

# Elections 2024: Communications and change

Kelly Quigley-Hicks **AEA Communications and Marketing Manager** 

"Have you ever felt like you wouldn't be able to deliver a successful election, or like there was a threat to delivering a successful election?"

"I would say probably every election for the last 10 years, and I'm not joking."

Electoral administrator in 2023 LGiU voter ID report







# UK Parliamentary general election

- By 28 January 2025
- 25 working day timetable
- Counts and media interest
- New constituency boundaries

Photo: Sergeant Tom Robinson RLC/MOD, OGL v1.00GL v1.0,

via Wikimedia Commons



#### 2024 scheduled elections

2 May scheduled polls	Number of councils
Principal councils	107 in England
Police and Crime Commissioners* (PCC)	270 in England and Wales
Combined Authority Mayoral* (CAM)	47 in England
Mayor of London and Greater London Authority	All London Boroughs plus City of London

- PCC and Mayors now first past the post
- Combined poll counts
- Monday 6 May bank holiday

Plus local by-elections or referendums



### Pre-election period: 2 May 2024

Code of Recommended Practice

By 19 March for London elections

By 26 March for all other elections

LGA guidance available

Returning and Monitoring Officer input

Tell elected members and officers



## Guiding principles

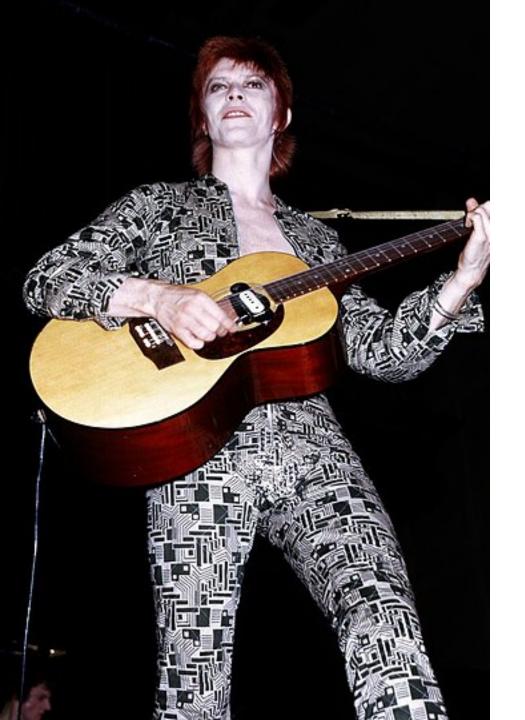
- Reasonableness: Would a reasonable person think this is designed to influence the outcome of the election?
- Fairness: would a decision be seen as fair and reasonable by the public and those standing for office?





### Ongoing issues

- Polling station staff recruitment
- Polling station venues
- Abuse towards candidates
- Mis/disinformation
- Potential for protests





## Ch-ch-changes

- Major legislative change
- Who is your audience?
- Where is your audience?
- Is your material up to date and accessible?
- Have you reviewed your website?

Photo: by Nik Walton CC-BY-SA

via Wikimedia Commons





#### Voter ID

- Reserved polls in GB only
- 2024 a first for many areas
- Electoral Commission resources
- VAC deadline: 5pm on 24 April
- Local knowledge is key
- GLA resources #NoVoteNoVoice



# Accessibility

Must take all reasonable steps to support voters with disabilities

Electoral Commission guidance Work with local charities and networks



### Online absent vote applications

Live since 31 October 2023 – postal and proxy votes

Polls in England, Police and Crime Commissioner England and Wales, Recall and UK Parliamentary by-elections/general election GB wide

National system with Agile development approach





#### Overseas electors

- Applies to UK general elections only
- 15-year limit removed from 16 January
- Can use previously registered address, or area last lived in if never registered
- Registration lasts three years
- Up to 3.5m may be eligible

Photo: Dickelbers CC BY-SA 4.0 DEED via Wikimedia Commons



## Absent voting changes



#### January 2024

Postal vote fresh application every three years, with identity verification needed



#### May 2024

Political parties and campaigners banned from handling postal votes



#### May 2024

Limit on number of postal votes handed in by an individual



#### May 2024

Electors only allowed to act as proxy for up to four people, no more than two 'domestic'



#### But wait, there's more

EU citizen voting and candidacy rights

Scotland and Wales reform

New digital imprints regime

New 'family voting' legislation

Electoral reform after general election?