

# Electoral Statistics for UK, 2014



Coverage: **UK**

Date: **16 April 2015**

Geographical Areas: **Local Authority and County, Parliamentary Constituency**

Theme: **Government**

## Main points

- The total number of UK parliamentary electors in 2014 was 45,325,100, a fall of 1.8% from 2013.
- The total number of UK local government electors in 2014 was 46,828,200, a fall of 1.8% from 2013.
- Between 2013 and 2014 the total number of both parliamentary and local government electors declined in England and Wales. Scotland and Northern Ireland both had an increase.
- The number of parliamentary electors declined in all regions of England between 2013 and 2014. The largest decrease (-3.5%) was in the North East.
- Between 2013 and 2014, the number of local government electors declined in all regions of England. The largest decrease (-3.6%) was in the North East.
- The 2014 electoral statistics are the first to have been produced following the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in England, Wales and Scotland.
- Electoral statistics are used by Boundary Commissions, the Electoral Commission, and central government to help with the improvement of electoral policies and for statutory reviews of parliamentary constituency boundaries.

## Summary

Electoral statistics are collated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and published for the UK and its constituent countries, local government areas and parliamentary constituencies. They provide annual counts of the number of people who are on the electoral registers, usually at 1 December each year.

References in this release to electoral statistics for 2014 should be taken to mean electors included on the registers published on 1 December 2014 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and

2 March 2015 in Scotland. These are the first registers published following the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in England and Wales in June 2014 and in Scotland in September 2014. (The transition to IER in Scotland was delayed in order to begin after the Scottish Independence Referendum).

See background note 5 for further details on comparing electoral statistics for different years.

## Introduction

Electoral statistics are available for the two main groups of voters:

- Parliamentary Electors – those entitled to vote in Westminster Parliamentary elections
- Local Government Electors – those entitled to vote in local government and/or European elections<sup>1</sup>

The difference in who is entitled to vote at parliamentary and/or local elections largely depends on residence and citizenship conditions. Local Government Electors for example, include those European Union citizens resident in the UK who are not entitled to vote in Westminster Parliamentary elections, whilst Parliamentary Electors include British citizens resident overseas who are not entitled to vote in local government elections. Further information on the eligibility criteria can be found in a Quality and Methodology Information paper from our [Quality Reports for Government Statistics page](#).

There are 3 key reasons why the registered numbers of electors in an area can change from year to year:

- a change in the size of the population who are entitled to vote; for example, due to international migration
- a change in the proportion of the eligible population who actually register to vote; for example, more people registering as a result of better canvassing
- differences in administrative practices; for example, the extent of use of the 'carry forward', which allows for an elector to be retained on the electoral register for a year when they have not responded to an annual canvass

In particular the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in 2014 has introduced new administrative practices. Although IER does not change who is eligible to vote, it may have changed the proportion of those eligible that are registered to vote. More information on IER is available in the section on Related Information.

## Methods, Quality and Uses

For England and Wales, electoral statistics are taken from data supplied to ONS by local Electoral Registration Officers. Data for Scotland are similarly collected by National Records of Scotland (NRS). Data for Northern Ireland are collected by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI). ONS collated these statistics for the UK using the data supplied by NRS and EONI.

More information is available from our [Electoral Statistics Information page](#).

Electoral statistics are gathered and published by ONS. They are used by Boundary Commissions, the Electoral Commission, and central government to help with the improvement of electoral policies and for statutory reviews of parliamentary constituency boundaries. The statistics are also of interest to Members of Parliament and the general public.

Electoral statistics represent the most accurate count possible of the number of people on electoral registers each year. They are subject to full quality assurance procedures and are reliable and provide comparable data across the UK constituent countries. Information on the quality of these statistics is provided in a Quality and Methodology Information paper available from our [Quality Reports for Government Statistics page](#).

## Notes for Introduction

1. To be entitled to vote in European elections in the UK, European Union (EU) citizens are required to request the right to vote in this country rather than their home country. Those persons who do not make this request will not be included in the European Parliament electorate.

## Parliamentary Electors

The total number of UK parliamentary electors in 2014 was 45,325,100, a fall of 1.8% from 2013.

The total number of parliamentary electors in each of the UK constituent countries and the percentage changes between 2013 and 2014 are:

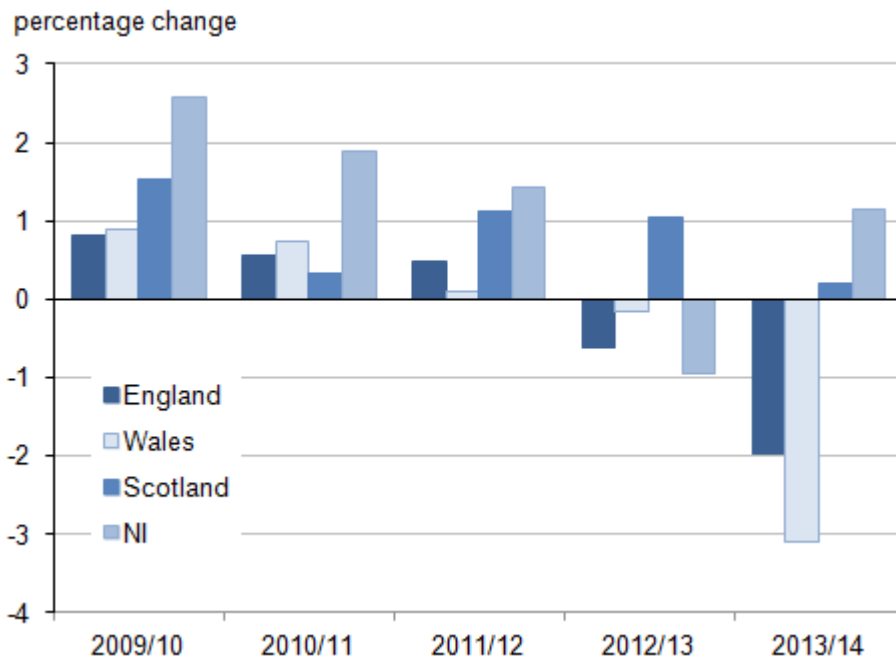
- England – 37,831,600, a fall of 2.0%
- Wales – 2,225,700, a fall of 3.1%
- Scotland – 4,035,400, a rise of 0.2%
- Northern Ireland – 1,232,400, a rise of 1.2%

Figure 1 shows the different patterns of change in parliamentary electors between the UK constituent countries over the last 5 years.

From 2009 to 2012 the number of electors increased in all 4 areas, although growth was highest in Northern Ireland. Small decreases (of less than 1%) were recorded in all areas except Scotland between 2012 and 2013. However, between 2013 and 2014 the parliamentary electorate of England fell by approximately 766,000 people (or 2.0%) and the parliamentary electorate of Wales fell by approximately 72,000 (or 3.1%); Scotland recorded a small growth (0.2%); Northern Ireland saw similar growth to that which occurred between 2011 and 2012.

The fall recorded in the parliamentary electorate between 2013 and 2014 in England and Wales is likely to be due, at least in part, to the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER). The increase recorded in Scotland is likely to be due in part to the Scottish Independence Referendum held in September 2014. Northern Ireland uses a continuous registration system that was introduced in 2006.

**Figure 1: Annual percentage change in parliamentary electors for UK constituent countries, 2009/10 to 2013/14**



Source: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

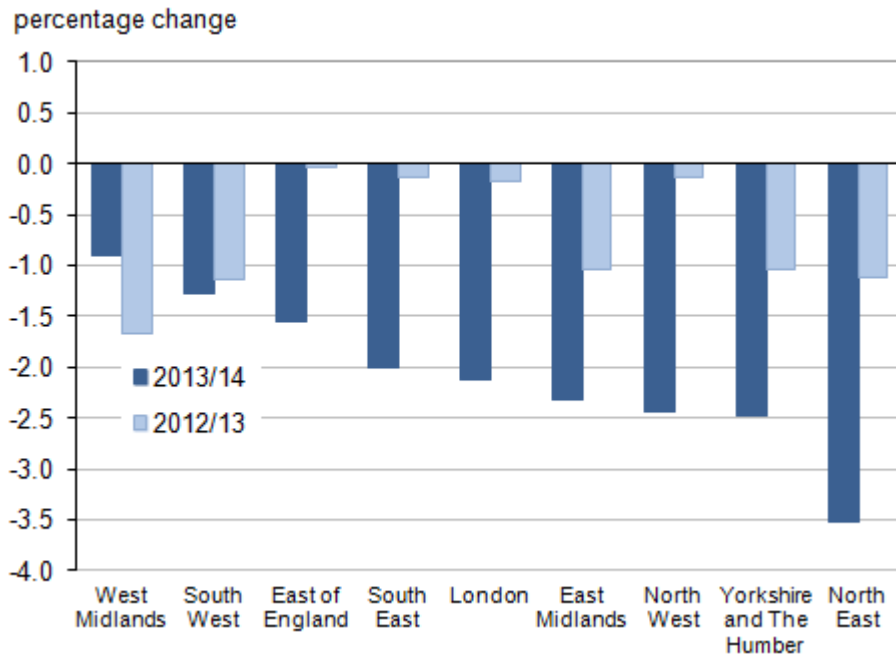
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Figure 2 shows that although all English regions showed declines in their parliamentary electorate between 2013 and 2014, there was considerable variation between them. The North East declined by 3.5% while the West Midlands declined by less than 1% and was the only area that saw a smaller decline than that recorded between 2012 and 2013. In general, northern areas of England showed larger declines than southern areas.

**Figure 2: Percentage change in parliamentary electors for English regions, 2013/14 compared with 2012/13**



Source: Office for National Statistics

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### Parliamentary Constituencies

There are at present 650 Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies in the UK made up of 533 in England, 59 in Scotland, 40 in Wales and 18 in Northern Ireland. These boundaries came into force at the May 2010 General Election. This release provides counts of the total number of parliamentary electors for all parliamentary constituencies in the UK.

The typical size of constituencies differs between the constituent countries of the UK with a median total parliamentary electorate across constituencies of about 71,000 in England, 68,900 in Scotland, 67,500 in Northern Ireland and 55,100 in Wales.

In 2014, the parliamentary constituency with the smallest sized electorate at 21,800 was Na h-Eileanan an Iar and the largest electorate at 107,600 was the Isle of Wight. These unusual electoral sizes are explained by these areas being island constituencies.

The total parliamentary electorate grew in 150 constituencies (23%) between 2013 and 2014. In total, 66 constituencies had growth of more than 1% in their parliamentary electorate including 6 which grew by more than 3%.

**Table 1: Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies with greatest percentage increase in parliamentary electors between 2013 and 2014**

Rank	Parliamentary Constituency	County (C) or Borough (B)	Total Parliamentary Electorate (thousands)		% Change
			2013	2014	2013/14
1	Edinburgh North and Leith	B	73.5	78.0	6.1
2	East Devon	C	69.3	72.7	4.9
3	Wellingborough	C	73.0	76.1	4.2
4	Tonbridge and Malling	C	70.2	72.7	3.5
5	Edinburgh South	B	62.0	64.1	3.4
6	Northampton South	B	57.5	59.4	3.4
7	Glasgow South	B	70.2	72.2	2.9
8	North Cornwall	C	63.7	65.5	2.7
9	Glasgow East	B	68.1	69.9	2.6
10	Wantage	C	81.9	84.1	2.6

**Table notes:**

1. Source: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

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Six of the constituencies with the greatest percentage growth in parliamentary electors between 2013 and 2014 are in England, with four constituencies in Scotland also in the top ten. Five of these top ten areas are borough constituencies, which are mainly urban areas. The other five areas are county constituencies which are partly or mostly rural. The labelling of a constituency as borough or county is made by the relevant Boundary Commission.

Note that the constituency of Northampton South appeared in the list of constituencies with the greatest percentage fall in parliamentary electors in the previous year. The turnaround for this constituency may link to changes in population size or the population entitled to vote, or administrative differences in how the register was put together between the years.

Torfaen (ranked 132<sup>nd</sup>) was the only constituency in Wales where the number of parliamentary electors increased between 2013 and 2014 – it recorded growth of 0.2%. The constituency of Foyle

(ranked 20<sup>th</sup>) showed the greatest growth in Northern Ireland at 2.1%. It should also be noted that Foyle recorded the greatest fall in parliamentary electors in Northern Ireland in the previous year.

The total parliamentary electorate fell in 500 constituencies (77%) between 2013 and 2014. However, 64 constituencies had a fall of more than 5% in their parliamentary electorate including 10 which fell by more than 10%.

**Table 2: Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies with greatest percentage decrease in parliamentary electors between 2013 and 2014**

Rank	Parliamentary Constituency	County (C) or Borough (B)	Total Parliamentary Electorate (thousands)		% Change
			2013	2014	2013/14
1	Cardiff Central	B	62.9	51.3	-18.3
2	Liverpool Riverside	B	74.6	63.3	-15.2
3	Newcastle upon Tyne East	B	67.9	58.6	-13.8
4	Nottingham South	B	70.8	61.9	-12.6
5	Ceredigion	C	56.2	49.4	-12.0
6	City of Durham	C	73.0	64.6	-11.5
7	Loughborough	C	78.4	69.9	-10.8
8	York Central	B	76.8	68.5	-10.8
9	Brighton Pavilion	B	73.9	66.4	-10.2
10	Leicester South	B	77.9	70.1	-10.0

**Table notes:**

1. Source: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

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Table 2 shows that the 10 constituencies with the greatest percentage fall in parliamentary electors between 2013 and 2014 include 8 located in England. The majority of these are classified as borough (or mainly urban) constituencies. The remaining 2 are located in Wales, including Cardiff

Central, the constituency with the greatest percentage fall in parliamentary electors at -18.3%. All these areas contain towns or cities with large student populations.

Less than half the constituencies in Scotland and no constituencies in Northern Ireland recorded a fall in parliamentary electors between 2013 and 2014.

## Local Government Electors

The total number of UK local government electors in 2014 was 46,828,200, a fall of 1.8% from 2013.

The total number of local government electors in each of the UK constituent countries and the percentage changes between 2013 and 2014 are:

- England - 39,185,000, a fall of 2.0%
- Wales - 2,254,200, a fall of 3.2%
- Scotland – 4,131,900, a rise of 0.3%
- Northern Ireland – 1,257,000, a rise of 1.3%

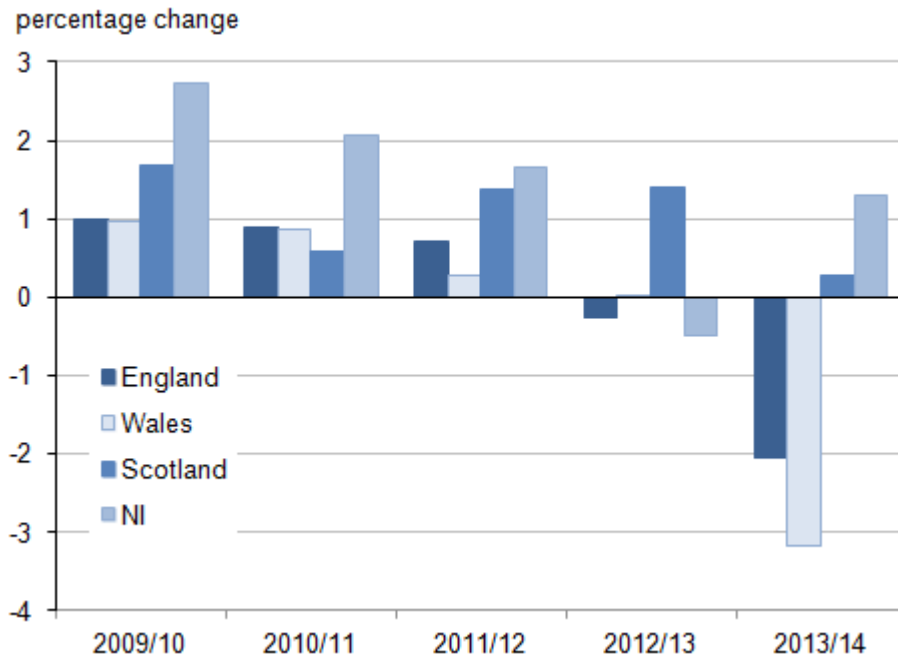
Figure 3 shows the different patterns of change in local government electors between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland over the last 5 years. Overall, the pattern of change is very similar to that for parliamentary electors shown in figure 1.

Over the last 5 years, the number of local government electors in England has grown by an average of just 0.1% each year, with growth during the period 2009 to 2012 offset by the falls seen between 2012 and 2014. In particular, the number of local government electors in England fell by approximately 817,000 between 2013 and 2014.

The pattern for Wales is similar to that of England, while the number of local government electors in Scotland and Northern Ireland has increased every year (with the exception of 2012 to 2013 in Northern Ireland).



**Figure 3: Annual percentage change in local government electors for UK constituent countries, 2009/10 to 2013/14**



Source: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

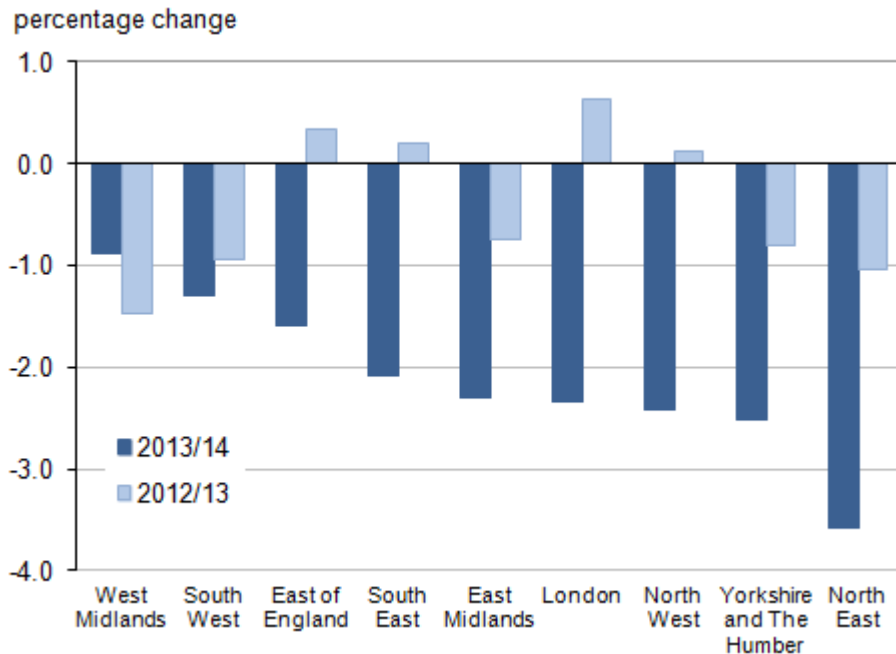
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Figure 4 shows that the -2.0% change in the number of local government electors in England, between 2013 and 2014, hides considerable variation between different regions. The North East had the largest change at -3.6%, while the West Midlands had the smallest, at -0.9%. As for parliamentary electors, the West Midlands was the only area where the decrease seen between 2013 and 2014 was less than that recorded the previous year.

**Figure 4: Percentage change in local government electors for English regions, 2013/14 compared with 2012/13**



Source: Office for National Statistics

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### Local Government Areas

Local government areas are unitary authorities, London boroughs and district councils in England; unitary authorities in Wales; and council areas in Scotland and Northern Ireland. At December 2014 there were a total of 406 local government areas in the UK: 326 in England, 32 in Scotland, 26 in Northern Ireland and 22 in Wales.

In 2014, the size of local government electorates ranged from the 1,600 electors in Isles of Scilly to 728,700 in Birmingham. The typical size of local government electorates varies between different areas of the country with a median across local government areas of about 97,500 in Wales, 97,300 in England and 93,100 in Scotland compared to only 41,300 in Northern Ireland.

The total local government electorate grew in 102 local government areas (25%) between 2013 and 2014. This compares to 215 areas, or 53%, between 2012 and 2013. However, only 51 areas had growth of more than 1% in their electorate; while 5 areas had growth of more than 3%.

**Table 3: Local government areas with greatest percentage increase in local government electors between 2013 and 2014**

Rank	Local Government Area	Total Local Government Electorate (thousands)		% Change
		2013	2014	2013/14
1	Wellingborough	52.2	55.6	6.5
2	East Devon	97.7	102.8	5.3
3	Tonbridge and Malling	86.0	89.8	4.4
4	Edinburgh, City of	358.5	371.8	3.7
5	Ashfield	87.9	90.6	3.1
6	Arun	112.3	115.3	2.6
7	Allerdale	69.0	70.8	2.5
8	Vale of White Horse	95.4	97.7	2.3
9	South Oxfordshire	105.0	107.4	2.3
10	Shropshire UA	225.4	230.6	2.3

**Table notes:**

1. Source: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

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The local government areas with the greatest percentage growth in local government electors between 2013 and 2014 are all in England, apart from the City of Edinburgh as shown in table 3. The greatest percentage growth in a local government area in Northern Ireland was Derry at 2.1% (ranked 12<sup>th</sup>), while Torfaen was the only local government area in Wales where the local government electorate grew during the period (0.1%, ranked 93<sup>rd</sup>).

Wellingborough; East Devon; Tonbridge and Malling; and Allerdale were all amongst the top 10 areas with the largest percentage falls in local government electors last year. Their turnaround this year may be due to changes in population size, the population entitled to vote or administrative differences in how the registers were put together between 2013 and 2014.

The total local government electorate fell in 304 local government areas (75%) between 2013 and 2014, compared to 190 areas (47%) in the previous year. Of those, 52 areas had a fall of more than 4%, including 2 which fell by more than 10%.

The top 10 local government areas with the greatest percentage fall in local government electors are shown in table 4. There are 8 in England and 2 are in Wales, including Ceredigion which had the largest percentage fall at 12.7%. Also, many of these areas are those with large student populations. The local government area with the greatest fall in local government electors in Scotland was Perth and Kinross at 4.0% (ranked 52<sup>nd</sup>). No areas in Northern Ireland recorded a fall in local government areas between 2013 and 2014.

**Table 4: Local government areas with greatest percentage decrease in local government electors between 2013 and 2014**

Rank	Local Government Area	Total Local Government Electorate (thousands)		% Change
		2013	2014	2013/14
1	Ceredigion	57.6	50.3	-12.7
2	Oxford	111.8	99.7	-10.8
3	Reading UA	117.9	106.7	-9.5
4	Haringey	175.2	159.4	-9.0
5	Newcastle upon Tyne	201.8	184.4	-8.6
6	Blackpool UA	111.5	102.1	-8.4
7	Cardiff	262.9	241.8	-8.1
8	Westminster	138.2	127.4	-7.8
9	Brighton and Hove UA	207.2	192.1	-7.3
10	Runnymede	63.5	58.9	-7.1

**Table notes:**

1. Source: Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

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**Related Information**

**Comparing Population Estimates and Electoral Statistics**

The electoral statistics in this release give information on the number of people who are registered to vote in the UK - there is no similar collection of data on the number of people who are eligible to vote but who choose not to register.

ONS provides mid-year estimates of the resident population, and these have sometimes been used as an estimate of the total number of people who are entitled to vote. However, care must be taken in using these data for that purpose as the population estimates include some people who are not eligible to vote and exclude some people who are eligible to vote (e.g. overseas electors).

ONS has also published some research looking at the scope and quality of the Electoral Register as a likely supply of data for measuring population, which is available in the [Administrative Data Sources Report on the Electoral Register \(554 Kb Pdf\)](#).

## Individual Electoral Registration

Individual Electoral Registration (IER) is the new system that allows individuals to register to vote in England, Wales and Scotland. It replaced the former system of household level registration – where one person in the household returned a registration form on behalf of all eligible voters resident at that address – from June 2014 in England and Wales, and September 2014 in Scotland. The electoral registration system in Northern Ireland remained unchanged.

The introduction of IER allows individuals more control over the registration process and is intended to increase accuracy by ensuring that the identity of every applicant is verified (using information such as date of birth and National Insurance number) before their details are added to the electoral register.

The Electoral Commission are monitoring the transition to IER, conducting research on voter registration, and providing information and guidance to both electoral registration officers and the general public. More [information on their role](#) is available from their website.

Further information from Cabinet Office on the [transition to IER](#) is available from the gov.uk website.

## Other Electoral Statistics

Other electoral statistics produced for areas in the UK include:

### England

Statistics for parliamentary electors for electoral wards in England for 2010 are available from the Boundary Commission for England. These statistics are produced from data collected from Electoral Registration Officers by ONS.

This data can be obtained from the Boundary Commission for England on request by emailing [information@bcommengland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:information@bcommengland.gsi.gov.uk).

### Wales

Statistics for National Assembly for Wales electors by Assembly Constituencies are published by the Welsh Government. Those electors who are eligible to vote in local government elections in Wales are eligible to vote in National Assembly for Wales elections. These statistics are produced from data collected from Electoral Registration Officers by ONS.

[The data are available from StatsWales](#) (please note their explanation giving details of the impact of boundary changes in some areas).

The Boundary Commission for Wales also publish [statistics for the parliamentary electorate by Electoral Divisions](#).

## Scotland

Electoral statistics for Scotland are produced and published by National Records of Scotland (NRS). Additional statistics not included in the overall UK publication cover Scottish Parliament Constituencies, Scottish regions and electoral wards.

The data are available from the [electoral statistics section of the NRS website](#).

## Northern Ireland

Electoral statistics for Northern Ireland are produced and published by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI). Monthly electoral statistics for both the parliamentary and local government electorate are available at electoral ward level from the [electoral statistics section of the EONI website](#).

## Background notes

1. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.
2. Electoral statistics for 2014 are available from the [electoral statistics section](#) of the ONS website.
3. Published tables include counts of local government electors and attainers by local government areas and parliamentary electors and attainers by parliamentary constituency. An attainer is a person who attains the age of 18 during the currency of the register, and is entitled to vote at an election on or after his or her 18th birthday.
4. A report describing the methodology used to create the electoral statistics estimates can be found on our [Electoral Statistics Information Page](#).
5. Electoral statistics usually relate to registers published annually in December. Time series comparisons of electoral statistics in this release use figures for December each year, with some exceptions: the 2012 statistics relate to October 2012 instead of December 2012 in England and Wales (excluding London); the 2013 statistics relate to February 2014 in England and March 2014 in Wales and Scotland; and the 2014 statistics relate to March 2015 in Scotland. This means that changes between the 2012, 2013 and 2014 electoral statistics may not exactly reflect annual change, as the actual time difference between the annual sets of figures may be up to 18 months (the maximum difference is in Wales – October 2012 to March 2014).

6. Information on previous elections held in the UK or its constituent countries and a list of upcoming elections and referendums is available from the [Electoral Commission](#).
7. A list of those people that have [pre-release access](#) can be found on the ONS website.
8. This is the first release of 2014 UK electoral statistics. A previous version including data for England, Wales and Northern Ireland only was published on 26 February 2015. No revisions of either dataset have been made.
9. Release code: ELEC3BL1
10. **Next publication:**

2016

**Issued by:**

Office for National Statistics, Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport NP10 8XG

**Media contact:**

Tel: Media Relations Office 0845 6041858

Emergency on-call 07867 906553

Email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

**Statistical contact:**

Tel: Pete Large 01329 444661

Email: [pop.info@ons.gov.uk](mailto:pop.info@ons.gov.uk)

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13. Produced in partnership with National Records of Scotland and Electoral Office for Northern Ireland.
14. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

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This document is also available on our website at [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk).

## Statistical contacts

Name	Phone	Department	Email
Pete Large	+44 (0)1329 444661	Electoral Statistics Unit	<a href="mailto:pop.info@ons.gsi.gov.uk">pop.info@ons.gsi.gov.uk</a>



**Issuing Body:**

Office for National Statistics

**Media Contact Details:**

Telephone: 0845 604 1858  
(8.30am-5.30pm Weekdays)

Emergency out of hours (limited service): 07867 906553

Email:

[media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)