

New Law Passed Will Make Voting in UK General Election Fairer

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- Parliamentary Constituencies Act receives Royal Assent and becomes law
- Constituencies across the UK will be updated and have a near equal number of electors
- Every vote will count the same, delivering manifesto commitment for fairer elections

Every vote cast in a general election will carry equal weight, after new legislation passed today will make constituencies across the UK more equal in size.

The Government's Parliamentary Constituencies Act has received Royal Assent, which means the geographical boundaries of the UK's 650 constituencies will be redrawn to each contain a near equal number of eligible voters.

The updated constituencies will reflect significant changes in demographics, house building and migration – the current ones having been defined using outdated data from two decades ago.

Constitution Minister, Chloe Smith, said:

"Every voter deserves to have confidence that their vote counts the same, no matter where it is cast. This assurance is long overdue and today's Act delivers exactly that.

"Up-to-date, more equally sized constituencies is a sensible policy that will make our elections fairer, ensuring that people from all four nations of the UK have equal representation in Parliament."

Reviews of UK parliamentary constituencies are undertaken by four judge-led and independent bodies – the Boundary Commissions for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The Government's new legislation will strengthen the independence of the process further, ensuring reviews take place every eight years and the subsequent proposals are implemented automatically. This will stop any potential for political interference or further delays to updating constituencies, protecting fair representation of the British people for the future.

Starting their review in January 2021, the Boundary Commissions will use the most up-to-date data on the current UK electorate available, to determine the average number of electors that will be in each constituency and their new boundaries. This will take into account five protected constituencies which must remain as they are out of geographical necessity.

The Commissions' proposed new electoral maps will be subject to extensive scrutiny, each undergoing three separate periods of consultation, where members of local communities can submit written suggestions for consideration and attend public hearings. The Commissions must present their final reports to the Speaker of the House of Commons by 1 July 2023.

Updated and equalised constituencies is one of a number of manifesto commitments this Government is already progressing in its first year, to strengthen the integrity of our elections and public trust in democracy.

We have recently published world-leading proposals to make political campaigning online more transparent for voters; a draft Bill to repeal the Fixed-term Parliaments Act; and will introduce voter ID at polling stations to protect our elections from potential fraud.