

Clive Betts MP
Chair
Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

30 March 2023

Dear Mr Betts,

Reports on electoral registration in Great Britain in 2022 and attitudes to voter registration

I am pleased to provide you with copies of both of the above reports, which I thought may be useful in the context of your Committee's inquiry into registration in the UK.

The first report – published today - looks at how the 2022 canvass was run and considers the impact of the changes to the canvass that were introduced in 2020 on the electoral registers.

Our analysis of electoral register data suggests that, despite the reforms introduced in 2020, the canvass may not be sufficient to ensure that the registers keep pace with population movement. This is consistent with findings from the previous two years.

However, we cannot draw definitive conclusions on the impact of the changed canvass process on the registers from this analysis alone. Our research studies into accuracy and completeness allow us to produce reliable estimates of the quality of the registers. The results of our next study will be published in September 2023 and will enable us to robustly evaluate the impact that the canvass reforms have had.

We have regularly highlighted our concern that the registration system, including the canvass, is unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term and have recommended that the UK's governments should reform the system to make better use of data to keep the registers up to date and to explore more automated registration processes.

The second report, published this week, looks at attitudes to voter registration. The report updates our 2014 research about public attitudes to voter registration. It examines what people know about the registration process as well as the reasons they are or aren't registered.

The report found that there are three key motivational mindsets which drive registration behaviour: disillusionment with the political system and politicians; apathy towards voting; and a sense of engagement in having your say or your voice heard.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ailsa Irvine', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Ailsa Irvine
Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance