24k)

There were 4 payments made during 2023/24 for early retirement (£27k) or for loss of office (£110k). (2022/23 for early retirement £0 or for loss of office £0).

For more detailed disclosure regarding staff costs please refer to the accountability report.

3.1 Other Operating Expenditure

	2023/24 £000	2022/23 £000
Policy development grants	1,985	1,991
	1,985	1,991

Section 12 of PPERA provides for the Electoral Commission to administer a scheme to make payments of policy development grants to registered political parties. The current scheme is contained in the Elections (Policy Developments Grants Scheme) Order 2006 as amended.

The scheme requires us to allocate £2,000,000 each year to registered political parties to assist with the costs of developing policies to be included in manifestos for local government, Northern Ireland Assembly, or Scottish, Welsh, Westminster or European Parliamentary elections. To be eligible for inclusion in the scheme, a registered political party must have at least two MPs sitting in the House of Commons on 7 March prior to the year in question, who have sworn the oath of allegiance provided by the Parliamentary Oaths Act 1866.

The annual allocation is divided between the eligible parties according to the allocation formula set out in the Scheme.

All parties submitted expenditure returns resulting in payments of £1,985,000

3.2 Public awareness expenditure

Section 13 of PPERA requires us to promote public awareness of current electoral systems in the UK and any pending such systems, together with such matters connected with any such existing or pending systems as we may determine. The section enables us to carry out programmes of education or information to promote public awareness; or to make grants to other persons or bodies to enable them to carry out such programmes. Section 13 expenditure (other than for devolved Welsh elections and referendums, Senedd elections and Scottish local elections) is limited by The Electoral Commission (Limit on Public Awareness Expenditure) Order date 2002 (SI 2002/505) Electoral Commission (Limit on Public Awareness Expenditure) Order 2014, SI 2014/510 to £7,500,000 in a financial year. The Section 13 spending limit does not apply to public awareness activity specifically provided for and undertaken under legislation other than PPERA.

Although not Section 13, any public awareness costs for Scotland (Section 10) are included in the table below.

	2023/24	2022/23
	£000	£000
Core expenditure public awareness	4	15
Section 13	8,807	6,218
Public awareness expenditure subject to Section 13 limit	<u>8,811</u>	<u>6,233</u>
Local government Scotland (S10)	28	495
Senedd (S10)	342	235
	<u>370</u>	<u>730</u>
Total Public awareness	<u>9,181</u>	<u>6,963</u>

4. Income

	2023/24	2022/23
	£000	£000
	Total	Total
Operating Income:		
Scottish Government	1,997	2,047
Senedd	1,449	1,512
New Registration of Political parties	14	11
Re-Registration of Political parties	8	8
Alteration to Registration of Political parties	2	2
Total Operating Income	<u>3,470</u>	<u>3,580</u>

Income received from political parties for fines and penalties does not form part of our income within our financial statements, as it is fully payable to the Consolidated Fund on receipt; see SoPs 4 for this breakdown.131

5. Property, plant and equipment

	Leasehold Improvements	Office equipment	Information Technology - hardware	Furniture and Fittings	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2023	422	5	611	161	1,199
Additions	811	28	259	26	1,124
Disposals	-	-	(55)	-	(55)
At 31 March 2024	1,233	33	815	187	2,268
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2023	99	2	492	48	641
Charged in year	94	2	144	16	256
Disposals	-	-	(55)	-	(55)
At 31 March 2024	193	4	581	64	842
Carrying amount at 31 March 2024	1,040	29	234	123	1,426
Carrying amount at 31 March 2023	323	3	119	113	558
Asset financing: Owned	1,040	29	234	123	1,426
Carrying amount at 31 March 2024	1,040	29	234	123	1,426

	Leasehold Improvements	Office equipment	Information Technology - hardware	Furniture and Fittings	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2022	325	6	594	160	1,085
Additions	97	-	17	-	114
Reclassifications	-	(1)	-	1	-
At 31 March 2023	422	5	611	161	1,199
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2022	32	2	301	16	351
Charged in year	67	-	191	32	290
At 31 March 2023*	99	2	492	48	641
Carrying amount at 31 March 2023*	323	3	119	113	558
Carrying amount at 31 March 2022	293	4	293	144	734
Asset financing: Owned	323	3	119	113	558
At 31 March 2023					

6. Intangible assets

	Information Technology	Software Licences	Websites	Information Technology - Assets under Construction	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2023	270	68	768	218	1324
Additions	-	-	-	88	88
Disposals	(227)	(21)	-	-	(248)
Reclassification	210	48	(21)	(237)	-
At 31 March 2024	253	95	747	69	1,164
Amortisation					
At 1 April 2023	233	47	443	-	723
Charged in year	101	25	64	-	190
Disposals	(227)	(21)	-	-	(248)
At 31 March 2024	107	51	507	-	665
Carrying amount at 31 March 2024	146	44	240	69	499
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2022	270	67	483	1,585	2,405
Additions	-	1	337	360	698
Disposals	-	-	(52)	(1,727)	(1,779)
At 31 March 2023	270	68	768	218	1,324
Amortisation					
At 1 April 2022	162	31	312	-	505
Charged in year	71	16	137	-	224
Impairments	-	-	(6)	-	(6)
At 31 March 2023	233	47	443	-	723
Carrying amount at 31 March 2023	37	21	325	218	601

Disposals consist of assets that are no longer in use with a Net Book Value of nil.

Information technology - assets under construction (AUC) and Websites is primarily Political Finance online, development started in 2018/19 and was due to be completed in 2022/23. A decision was made in October 2022 by the Accounting Officer after discussions with the Board and the Audit & Risk Committee to impair the asset. Due to the prospects of successful delivery of the current project at a value for money cost were low

and therefore, in line with obligations under Managing Public Money, the best value for money and most feasible option for delivery is to cease work on the existing project and consider different technological and project approaches to delivery. The impairment is shown in 2022/23.

7. Leases

Right-of-use assets represent the right to direct the use of an underlying asset arising as a result of a lease. The Electoral Commission does not own the underlying asset, but recognises the value of the right of use in accordance with IFRS 16

7.1 Quantitative disclosure around right-of-use assets

	Buildings	Total
	£000	£000
Right-of-use asset value at 1 April 2023	4,384	4,384
Additions	756	756
Depreciation charged in year	(618)	(618)
Right-of-use asset value at 31 March 2024	4,522	4,522
	Buildings	Total
	£000	£000
Right-of-use asset value at 1 April 2022	-	-
Additions	4,975	4,975
Depreciation charged in year	(591)	(591)
Right-of-use asset value at 31 March 2023	4,384	4,384

Our Wales and Northern Ireland leases are expired during 2023/24. New leases have been acquired; therefore, additional Right-of-use asset and liability is shown in the tables during 2023/24.

7.2 Quantitative disclosure around lease liabilities

	Buildings	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£000	£000	£000
Lease Liability			
Not later than one year	663	663	603
Later than one year & not later than 5 years	2,683	2,683	2,356
Later than 5 years	1,308	1,308	1,461
	<hr/> 4,654	<hr/> 4,654	<hr/> 4,420
Less interest element	306	306	173
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Present Value of Obligations	4,348	4,348	4,247
Current Liability	<hr/> 606	<hr/> 606	<hr/> 430
Non-current liability	<hr/> 3,742	<hr/> 3,742	<hr/> 3,817
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total cash outflow for leases	617	617	613

7.3 Quantitative disclosures around elements in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

	2023/24 £000	2022/23 £000
Discount in-year	54	46
Expense related to low-value asset leases (exc. Short-term)	-	19

8. Trade and other receivables

	2023/24 £000	2022/23 £000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other receivables	2	8
Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts due to Consolidated Fund	9	5
Prepayments and accrued income	923	790
	934	803

9. Cash and cash equivalents

	2023/24 £000	2022/23 £000
Balance at 1 April	9	619
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	75	(610)
Balance at 31 March	84	9
The following balances at 31 March were held at:		
Government Banking	84	9
Balance at 31 March	84	9

10. Trade and other payables

	2023/24 £000	2022/23 £000
Amounts falling due within one year		
Other taxation and social security	915	599
Other payables*	-	6
Consolidated Fund Extra Receipts due to be paid to the Consolidated Fund: <i>received</i>	1	-
<i>receivable</i>	9	5
Accruals and deferred income	3,009	2,292
Deferred Income – Scottish Parliament	24	14
Deferred Income - Senedd	48	28
Amounts issued from the Consolidated Fund for supply but not spent at year end	84	9

Other creditors	33	-
	4,123	2,953
Amounts falling due after more than one year:		
Other payables, accruals and deferred income	-	1
	-	1

11. Provisions for liabilities and charges

	Pension £000	Dilapidations £000	Total £000
Balance at 1 April 2023	126	630	756
Provided in the year	5	105	110
Provision not required written back	-	(51)	(51)
Provisions utilised in the year	(14)	-	(14)
Change in discount rate	-	(64)	(64)
Impact of discounting	-	27	27
Balance at 31 March 2024	117	647	764

Analysis of expected timing of discounted flows

	Dilapidations £000	Total £000
Not later than one year	-	-
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	-
Later than five years	647	647
Balance at 31 March 2024	647	647

11.1 Pension Liability Statement

We provide for the pension liability for certain former Commissioners of the Local Government Commission for England, following the transfer of functions on 1 April 2002.

The pension provision is unfunded, with benefits being paid as they fall due and guaranteed by the employer. There is no fund, and therefore no surplus or deficit. Actuarial advice was sought to ensure that the provision is set at a realistic level. An actuarial valuation was carried out by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) to provide a value of the pension liability as at 31 March 2024. Actuarial gains and losses are accounted for through the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

Given the non-materiality of the pension liabilities, the full disclosure requirements of IAS 19 are not required.

The assumptions used by the actuary were:

	2023/24	2022/23
CPI inflation assumptions	2.55%	2.40%
The rate of increase for pensions	2.55%	2.40%
The rate used to discount scheme liabilities	5.10%	4.15%

Sensitivity of the defined benefit obligation (DBO) to changes in the significant actuarial assumptions:

Change in assumption*		Impact on DBO	
		%	£000s
Rate of discounting scheme liabilities	+ 0.5% a year	(3)	(3)
Rate of increase in CPI	+ 0.5% a year	3	3
Life expectancy: each member assumed 1 year younger than their age		5	5

* Opposite changes in the assumption will produce approximately equal and opposite changes in the DBO. Doubling the changes in the assumptions will produce approximately double the change in the DBO. The sensitivities show the change in assumption in isolation. In practice such assumptions rarely change in isolation and, given the interdependencies between the assumptions, the impacts may offset to some extent.

From 2010–11 the basis for the indexation of retirement benefits was changed from the Retail Price Index to the Consumer Price Index.

The Government Actuary's Department prepared a valuation on 31 March 2024.

	2023/24	2022/23
	£000	£000
Provision at 1 April	126	160
Interest Cost	5	2
Actuarial Loss/(Gain)	-	(22)
Less benefits paid	(14)	(14)
Past service cost	-	-
Present Value of scheme at end of year	<u>117</u>	<u>126</u>

Present value of scheme liabilities	Value at 31/03/2024 £'000	Value at 31/03/2023 £'000	Value at 31/03/2022 £'000	Value at 31/03/2021 £'000	Value at 31/03/2020 £'000
Liability in respect of					
Active members	-	-	-	-	-
Deferred Pensioners	-	-	-	-	-
Current Pensioners	<u>117</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>161</u>	<u>167</u>
Present value of scheme liabilities in respect of current pensioners	<u>117</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>161</u>	<u>167</u>

11.2 Dilapidations

We recognise a liability to make dilapidation payments to the property owners of our office premises upon the expiry of individual leases. These payments reflect the expected cost of fully reinstating tenant alterations and decorations at the time of departure.

Dilapidations are measured at the best estimate, supplied by an external surveyor using the industry price guide, of the expenditure required to settle the present obligation. This estimate reflects the present value of the expenditure required, where the time value of money is material. The Electoral Commission has reviewed the assessment line by line to ensure it considers what is valid and probable that the landlord would require the Commission to complete upon exiting the property and have adjusted the surveyor's estimates accordingly where relevant. Based on this assessment, we have provided a provision for dilapidation that is both realistic and probable for the new leases.

The Commission uses the HM Treasury discount rates to calculate the present value. Under IFRS 16, dilapidations on new leases are capitalised into the right-of-use asset.

12. Contingent assets & liabilities

Contingent liabilities cover all known claims where legal advice indicates that the criteria for recognition of a provision has not been met or where the possibility of economic transfer is remote.

There were no legal cases that were active at year-end or have since started where the Electoral Commission may need to raise a provision or contingent liability. Management have concluded that no probable present obligation to transfer economic benefits exists.

At 31 March 2024 there were nil contingent assets and nil contingent liabilities required to be disclosed under IAS37 (2022/23: 1 contingent asset of £325,000 and nil contingent liabilities).

13. Related-party transactions

The Electoral Commission is a body independent of Government and political parties, directly accountable to the UK Parliament, Scottish Parliament and the Senedd. The Electoral Commission does not have any related party relationships as defined by IAS 24 Related party disclosures.

The Electoral Commission does have transactions with government departments and central government bodies. Other than remuneration as disclosed in the accounts, none of the Commissioners, Executive Team or other related parties connected with them has undertaken any material transactions with the Electoral Commission during the year.

14. Events after the reporting period

In accordance with the requirements of IAS 10 Events after the reporting period are considered up to the date on which the accounts are authorised for issue. This is interpreted as at the date of Certificate of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

In the Accounting Officer's opinion, there are no events since 31 March 2024 that would affect the financial statements.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

ACCOUNTS DIRECTION GIVEN BY THE TREASURY IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 17(2) OF SCHEDULE 1 TO THE POLITICAL PARTIES, ELECTIONS AND REFERENDUMS ACT 2000.

1. The Electoral Commission shall prepare accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2011 and subsequent financial years in compliance with the accounting principles and disclosure requirements of the edition of the Government Financial Reporting Manual ('the FReM') issued by HM Treasury which is in force for the financial year for which the accounts are being prepared.
2. The accounts shall be prepared so as to:
 - (a) give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Electoral Commission at 31 March 2011 and subsequent financial year ends, and of its net resource outturn, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flows for the financial year then ended; and
 - (b) provide disclosure of any material expenditure or income that has not been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament or material transactions that have not conformed to the authorities which govern them.
3. Compliance with the requirements of the FReM will, in all but exceptional circumstances, be necessary for the accounts to give a true and fair view. If, in these exceptional circumstances, compliance with the requirements of the FReM is inconsistent with the requirement to give a true and fair view, the requirements of the FReM should be departed from only to the extent necessary to give a true and fair view. In such cases, informed and unbiased judgement should be used to devise an appropriate alternative treatment which should be consistent with both the economic characteristics of the circumstances concerned and the spirit of the FReM. Any material departure from the FReM should be discussed in the first instance with the Treasury.
4. This direction replaces the direction dated 27 February 2006.

Chris Wobschall
Head, Assurance and Financial Reporting Policy, HM Treasury
15 April 2011

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The Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK. We work to promote public confidence in the democratic process and ensure its integrity.

The Electoral Commission 2024

E03139195
978-1-5286-5067-0