

2023 Parliamentary Constituency Boundary Review

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you conducting a review of Parliamentary constituencies?

We are responsible for reviewing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in Northern Ireland on the basis of rules laid down by Parliament. Along with the Boundary Commissions for England, Scotland and Wales, we are required to submit a formal report by 1st July 2023 on the basis of rules set out in the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended).

What happened to the 2018 Parliamentary boundary review?

The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 was passed in December 2020, bringing the 2018 Review to a close without implementation.

What are the changes brought about by the 2020 legislation?

The key changes brought about by the 2020 legislation are:

* 650 seats across the UK, compared to 600 in the 2018 Review (meaning NI retains its 18 seats);
* There are three periods of public consultation, rather than two;
* Public hearings now take place during the secondary consultation period rather than the first;
* The interval between reviews will be 8 years once the 2023 Review is completed, meaning the next review is currently anticipated to finish in 2031;
* Other changes include reintroduction of the ‘inconvenience’ Rule 5 factor and a change to the Parliamentary process after submission.

You can read the legislation at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/>.

How many constituencies will Northern Ireland have after the 2023 Review?

The number of constituencies in each of the four parts of the UK is worked out using a formula in the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended). On the basis of this formula, Northern Ireland has been allocated 18 seats, which is the same number as it has currently.

How can I take part in the Review process?

There are three periods of public consultation during the 2023 Review. You can find information about the statutory consultation process in the Guide to the 2023 Review, which is available at <https://www.boundarycommission.org.uk/publications/guide-2023-review>.

The Commission has just published its initial proposals for consultation. Information about how to participate in the consultation is available at <https://www.boundarycommission.org.uk/2023-review-parliamentary-constituencies>.

Will the consultation materials and other publications be available in alternative formats or other languages?

The Commission is keen to make its consultation as accessible as possible. If you require materials in a language other than English, or in a different format, please contact us to discuss your needs – our contact details are available at <https://www.boundarycommission.org.uk/contact-us>.

When and where will the public hearings be held?

Changes brought about by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 means that public hearings must now take place during the second consultation period rather than the first. Dates and venues for public hearings have therefore not yet been confirmed, but they will be publicised in due course.

Will COVID-19 impact the consultation process?

The Commission is required to follow a statutory consultation process. However, we will adhere to all relevant public health guidance throughout the consultation, and at the time of the public hearings. We are currently exploring options around public hearings to ensure the process is as accessible as possible for all who wish to participate. There are also a number of opportunities during the Review to share your views in writing.

What base data is used for the 2023 Review?

The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 specifies that, for the 2023 Review, the “electorate” is the total number of persons whose names appeared on the electoral register at 2nd March 2020. It also specifies that the local government boundaries to be used are wards as at 1st December 2020. You can find more information about the statutory requirements in the Guide to the 2023 Review which is available at <https://www.boundarycommission.org.uk/publications/guide-2023-review>.

How does the Local Government Boundaries Review relate to the work being carried out by the Parliamentary Boundary Commission?

The Local Government Boundaries Commissioner is currently carrying out a review of local government wards. The Commission understands that this work is currently anticipated to complete by May 2022. It is important to note that the Parliamentary Constituencies Act specifies that, for the 2023 Review, the ward boundaries which may be considered are those as at 1st December 2020.

Will the Northern Ireland Canvass affect the 2023 Review?

The 10-yearly Canvass by the Electoral Office is currently taking place in Northern Ireland. It is important to note that the Parliamentary Constituencies Act specifies that, for the 2023 Review, the “electorate” is the total number of persons whose names appeared on the electoral register at 2nd March 2020.

What effect will this review have on Assembly constituencies?

Section 33 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 provides that the boundaries of the Northern Ireland Assembly constituencies follow the same boundaries as the Parliamentary constituencies.

What software was used to develop the proposals?

The GIS software used to develop the proposals is ESRI ArcGIS. This is an off-the-shelf GIS product - more information about the software can be found at ESRI’s website.