



CPA UK ELECTION ASSESSMENT MISSION
UNITED KINGDOM GENERAL ELECTION 2017

3 - 8 JUNE 2017



FINAL REPORT

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CPA UK also express its thanks to the numerous CPA Branches for facilitating recruitment of parliamentary observers.

CPA UK would like to thank the following organisations for their support and contribution to the Mission.

The
Electoral
Commission



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



WESTMINSTER
FOUNDATION FOR
DEMOCRACY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.01. CPA UK deployed Commonwealth Observers to **eight constituencies** throughout the UK to conduct an Election Assessment Mission (EAM)¹. The designated constituencies were:

- **Birmingham Ladywood**
- **Darlington**
- **East Devon**
- **Edinburgh West**
- **Gower**
- **Hendon**
- **Manchester Central**
- **North Norfolk**

Constituencies were selected to provide as broad and varied a sample as possible, based on various considerations, including observation findings by CPA UK's EAM in 2015. This final report reflects the consolidated findings, conclusions and assessments made by its Observers.

1.02 Despite the nature of the snap election, the heightened security concerns and the short planning window for election administrators, **the poll was well administered** according to the Observers' findings. CPA UK reported that Election Day was **largely calm and orderly**, with a steady flow of voters turning up to vote in the observed constituencies, in some cases queuing before 0700. Election Day operations were carried out by often **extremely experienced polling station staff in a highly competent manner** in the vast majority of the polling stations where polling was observed.

1.03. The often inconsistent application of polling station procedures and guidance throughout different constituencies and within the same constituency was highlighted by the Observers. This was **deemed contrary to the certainty and consistency** with which voters should be able to exercise their rights on Election Day, notably regarding **secrecy** in and around polling booths.

1.04 The EAM participants were generally **impressed by the culture of trust** that permeates most technical elements of the electoral process. Whereas this trust limits the number of procedural safeguards that are currently necessary to guarantee the holding of genuine elections; the Observers noted a number of **potential vulnerabilities** that require additional procedural safeguards in the future to **preserve the underlying level of trust in the genuine nature of electoral processes**.

1.05. In line with best practices in election observation methodology, the CPA UK EAM offers a series of key recommendations for the consideration of relevant stakeholders, notably the Electoral Commission. These recommendations are issued in a spirit of constructive cooperation aimed at ensuring that electoral processes and their procedures remain aligned with the key regional and international obligations and commitments that the UK is a party to.

1. CPA UK defines an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) as a short mission comprising less than a week of deployment covering Election Day and only one or two days before. An EAM will only examine the administration of Election Day.



Observers participating in the Election Assessment Mission from 23 jurisdictions across the Commonwealth

2. BACKGROUND

2. Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bangladesh, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Ghana, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Montserrat, New Zealand, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, St. Lucia, Tonga, Uganda and Zambia.

- 2.01. **The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK Branch (CPA UK) conducted an Election Assessment Mission (EAM) to the UK General Election on 8 June 2017.** The Observer delegation comprised **32 parliamentarians and electoral officials from 23 jurisdictions**². The Mission was led by its Head of Mission, Sebastian Pillay MP from the Seychelles. Observers were deployed from 6 June to observe the immediate pre-election environment, observed Election Day on 8 June, and remained in their designated constituencies until 9 June.
- 2.02. The CPA UK EAM was focused exclusively on the observation of Election Day and a number of openings of postal votes in different constituencies. The Mission assessed Election Day procedures and guidelines as well as observing their implementation. The Mission did not assess broader issues such as the legal and electoral framework, the election campaign, media coverage or party and campaign finance, except when they had a direct impact on their actual observations.
- 2.03. The 2017 EAM is the third UK General Election that CPA UK have recruited and deployed Commonwealth observers (after those in 2010 and 2015). CPA UK's Missions have contributed to positive reforms, including recommendations that subsequently contributed to allow voters queuing at 2200 at polling stations to cast their votes. Previously polling stations followed a variety of different rules due to a lack of clarity and consistency in this regard.
- 2.04. CPA UK's election observation methodology aims to contribute to electoral processes through independent, systematic observation and analysis. This process leads to constructive recommendations based on the existing legal and procedural framework for elections and its implementation. It seeks to respect relevant international and regional obligations that each jurisdiction has subscribed to, and specific standards for genuine elections.
- 2.05. By bringing together Observers from across the Commonwealth to undertake an independent and objective observation and assessment of a UK General Election, CPA UK's intention was to encourage the sharing of good practice and promote greater dialogue between member nations on UK elections. CPA UK's EAM in 2017 had a series of additional objectives, chief among them was to provide an opportunity for parliamentarians and election officials from Commonwealth countries to develop an understanding of the UK electoral process in the context of election observation methodologies.

3. PRE-ELECTION DAY OBSERVATION

3.01. Following a comprehensive briefing programme by CPA UK on 3 to 5 June, Observers were deployed to eight constituencies throughout the UK to conduct their pre-election assessment. In the lead up to Election Day, Observers met with numerous electoral stakeholders in their constituencies, including (Acting) Returning Officers, parliamentary candidates, local officials, police services, civil society organisations, the media, religious leaders, local interest and student groups. In addition, the Head of Mission met with the Chair of the UK Electoral Commission and spoke with the Association of Electoral Administrators and the Electoral Reform Society. These meetings, together with observed campaign events and exchanges with potential electors provided the Observers with an overall understanding of the immediate pre-election period and contributed to placing the Mission's Election Day findings in the context of the overall UK electoral process.

3.02. **CAMPAIGN.** The heightened security concerns following the terrorist attacks that took place during the election campaign were among the many issues addressed in the pre-election period. The Observers noted that the **campaign was particularly contested** in some constituencies, notably through social media, despite the short time available to plan and finance campaigns, which **could have disproportionately harmed smaller parties and independent candidates**. Citizen engagement was gauged to be high in the run up to election day in most constituencies.

3.03. **REGISTRATION.** Stakeholders expressed **significant trust** regarding the accuracy of the Individual Electoral Registration process and of voters' lists, however **criticisms were made by various interlocutors regarding the process of individual voter registration** which may have resulted in less voters being registered. However this is counter to the recent report by the Electoral Commission which indicates there was an increase in registered voters by approximately 500,000 (from 2015)³. In the lead up to 22 May deadline, active steps were taken by the Electoral Commission, political parties and local authorities to encourage registration primarily through social media campaigns. **Further concerns were expressed regarding the disaggregation of voter lists**⁴. Although no data is available on the number of persons who registered twice, such as students, the ease with which this can be done undetected given the lack of a centralised register, can place some strain on the respect of the obligation to ensure **equality of the vote**.

3. Electoral registration at the June 2017 UK general election. Report on the UK Parliamentary general election held on 8 June 2017, July 2017. https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/232761/Electoral-registration-report-July-2017.pdf

4. There is no single central register of voters in the United Kingdom. Voters are registered at a local level and managed by local authorities.

Recommendation 1: The process for individuals to verify their registration data could be simplified, in order to limit dependence on the issuing and reception of Poll Cards by electors. Serious consideration should be given to curbing the potential, or increasing the safeguards against double registration throughout the UK, including possibly through a centralised register, to guarantee the right to equal suffrage.

3.04. VOTER EDUCATION AND INFORMATION. CPA UK EAM Observers were **very impressed by the general level of trust which underlies the UK's electoral process.** However this level of trust is undermining the need for additional procedural safeguards that are ultimately necessary to guarantee the holding of genuine elections. In particular, several interlocutors stressed the need for greater voter education and information on the electoral process and polling procedures. Official information and education is necessary to clarify social-media fuelled confusion, for example over the use of pencils or pens in polling stations or the purpose of tellers. Observers **noted confusion by voters** on correct procedures, which at times **impacted on the secrecy of the vote.**

Recommendation 2: Focused, concerted and standardised nation-wide efforts by all stakeholders, could be considered to enhance understanding among potential voters in key Election Day procedures, notably concerning the secrecy of the vote, the role of tellers, instructions on the use of pencils and/or pens and general polling procedures. Further nation-wide standardisation of Election Day procedures could facilitate this process.

3.05. RETURNING OFFICERS. CPA UK EAM Observers noted the crucial role played by (Acting) Returning Officers (AROs) in the electoral process and the **general level of confidence in their professionalism and impartiality.** **Concerns were raised** by the Observers regarding potential difficulties arising from the relationship between Returning Officers and local councils, which could generate obstacles in the administration of the elections as well as possible **perceptions of conflicts of interest.** Enhancing transparency in the work of AROs, notably in the selection and appointment of polling station staff and counting staff should be considered as a valuable safeguard against any **perceived mistrust in the system.**

Recommendation 3: In order to bolster the independence of ROs, consideration could be given to increasing the role of the Electoral Commission in their appointment. Similarly, greater transparency in the selection and appointment of polling station and counting staff (including through public display periods) would enhance the transparency of the process and thus contribute to maintaining existing high levels of trust.

3.06. ADVANCE POSTAL VOTE OPENING. CPA UK Observers attended advance postal vote opening sessions in eight constituencies. Advance postal vote opening sessions take place in the run-up to polling day with a final session taking place at the count. Party and candidate agents are invited to attend these sessions where returned postal ballot packs are opened

and the signature and date of birth on the returned postal voting statements are matched against those previously provided by the elector. Observers highlighted that this part of the electoral process was the one wherein the use of technological applications was most prevalent. Observers noted the **absence of political party representatives** in this part of the process in seven of the eight constituencies where it observed. A crucial safeguard regarding the secrecy of the vote was consistently respected, in the sense that ballot papers were consistently kept face down although in East Devon the Observers assessed that postal voting statements were not kept sufficiently apart from ballot papers, potentially jeopardising the secrecy of the vote, albeit inadvertently.

5. In East Devon, where initial administrative errors were made in the issuing of postal ballot packs, the Acting Returning Officer took steps to ensure these postal ballots in question would still be counted as valid.

- 3.07. Overall, the conduct of advance postal vote openings was rated as **'good' or 'outstanding'** in all observed proceedings. Observers considered the work of participating staff as professional and competent in most cases.
- 3.08. Recent trends from the 2015 General Elections and the EU Referendum indicate that there is an increase in the number of voters opting to vote by post, amounting to around 18 percent of registered voters in recent polls. The turnout of postal voting tends to be significantly higher among these voters, up to 20 percentile points higher than that of in-person voters. This higher turnout signifies that postal votes represent around 20 percent of all valid votes cast. Observers reported on differences in terms of the number of advance postal vote openings carried out in the constituencies prior to Election Day. These variations were not correlated to the number of voters registered to vote by post.
- 3.09. During these opening sessions, Observers noted that postal vote envelopes occasionally lacked postal voting statements and envelopes A (wherein the ballot paper is included) and several voting statements did not pass the personal identifier test. Ballot papers without numbers or official marks were routinely rejected (with the exception of East Devon). Although Observers noted the diligence of staff to be inclusive and to try, within their scope of discretion, to reconcile documents and ballot papers in order to ensure the validity of the largest number of ballots⁵, the regulations on the invalidity of voting statements where dates of completion are noted instead of date of birth and the lack of signatures, although only affecting a small number of cases, led to the rejection of several ballots. Data on previous elections indicates that the percentage of rejected postal ballots is in the region of 4 percent, which is significantly greater than the number of invalid ballots cast in ballot boxes on Election Day, **indicating a need for greater measures to educate voters and simplify procedures.**

Recommendation 4: In order to safeguard the right and opportunity for electors to vote, additional measures might be required to educate voters and simplify Postal Voting Statements as well as the instructions on Postal Vote Packs to minimise the number of incorrectly completed postal votes and thus the risk of rejecting ballots, thereby disenfranchising voters.

- 3.10. Despite the significance and growing importance of this voting modality, which in the case of Edinburgh West represents as many as one third of registered voters, **political parties and candidates seemed largely uninterested in taking advantage of their right to be present and to monitor this process.**⁶ Their absence nullifies their capacity to object to the rejection of voting statements. Observers **noted their concern** that given the absence of political parties or

6. Political party agents (Conservative and Labour) were observed to be present only in Hendon at the opening of postal votes held on 6 June.

candidate representatives there were **no effective safeguards** to the subjective decisions of staff regarding signatures. Furthermore, party and candidate agents are not taking advantage of their right to affix their seals on the ballot boxes where the ballot papers are stored awaiting the count, which could add an additional safeguard to the integrity of the process. Although Observers assessed that the measures to ensure secure storage of postal votes were **generally sufficient**, the absence of party and candidate agents at the openings of postal votes, essentially **reduces safeguards on this part of the process to trust and confidence in the work of the election administrators.**

Recommendation 5: The participation of political parties and candidate agents in the advance postal vote opening proceedings should be fostered to ensure effective oversight over this part of the process, thereby promoting transparency and objective confidence in the integrity of the process, notably through safeguards concerning the secure storage of postal ballots. The use of numbered seals, as recommended by CPA UK in 2015 could also be considered.



Members of the Gower observer team



EAM Head of Mission meeting with the Chair of the Electoral Commission, Sir John Holmes



Observers meeting with election officials in Darlington



Observers meeting with a parliamentary candidate in Birmingham Ladywood



EAM closing press conference, Church House Conference Centre

4. ELECTION DAY OBSERVATION

4.01. On Election Day, the CPA UK EAM observed the conduct of opening, polling and closing operations in 267 polling stations, in both rural and urban areas, and in eight count centres. CPA UK EAM Observers reported that Election Day was largely calm and orderly, with a steady flow of voters turning up to vote in the observed constituencies. Election Day operations were carried out by often extremely experienced polling station staff in a **highly competent manner** in the vast majority of the polling stations where polling was observed. The **often inconsistent application of polling station procedures and guidance** throughout different constituencies and within the same constituency was highlighted by the Observers and was **deemed contrary to the certainty and consistency with which electors should cast their votes on Election Day**.

4.02. **OPENING.** CPA UK Observers attended the opening of 16 polling stations and assessed the conduct of opening operations as **'good' or 'outstanding'** in all cases. All materials were present and all polling stations opened on time in the observed stations, even in instances where Poll Clerks arrived late or had to be replaced. **Some irregularities were reported**, including a ballot box which was not properly sealed and polling documents not checked before opening⁷ but the Observers considered that these **did not affect the integrity or secrecy of the opening process**. Although opening procedures were **assessed as largely transparent**, the CPA UK Observers noted that party or candidate agents, or even tellers, were not present in 15 of the 16 polling stations where the opening was observed.

4.03. **POLLING.** The CPA UK EAM observed polling operations in 236 polling stations. The overall **conduct of operations and the integrity of the process were assessed positively** in 95 percent of the observed polling stations and essential materials were present in all observed cases.⁸ Accessibility to polling stations was only assessed negatively in three observed polling stations; steps were taken by polling station staff in one of these to facilitate the exercise of the right to vote for persons with disabilities. On a more general note, Observers expressed **concern over the signage provided to locate polling stations**, which was considered to be **largely inadequate**⁹ Overall, **gender equality was respected** among polling staff, as women represented 59.5 percent of all polling staff in the observed polling stations, including 49 percent of Presiding Officers and 66 percent of Poll Clerks.

4.04. **SECRECY OF THE VOTE.** In nearly 10 percent of observed polling stations, the secrecy of the vote was **considered to be compromised**, due in some cases to: overcrowding, polling station and polling booth layout,¹⁰ voter carelessness regarding the folding of the ballot, and insufficient control by polling station staff regarding the behaviour of voters in the booths, including 11 direct observations of more than one person in the booth at the same time.¹¹ Whereas in some cases the polling station staff were quick to reprimand electors, in other cases they did not exercise their authority to ensure that only one person entered the booth, or even to avoid voters from speaking to each other while in adjacent booths, or to prevent the use of mobile phones while in the booth. Observers noted that while the open booth design allows for several voters to fill in their ballot simultaneously it does not ensure sufficient privacy. **These concerns were already highlighted by the CPA UK EAM to the General Elections in 2015 in its Final Report and Recommendations.**

7. In Hendon, East Devon and Edinburgh West

8. Wheelchair accessible booths were noted to be missing in one polling station in Darlington.

9. Due to the quality, size and durability of materials as well as their general visibility; this could particularly affect electors recently residing in the area.

10. Particularly in the case of mobile polling stations where space constraints were considered to compromise the secrecy of the vote.

11. Four cases were observed in Hendon, three in Birmingham Ladywood and in Darlington, and one case in Gower.

Recommendation 6: Measures regarding the secrecy and the integrity of the vote should be reinforced, through more appropriate (enclosed) polling booths, stricter control by polling station staff regarding behaviour in the polling booths and increased awareness among voters regarding behaviour in the polling booth, an aspect already highlighted by CPA UK in its Final Report on the 2015 General Election.

12. In Hendon and Edinburgh West.

13. No requests were made to use the tactile voting template in any of the observed polling stations in the period of observation.

4.05. PARTY/CANDIDATE AGENTS AND TELLERS. CPA UK EAM Observers noted that parties and candidates very rarely exercised their right to have agents in polling stations, reducing their presence to the deployment of tellers in a relatively small number of observed polling stations. Having agents or representatives in polling stations **generates transparency and provides parties and candidates with a direct source of information regarding polling operations.** Observers assessed that the role of tellers outside polling stations, in the few cases where they were present, was not fully understood by many electors and that in some cases tellers were acting in an officious and occasionally aggressive manner. Most electors seemed to consider that they were part of the polling station staff and thus offered the required details unaware that they were not obliged to do so. Their partisan mandate was not always made clear and their rosettes were not always visible. Presiding Officers took measures to limit inappropriate behaviour by tellers in two observed case.¹²

Recommendation 7: Political parties and candidates should be invited to take up the opportunity of having agents in polling stations to further guarantee the transparency and integrity of the process, notably in terms of identification of voters and respect for polling procedures. The Electoral Commission could consider issuing clearer, more targeted, guidelines on their role, while parties and candidates should train their tellers on the behaviour that is required of them and voter information campaigns could be envisaged to clarify the role of tellers among electors.

4.06. RESPECT FOR PROCEDURES. Overall, polling procedures were **largely respected** in observed polling stations. However, significant **variations were noted in the interpretation of the guidance** that is provided and in some instances, procedures were not strictly followed. In 20 percent of observed polling stations the procedures regarding the identification of electors, namely the reading out of their name and voter number **were not carried out** during the period of observation. Similarly, voters were not consistently instructed or requested to show the ballot paper number and the unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper to the Presiding Officer or Poll Clerk before placing it in the ballot box. Guidance regarding the returning of poll cards and their secure disposal were also **followed inconsistently.** The procedures for assisted voting were respected in 90 percent of the 44 observed cases and over 60 percent of those requiring assistance relied on a companion of their choice rather than the Presiding Officer¹³. The sometimes **erratic application of procedures** did not appear to compromise the integrity of the process in the majority of observations and was largely attributed by the Observers to uncertainty among polling station staff regarding procedures, **stemming from unclear training, instructions and/or guidance.**

Recommendation 8: Greater efforts could be undertaken to enhance comprehension of key Election Day procedures by polling station staff and to ensure a more homogenous application and interpretation of guidelines throughout all constituencies. The rationale for some guidelines and procedures could be reviewed in light of the underlying obligations they seek to address.

4.07. ABSENTEE VOTING. Postal ballots were handed over, largely by the concerned elector, to Presiding Officers in 13 percent of observed polling stations. **Procedures were followed correctly in the majority of cases** and only one instance was observed where more than one postal vote was handed over by the same person. A request for assistance regarding a postal vote was only observed in one polling station. Arrangements for the collection of postal votes from polling stations throughout Election Day differed **greatly among the different constituencies**. The Observers highlighted the **lack of specific security measures for the storage and transport of these postal votes**. Proxy votes were recorded in nearly 19 percent of observed polling stations and **procedures for proxy votes were consistently followed** in 95 percent of cases, when it came to the handling of proxy votes.

Recommendation 9: In order to enhance the integrity of the process and to introduce further safeguards for the secrecy of the vote, consideration could be given to the use of tamper-proof envelopes for the transport of postal votes from polling stations to count centres.

4.08. CLOSING. Closing procedures were **fully respected** in all 15 polling stations where CPA UK EAM Observers were present for the closing. There were no voters queuing to vote at 10pm in any of the observed polling stations. The closing process, including the packaging and transport of materials to count centres was followed by Observers and **assessed as secure** as was the handover of materials to the count centres which was **assessed as orderly** in all cases. As throughout Election Day, party and candidate agents were not present at the close, with the exception of one observed polling station in Edinburgh West where the agent in question did not take advantage of the possibility of affixing a seal on the ballot box.

4.09. COUNTING. The CPA UK EAM observed counting operations in eight count centres in all observed constituencies. The presence of security in count centres was reinforced given the heightened national security level. Counting operations started before 2am in all observed count centres. The handover of materials from polling stations was carried out in an **orderly manner** in all observed cases. In contrast to other parts of the Election Day process, the count was well attended by candidate and party agents and often by media representatives. Procedures were **largely followed**, notably for the invalidation of ballots and no rejected votes were objected to; no calls for a recount were made during the time of observation. Despite the variety of counting methods and processes, the integrity and security of the process was **assessed positively in all observed cases** and the performance of all count centres was **assessed very positively** during the period of observation. Observers noted the professionalism and organisation of the count and counting officers.

5. CONCLUSION

5.01. Based on its direct observations and within the scope of the assessment of its Observers, the EAM concludes that the 8 June 2017 General Election process **largely respected national laws and procedures**. However, the Observers recognised that in order for the UK to maintain its international and regional obligations and commitments regarding genuine elections **certain vulnerabilities, as highlighted in this report, should be addressed**. The EAM recognises that the electoral process in the UK is substantially based on **broad trust and confidence** in the integrity of the process and the impartiality of the electoral administration. Moreover, the EAM **would recommend a review of certain guidelines and provisions with a view to establish greater consistency and equality** regarding how the process is carried out throughout the country but also to consider, or anticipate, the potential need to **add new procedural safeguards** to limit the consequences of any erosions of trust in different parts of the process.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The process for individuals to verify their registration data could be simplified, in order to limit dependence on the issuing and reception of Poll Cards by electors. Serious consideration should be given to curbing the potential, or increasing the safeguards against double registration, including possibly through a centralised register, throughout the UK, to guarantee the right to equal suffrage.
2. Focused, concerted and standardised nation-wide efforts by all stakeholders could be considered to enhance understanding among potential voters in key Election Day procedures, notably concerning the secrecy of the vote, the role of tellers, instructions on the use of pencils and/or pens and general polling procedures. Further nation-wide standardisation of Election Day procedures could facilitate this process.
3. In order to bolster the independence of ROs, consideration could be given to increasing the role of the Electoral Commission in their appointment. Similarly, greater transparency in the selection and appointment of polling station and counting staff (including through public display periods) would enhance the transparency of the process and thus contribute to maintaining existing high levels of trust.
4. In order to safeguard the right and opportunity for electors to vote, additional measures might be required to educate voters and simplify Postal Voting Statements and the instructions on Postal Vote Packs to minimise the number of incorrectly completed postal votes and thus the risk of rejecting ballots, thereby disenfranchising voters.
5. The participation of political parties and candidate agents in the advance postal vote opening proceedings should be fostered to ensure effective oversight over this part of the process, thereby promoting transparency and objective confidence in the integrity of the process, notably through safeguards concerning the secure storage of postal ballots. The use of numbered seals, as recommended by CPA UK in 2015 could also be considered.
6. Measures regarding the secrecy and the integrity of the vote should be reinforced, through more appropriate (enclosed) polling booths, stricter control by polling station staff regarding behaviour in the polling booths and increased awareness among voters regarding behaviour in the polling booth, an aspect already highlighted by CPA UK in its Final Report on the 2015 General Election.
7. Political parties and candidates should be invited to take up the opportunity of having agents in polling stations to further guarantee the transparency and integrity of the process, notably in terms of identification of voters and respect for polling procedures. The Electoral Commission could consider issuing clearer, more targeted, guidelines on their role, while parties and candidates should train their tellers on the behaviour that is required of them and voter information campaigns could be envisaged to clarify the role of tellers among electors.
8. Greater efforts could be undertaken to enhance comprehension of key Election Day procedures by polling station staff and to ensure a more homogenous application and interpretation of guidelines throughout all constituencies. The rationale for some guidelines and procedures could be reviewed in light of the underlying obligations they seek to address.
9. In order to enhance the integrity of the process and to introduce further safeguards for the secrecy of the vote, consideration could be given to the use of tamper-proof envelopes for the transport of postal votes from polling stations to count centres.

6. ABOUT CPA UK

6.01. WHO WE ARE. CPA UK is a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), which is a Commonwealth-wide network of some 17,000 national, state, provincial and territorial parliamentarians within 180 legislatures in 52 countries. The purpose of the CPA is to strengthen parliamentary democracy across the Commonwealth, providing a space for parliamentarians to share, learn, compare and work together to promote Commonwealth values of democracy, rule of law, human rights, good governance and social and economic development.

6.02. The Commonwealth brings together a third of the world's population, including a billion people under 25, the largest and the smallest, developing and developed countries. Within the Commonwealth family there are huge opportunities created by aspects of shared culture, governance commonalities and good diplomatic and trade relations. There are also many challenges, which by acting and working together Commonwealth countries can strengthen their responses and bring about positive change. CPA UK is part of the UK Parliament and is the most active branch in the Association. Its offices are at the very heart of Parliament, situated in Westminster Hall. All sitting Members of both Houses are eligible to participate in CPA UK programmes.

6.03. WHAT WE DO. CPA UK runs exciting, demanding, and far-reaching international parliamentary strengthening and capacity-building programmes with legislatures across the Commonwealth focusing on the tools by which the Executive is held accountable by parliamentarians. CPA UK's themed international parliamentary conferences and parliamentary workshops run in Parliament and abroad attract international speakers from politics, academia, NGOs and governments across the world and the quality of its programmes is internationally recognised. Discussions on a huge range of issues take place between international policy makers in forums conducted by CPA UK such as sustainable development, human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women, climate change, international trade and investment, national security, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.



Members of the CPA UK Team.

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DARLINGTON

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