

SCOTLAND OFFICE

Issued on behalf of
The Boundary Commission for Scotland



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Sixth Periodic Review of Westminster Constituencies

7 fewer Westminster constituencies in boundary shake-up

- Boundary Commission for Scotland begins its Sixth Periodic Review of Westminster Constituencies
- New rules allocate Scotland 52 constituencies out of 600 across the UK
- Nearly all constituency electorates to be within 5% of UK average
- Provision is made for 2 Scottish island constituencies: Na h-Eileanan an Iar (the Western Isles) and Orkney and Shetland
- Public will be consulted on proposals
- Consultation will be longer than in previous reviews; responses to be published for comment

A national review of MPs' constituencies gets underway today. New rules introduced by the UK Government earlier this year, which result in a decrease in the number of constituencies in Scotland from 59 to 52, make widespread change necessary.

Across the UK, the number of constituencies is being reduced from 650 to 600, with similar reductions in each part of the UK: England 502 in place of the current 533; Wales 30 in place of the current 40; and Northern Ireland 16 in place of the current 18.

The electoral quota for the review, which is the average electorate per constituency across the UK, is 76,641.2, with the electorate of each constituency having to be within 5% of that quota. As a result, the smallest permitted electorate is 72,810 and the largest permitted electorate is 80,473.

Exceptions to these electorate limits apply for Na h-Eileanan an Iar (the Western Isles), Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands council areas. Exceptions can also be made for very sparsely populated areas if constituencies are larger than 12,000 square kilometres.

The Boundary Commission for Scotland, responsible for reviewing parliamentary boundaries in Scotland since 1945, must make recommendations on new constituency boundaries to the Secretary of State for Scotland by 1 October 2013, in time for the next General Election, expected in 2015.

Dr Hugh Buchanan, Secretary to the Boundary Commission for Scotland, said: “the review will result in significant change for many constituencies. The new rules put great emphasis on equal electorates, and as a result there may be more constituencies crossing local authority boundaries. Consultation remains a central part of the review process, with updated processes for ensuring that the Commission's proposals are fully available for comment by anyone with an interest.”

Proposals will be published by the Boundary Commission for Scotland for public consultation towards the end of the year.

Further information on the review can be found on the Commission’s website: www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk

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Notes for News Editors

The Boundary Commission for Scotland is an independent advisory non-departmental public body sponsored and wholly funded by the Scotland Office. The role of the Commission is to review the boundaries of constituencies for the United Kingdom and Scottish Parliaments.

Full information about the Commission and its work is available on the Commission's website: www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk . A general introduction to the Commission and its work appears in our Information Paper *The Commission: a general guide* which is available from the **Publications** section of the website www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk/publications/ . Information on this review is available from the **Reviews in Progress** section of the website: www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk/6th_westminster/ .

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