



# Election Timetables

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This Research Paper sets out the model timetables for Parliamentary general elections and by-elections. The *Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013* creates a 25 day timetable for general elections, with a timetable of up to 27 days for a by-election. A model local election timetable is also included. The Paper updates and replaces Research Paper 09/44 *Election Timetables*. Please note that the new timetables are not yet in force.

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## Research Paper 13/27

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## Summary

This Paper sets out the model electoral timetables for UK general and by-elections as laid down in the *Parliamentary Elections Rules* appended to the *Representation of the People Act 1983* as subsequently amended, most recently in 2013.

Since the general election in 2010, when Parliament was dissolved by prerogative powers and the election timetable lasted 17 days, two pieces of legislation have made changes to the triggering of and timetable for a parliamentary election. First, the *Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011* ended the prerogative power of dissolution. Dissolution now only occurs in accordance with that Act. Secondly, the *Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013* extended the length of the timetable for the general elections to 25 days. No date is yet available for the commencement of the lengthened timetable. Secondary legislation is required.

The *Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011* fixes the date of the next general election as 7 May 2015, and provides for five year intervals between elections. The *Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013* has made provision for lengthening the Parliamentary election timetable, both for general and by-elections. These provisions have not yet been brought into force and until they are, the timetable for a general election remains at 17 days. When brought into force, Parliament will have to be dissolved 25 rather than 17 days before the general election on 7 May 2015. The by-election timetable will also vary between 21 and 27 days from the issuing of the writ, but again this provision is not yet in force and no date has yet been announced for implementation, pending secondary legislation.

A draft timetable for the 2015 general election is provided. Once the new timetable has been introduced, Parliament will be dissolved on Monday 30 March 2015, Day 0 of the timetable, for polling day to be on Day 25, Thursday 7 May 2015. Under the current timetable, Parliament would be dissolved on Monday 13 April 2015.

For the purposes of the timetable, weekends and public holidays are disregarded. In the timetable for the 2015 general election Friday 3 April and Monday 6 April are Bank Holidays (Good Friday and Easter Monday) as well as Monday 4 May and are therefore not counted for the purposes of the timetable.

## 1 General Elections

### 1.1 Background

Statutory electoral timetables for both general and by-elections are laid down in the *Parliamentary Elections Rules* appended to the *Representation of the People Act 1983*. The timetables were last amended by the *Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013*.

### 1.2 *Fixed -Term Parliaments Act 2011*

This Act sets a maximum term between elections, rather than the actual length of the Parliament. It sets the date of the next general election as 7 May 2015 and on the first Thursday in May in every fifth year thereafter. There is scope for the Prime Minister to lay an order before both Houses to extend this date for a maximum of two months to deal with unexpected developments. He/she must set out the reasons for the delay. One precedent is the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001 which delayed local and general elections by one month.

Where an early election has taken place, the next election will generally take place five years later. The only exception is where an early election is held before the first Thursday in May in an election year, in these circumstances, the next general election will be held on the first Thursday in May in the fourth year from the previous election. This means that Parliaments cannot extend beyond five years and that the normal cycle is restored to five years.

Early elections can be held only:

- if a motion for an early general election is agreed either by at least two-thirds of the whole House or without division or;
- if a motion of no confidence is passed and no alternative government is confirmed by the Commons within 14 days.

Section 3 of the 2011 Act provides for a 17 working day election timetable, not including the day of issuing of writs and summoning of a new Parliament.

If a new Government cannot be formed within this time period, then dissolution is triggered. There is no provision for an extension of the 14 day period. Dissolution need not follow immediately on a triggering event, as section 2(7) allows for the Prime Minister to recommend a suitable polling day to the Crown. A proclamation for a new Parliament can then be issued.

### 1.3 Lengthening the timetable

The Electoral Commission had published proposals in July 2003 to lengthen the general election timetable to bring it into line with the 25 day local election timetable.<sup>1</sup> The Commission's reasoning was based on the increasing practice of combining local and general elections. The Commission proposals formed part of a package of reform to electoral administration set out in the Commission's report, *Voting for Change: an electoral law modernisation programme*, published in June 2003. The *Electoral Administration Act 2006* subsequently included many of these recommendations in its provisions, including the abolition of Maundy Thursday as a *dies non* (not counted for the purposes of the timetable).<sup>2</sup> However the Labour Government did not favour an increase in the length of the

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<sup>1</sup> [Electoral Timetables in the United Kingdom](#) Electoral Commission, July 2003

<sup>2</sup> For further details of the *Electoral Administration Bill 2005-06* see [Library Research Paper 05/65](#)

Parliamentary election timetable in its response to *Voting for Change* in December 2004 and so no lengthening of the timetable took place in 2006.<sup>3</sup>

In July 2010 the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) published a report, *Beyond 2010: the future of electoral administration in the UK*.<sup>4</sup> The AEA welcomed the new Coalition Government's proposal for fixed term Parliaments and suggested that this would provide an opportunity to lengthen the electoral timetable for Parliamentary elections. The AEA said that this would 'bring significant benefits to electors in terms of being able to register to vote in the election and to make applications for and then receive absent votes'.<sup>5</sup> The AEA recommended a standard electoral timetable for all elections of 30 working days.

On 13 July 2011 Mark Harper, then Minister for Political and Constitutional Reform, announced the publication of draft legislation on three electoral administration provisions in a written ministerial statement.<sup>6</sup> One of these provisions was to extend the timetable for UK Parliamentary elections from 17 to 25 working days. Mark Harper noted that the very limited time available for the postal vote process in the current 17 day timetable 'compromises effective participation in elections by certain types of voter, particularly overseas and service voters.' Extending the timetable to 25 days would increase the time between the deadline for nominations (which will remain Day 6) and polling day thus allowing administrators to begin printing ballot papers earlier.

The provision to increase the length of the Parliamentary election timetable was subsequently included in the *Electoral Registration and Administration Bill 2012-13* which received Royal Assent on 31 January 2013.

This provision has not yet been brought into force. Once it has been commenced, the timetable will be as follows:

#### 1.4 Model general election timetable (*Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013*)

Proclamation summoning new Parliament, dissolution of old Parliament and issue of writ	Day 0
Receipt of writ	Day 1
Last day for publication of notice of election	Day 3
Last day for delivery of nomination papers/withdrawals of candidature/appointment of election agents (4pm)	Day 6 (provided writs received on Day 1)
Statement of persons nominated published at close of time for making objections to nomination papers (5pm on Day 6) or as soon afterwards as any objections are disposed of	
Last day for requests for a new postal vote or to change or cancel an existing postal vote	Day 14

<sup>3</sup> Cm 6426 Recs 54-56

<sup>4</sup> *Beyond 2010: the future of electoral administration in the UK*, Association of Electoral Administrators, July 2010

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p23

<sup>6</sup> [HC Deb 13 July 2011 c24WS](#)

Last day to apply to register to vote	
Last day for new applications to vote by proxy (except for medical emergencies)(5pm)	Day 19
Last day for appointment of polling and counting agents	Day 20
Last day to apply for a replacement for lost or spoilt ballot paper (5pm) Last day to apply for an emergency proxy (5pm) Polling Day (7 am – 10 pm)	Day 25

For the purposes of the timetable, Saturday, Sunday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday, other bank holidays and any day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning are disregarded. Maundy Thursday is no longer disregarded following the *Electoral Administration Act 2006*.<sup>7</sup> NB A bank holiday which is in force only in one part of the UK is still a disregarded day for the purposes of a general election timetable. So St Patrick's Day (17 March) would affect a general election timetable if the polling day was less than 25 days after that date.<sup>8</sup>

A complete timetable for a parliamentary general election was set out by the Cabinet Office in a deposited paper prepared for the passage of the *Electoral Registration and Administration Bill 2012-13*.<sup>9</sup>

Day	Timetable	Key administrative activities
<b>0</b>	In accordance with the Fixed-term Parliaments Act, Parliament is automatically dissolved 25 working days before polling day and the writ is issued.	
<b>1</b>	Receipt of the writ begins the electoral timetable. The day that the writ is received is always Day 1 in the timetable.  Having received the writ, the notice of election can be published.	
<b>2</b>		
<b>3</b>	Deadline for publishing the notice of election. The notice of election can be published at any time after the receipt of the writ but the deadline for doing so is 4pm on Day 3. The notice of election informs people that an election is scheduled to take place.  Candidates who wish to stand for election	

<sup>7</sup> S 20 of the *Electoral Administration Act 2006*. Brought into force by the *Electoral Administration Act 2006 (Commencement No 2, Transitional and Savings Provisions) Order, 2006*. SI 2006/3412

<sup>8</sup> Schedule 1, para 2(2) *Representation of the People Act 1983*

<sup>9</sup> Dep 2012/1287

	can begin to submit their nomination papers after the publication of the notice of election.	
<b>4</b>		
<b>5</b>		
<b>6</b>	<p>Deadline for candidates who wish to stand for election to have delivered their nomination papers is 4pm. If having been nominated, a candidate wishes to withdraw; they have until 4pm to do so.</p> <p>Objections to a candidate's nomination can be made up until 5pm.</p> <p>A statement of the persons who have been nominated is published at the close of objections (5pm), or as soon afterwards as any objections have been disposed of.</p>	<p>Once the statement of persons nominated is confirmed, ballot papers can be printed.</p> <p>Once the ballot papers have been printed (a process which may take a number of days), postal ballot packs can be issued.</p> <p>First interim publication date – An update to the electoral register is published.</p> <p>For a poll held on the first Thursday in May, the monthly update before the poll will be published on the first working day in April<sup>10</sup>.</p>
<b>7</b>		

<sup>10</sup> Between December and early August, individuals can be added to the electoral register under the rolling registration procedure. During this period an update to the electoral register is published on the first working day of each month. To be included on one of these monthly updates individuals must have applied to register before the cut off point in the middle of the previous month. The cut off point is calculated by counting backwards from the first working day of the month for 14 calendar days and 6 working days. Section 13B(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 prevents the publication of the monthly register update, if that update would be published after the fifth working day before polling day. This means that the register update which takes place on the first working day in April will continue to be published but the update on the first working day in May will not.



		Second interim publication date – The date of the second update to the electoral register is to be determined by the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO), but must be a day after the first interim publication date and before the publication of the final register five working days before the poll.
<b>8</b>		
<b>9</b>		
<b>10</b>		
<b>11</b>		
<b>12</b>		
<b>13</b>		
<b>14</b>	<p>Eligible individuals have until 12 midnight to apply to appear on the electoral register. Individuals must appear on the electoral register to be able to vote in elections.</p> <p>Eligible individuals have until 5pm to apply for a postal vote or amend their postal vote details.</p> <p>If an eligible individual wishes to register to vote and apply for a postal vote then both applications must be made by 5pm.</p>	
<b>15</b>		
<b>16</b>		
<b>17</b>		
<b>18</b>		
<b>19</b>	Deadline for appointing a proxy. A registered elector can appoint another registered elector as their ‘proxy’. The proxy can then vote on that person’s behalf on polling day.	
<b>20</b>	<p>Deadline for objections to registration. After an individual has applied to be on the register there is a five working day objections period, during which anyone can object to that individual being added to the register. The objections period lasts for five clear working days.</p> <p>Legislation requires that an updated version of the electoral register is published on this</p>	<b>As with the existing arrangements, the final</b>

	<p>day. This is the final register which is used for the poll.</p> <p>Deadline for appointing polling and counting agents. Polling and counting agents scrutinise the conduct of the poll at certain stages e.g. counting of votes.</p>	<b>version of the register will continue to be printed on this day.</b>
<b>21</b>		
<b>22</b>		
<b>23</b>		
<b>24</b>		
<b>25</b>	<p>Polling day</p> <p>The deadline for applying to vote by emergency proxy is 5pm. An emergency proxy can be granted to someone who is registered to vote in person but falls ill after Day 11.</p>	

### 1.5 Current model general election timetable

A 17 day timetable remains in force until the provisions in the 2013 Act are brought into force.

Proclamation summoning new Parliament, dissolution of old Parliament and issue of writ	Day 0
Receipt of writ	Day 1
Last day for publication of notice of election (4pm)	Day 3
Last day for delivery of nomination papers/withdrawals of candidature/appointment of election agents (4pm) Statement of persons nominated published at close of time for making objections to nomination papers (5pm on Day 6) or as soon afterwards as any objections are disposed of Last day for requests for a new postal vote or to change or cancel an existing postal vote or proxy appointment (5pm) Last day to apply to register to vote	Day 6
Last day for new applications to vote by proxy (except for medical emergencies)(5pm)	Day 11
Last day for appointment of polling and counting agents	Day 15
Polling Day (7 am – 10 pm)	Day 17

## 1.6 Day of election

Until the *Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011*, which set the date of the next general election as the Thursday 7 May 2015,<sup>11</sup> there was no statutory requirement for parliamentary elections to be held on Thursdays; they could be held on any weekday. However, using Thursdays has become an election convention. Since 1935 every general election has been held on a Thursday. The month for the election varies but 1918 was the last time that an election was held in December, and there have been no polling days in January since 1910. For a full list of months in which elections have been held see *British Electoral Facts 1832 –1999*, Tables 5.02 and 5.03.<sup>12</sup>

## 1.7 Days of public thanksgiving or mourning

The *Representation of the People Act 1983* states that days of public thanksgiving or mourning are to be disregarded for the purpose of the election timetable but no definitions of such days are provided by the Act or elsewhere.

The Parliamentary election timetable could be affected by a period of mourning following the death of a member of the Royal Family. Days of mourning are not statutorily defined but would seem to encompass the general days of mourning observed by the public on the death of the sovereign, as opposed to the court mourning observed by the Royal Family and others. General mourning is observed by the general public, and is usually restricted to the death of the Sovereign. It lasts only a few days, until the funeral. It is assumed that this would be “public mourning” for the purposes of the *Representation of the People Act 1983*. There was no period of general mourning on the death of King George VI in 1952, but it is possible that a period of general mourning would be announced on the death of the present Sovereign.

In practice it could perhaps be assumed that any day of mourning or thanksgiving relevant to the election timetable would be set for a day or days (such as Saturdays or Sundays) which, if otherwise appropriate in the context of the event giving rise to them, would not substantively interfere with the election timetable.

Section 20 of the *Representation of the People Act 1985*, which makes provision for what is to happen if the Sovereign dies during a general election, was substituted by paragraph 16 of the Schedule to the *Fixed -Term Parliaments Act 2011*. The general principle is that a 14 day delay to the timetable and/or the meeting of Parliament is instituted, should the monarch die on or after the day of dissolution. The amount of election expenses is increased to take account of the longer campaign period.

### **For section 20 substitute—**

#### **“20 Demise of the Crown and parliamentary elections etc**

(1) Subject to what follows, the demise of the Crown does not affect any proclamation summoning a new Parliament issued before the demise (see [section 3\(4\)](#) of the *Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011*) (or any other matter relating to a parliamentary election or the summoning of a new Parliament).

(2) Subsections (3) to (6) apply if the demise occurs—

(a) on the day of the dissolution of a Parliament by section 3(1) of the 2011 Act, or

<sup>11</sup> Unless there is an early general election before 2015

<sup>12</sup> *British Electoral Facts 1832-199*, edited by Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher, 2000

(b) after that day but before the polling day for the next parliamentary general election after the dissolution as determined under section 1 of the 2011 Act or appointed under section 2(7) of the 2011 Act (“the current election”);

and any relevant writ, notice or other document is to be issued or, if already issued, read accordingly.

(3) In relation to the current election, for the purposes of the timetable in rule 1 in Schedule 1 to the principal Act—

(a) the polling day shall be—

(i) the 14th day after the day which would otherwise have been the polling day, or

(ii) if the 14th day is not a working day, the next working day after the 14th day;

(b) any working day within the period of 13 days beginning with the day after the demise—

(i) shall be disregarded in computing any period of time, and

(ii) shall not be treated as a day for the purpose of any proceedings before the polling day.

(4) If the polling day for the current election was appointed under section 2(7) of the 2011 Act, the reference to the polling day in section 1(4) of the 2011 Act is to be read, in relation to the current election, as a reference to the new polling day under subsection (3)(a).

(5) Section 76 of the principal Act shall have effect in relation to any candidate at the current election as if the maximum amount specified in subsection (2)(a) of that section were increased by one half.

(6) If the proclamation summoning the new Parliament after the current election was issued before the demise, the meeting of the new Parliament shall (subject to any prorogation subsequent to the demise) take place—

(a) on the 14th day after the day appointed in the proclamation for the meeting, or

(b) if the 14th day is not a working day, the next working day after the 14th day.

(7) If the demise occurs within the period of seven days before the day of the dissolution of a Parliament by section 3(1) of the 2011 Act, subsections (2) to (6) have effect as if the demise occurred on that day.

(8) In this section “working day” means any day other than one to which rule 2 in Schedule 1 to the principal Act applies in relation to the current election (or would have applied had it fallen before the polling day).”

## **1.8 General Election Timetable for 2015**

The new 25 day timetable represents a significant extension of the length between dissolution and day of poll in May 2015, given that Easter falls between dissolution and poll. The issue of writs would take place on 30 March, rather than 13 April, as under the 17 day timetable.

	<b>17 Day Timetable</b>	<b>25 Day Timetable</b>
Day 0 – <b>Dissolution and Issue of Writs</b>	Monday 13 April	Monday 30 March
Day 1	Tuesday 14 April	Tuesday 31 March
Day 2	Wednesday 15 April	Wednesday 1 April
Day 3	Thursday 16 April	Thursday 2 April
		<i>Friday 3 April and Monday 6 April are Bank Holidays (Good Friday and Easter Monday) and therefore not counted for the purposes of the timetable.</i>
Day 4	Friday 17 April	Tuesday 7 April
Day 5	Monday 20 April	Wednesday 8 April
Day 6	Tuesday 21 April	Thursday 9 April
Day 7	Wednesday 22 April	Friday 10 April
Day 8	Thursday 23 April	Monday 13 April
Day 9	Friday 24 April	Tuesday 14 April
Day 10	Monday 27 April	Wednesday 15 April
Day 11	Tuesday 28 April	Thursday 16 April
Day 12	Wednesday 29 April	Friday 17 April
Day 13	Thursday 30 April	Monday 20 April
Day 14	Friday 1 May	Tuesday 21 April
	<i>Monday 4 May is a Bank Holiday and therefore not counted for the purposes of the timetable.</i>	
Day 15	Tuesday 5 May	Wednesday 22 April
Day 16	Wednesday 6 May	Thursday 23 April
Day 17	<b>Thursday 7 May 2015 POLLING DAY</b>	Friday 24 April
Day 18		Monday 27 April
Day 19		Tuesday 28 April
Day 20		Wednesday 29 April

Day 21		Thursday 30 April
Day 22		Friday 1 May
		<i>Monday 4 May is Bank Holiday</i>
Day 23		Tuesday 5 May
Day 24		Wednesday 6 May
Day 25		<b>Thursday 7 May 2015</b> <b>POLLING DAY</b>

### 1.9 Dissolution Procedure

The *Fixed-Term Parliaments Act 2011* ended the prerogative power of the crown to dissolve Parliaments, as noted by Neil Parpworth:

Although the act does not declare that 'The prerogative power to dissolve Parliament is hereby abolished', it does provide in s3(2) that 'Parliament cannot otherwise be dissolved'. If not expressly then at least by implication, the prerogative power of dissolution has been extinguished by the 2011 Act.<sup>13</sup>

The term of the Parliament now automatically expires, unless there is an early election, or an extension using the powers to adjust the date of the election detailed below.. A royal proclamation will be made to summon a new Parliament, following a meeting of the Privy Council, but not to dissolve it. Under section 1(5) of the *Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011*, the Prime Minister may adjust the date of the election by a statutory instrument for up to two months, but it has to be approved by both Houses before dissolution and be accompanied with a statement of reasons. The intention is to deal with unexpected events, such as the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001, which resulted in the *Elections Act 2001*, postponing local elections for a month.

Where there is an early election, following either a vote of confidence, or decision of two thirds of the House, the proclamation announcing a new Parliament would include the date of the election, as provided in section 2 of the 2011 Act.

A royal proclamation is a formal notice issued to the people by the Sovereign. The role of proclamations in modern times has diminished, but the most important are those which announce the accession of a new Sovereign, and those which prorogue Parliament and trigger the campaign for a general election. The draft of the proclamation is submitted for approval and signature to the Queen in Council. At the same time an order is approved, directing the Lord Chancellor to cause the 'Great Seal of the Realm' to be affixed to the proclamation. The proclamation takes effect the moment it is sealed.

Following the *Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011*, The responsibility for issuing the writs for the election became a statutory responsibility of the Lord Chancellor and the Secretary of State

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<sup>13</sup> Neil Parpworth, *Constitutional & Administrative Law*, 7th edition, 2012, para 4.23

for Northern Ireland, although there is expected to be a continuing role for the Crown Office to despatch the writs.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Prorogation and adjournment***

Prorogation of Parliament is a prerogative act of the Crown, which suspends nearly all business of both Houses, including the sitting of committees, until Parliament is summoned again. The *Fixed-Term Parliaments Act 2011*, section 6(1) specifically preserves this prerogative power. This power is exercised by a royal proclamation, following a Privy Council meeting after which an Order in Council is issued.

The ceremony normally takes place when both Houses are sitting; a Commission in the House of Lords, usually made up of five peers, requests the attendance of the Commons and Royal Assent is signified to outstanding Acts followed by a nominal speech from the throne. Alternatively, Parliament can be prorogued by proclamation when either House is adjourned. Prorogation is the normal instrument for ending an individual session of Parliament, but it has been the custom for much of the twentieth century also to prorogue Parliament before its dissolution. The instrument of prorogation will nominate a day for the summoning of Parliament but when superseded by a dissolution a later day is named in the royal proclamation announcing the issuing of writs.

From September 1974 until 1992 an alternative practice grew up of dissolving Parliament by proclamation following the adjournment of both Houses. An adjournment merely suspends a House's business within a session for a specified period of time, and the exercise of the power is by the Lords and Commons separately. All that is needed is a resolution of the House or for the Speaker to declare under Standing Order that the House is adjourned. It is not therefore a prerogative act. The practice appears to have been first used in 1922 following the sudden break-up of the coalition government. Since Parliament had already adjourned for the summer recess, Parliament was dissolved by royal proclamation on the same day as the announcement of a general election, and no prorogation took place. Parliament had been adjourned on August 4 until November 18 and the election was announced on 23 October, with dissolution on 26 October.

Thereafter prorogation was used until 1964 when Sir Alec Douglas Home called an election when Parliament was already adjourned for the summer recess; after consultation he decided against a recall of the Commons simply to prorogue them. Harold Wilson was the next Prime Minister to abandon prorogation in September 1974, once again when both Houses were already adjourned for the summer recess.<sup>15</sup> Thereafter adjournment became the norm, as Professor Robert Blackburn records in his 1990 study, *The Meeting of Parliament*.

According to Professor Blackburn, discussions took place between officials of both Houses and the Crown between 1974 and 1979 as to the necessity of the prorogation ceremony. The *Royal Assent Act 1967* meant that Commissioners in the Lords were no longer necessary, as Assent by Notification became the accepted practice. Administrative convenience therefore told against the prorogation ceremony, which was time consuming, coming as it did a few days into the election campaign.

However before the 1987 dissolution, Speaker Weatherill expressed sadness that the ceremony was not taking place. Professor Blackburn notes this indication that it had been a

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<sup>14</sup> Section 3(3). At present, the Lord Chancellor undertakes this function once there has been an Order in Council.

<sup>15</sup> Adjournment had come on 29 July until October 15; the election was announced on 15 September and Parliament dissolved on 25 September

Government, not a Commons decision to abandon prorogation. In 1992 prorogation was held before dissolution. Although it is not known what prompted the reversion, the Speaker's intervention was no doubt very influential.

In 1997 the decision to continue with prorogation may well have been taken with the 1992 precedent in mind, although the effect on select committees meant unfortunate publicity for the Government and may well have contributed to the reversion to adjournment before the 2001 election.<sup>16</sup> The relatively long period between the announcement of the election on 17 March 1997 and dissolution on 8 April 1997 focused attention on the manner of the dissolution.<sup>17</sup> Prorogation came on 21 March 1997, a week before Good Friday.

Parliament while prorogued can be summoned by proclamation for an earlier day than in the prorogation proclamation, pursuant to the *Meeting of Parliaments Act 1797 and 1870* and the *Parliament (Elections and Meetings) Act 1943*.<sup>18</sup> In reality this power can only be exercised by the Prime Minister through advice to the Crown on the use of the prerogative.

### 1.10 Date of meeting of the new Parliament

The *Fixed-Term Parliaments Act* does not set the date for the meeting of a new Parliament following a normal general election. The date is announced in a proclamation issued by the Queen on the advice of the Privy Council summoning the new Parliament. Where it is an early general election the royal proclamation does include the date of the poll.

The meeting of Parliament after an election may be deferred under the *Proclamation Act 1867* by a proclamation proroguing Parliament to a later day not less than 14 days after the date of the proclamation. In 1950 this power was used to extend prorogation from 24 January to 14 February when Parliament was in recess. In the event, a dissolution proclamation was issued on 3 February and polling took place on February 23. The election had been announced on 11 January.

In 2010 the date of meeting of Parliament reflected the recommendations from the Modernisation Committee in its report, *Revitalising the Chamber: the role of the back bench Member*, which recommended that "there should be a longer gap than usually occurred in the past between the election and the day the House first meets". It recommended that "the gap should be about twelve days".<sup>19</sup> The Government accepted the recommendation in principle.<sup>20</sup>

### 1.11 Dates of election announcement, prorogation, dissolution polling day and assembly of Parliament

Prior to the *Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011*, it had been the custom for the Prime Minister to announce the date of the election some days in advance of dissolution, to allow for the rapid passage of bills in the "wash-up". Further detail of this procedure is given in a joint Commons and Lords Library Research Paper 11/18 [Wash-up 2010](#). The following tables set

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<sup>16</sup> There were press reports that the unusually early prorogation had been announced to ensure that the Select Committee on Standards and Privilege report on allegations against Neil Hamilton and others would not be published before the election. This was denied by the then Government.

<sup>17</sup> At 22 calendar days, it was the longest since 1950.

<sup>18</sup> Erskine May, 24<sup>th</sup> edition 2011, pp144-47. See ff18 on p147 for full explanation

<sup>19</sup> Modernisation Committee, *Revitalising the Chamber: the role of the back bench Member*, 20 June 2007, HC 337 2006-07, para 39

<sup>20</sup> Office of the Leader of the House of Commons, *Revitalising the Chamber – The role of the back bench Member (The Government's Response to the modernisation Committee's First Report of session 2006-07: HC 337)*, October 2007, Cm 7231, para 6, <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm72/7231/7231.pdf>



out the length of time in days between the election announcement, prorogation and dissolution, polling day and assembly of the new Parliament

<b>Year</b>	<b>Election announced</b>	<b>Parliament prorogued</b>	<b>Parliament dissolved</b>	<b>Polling day</b>	<b>Parliament assembled</b>
<b>1918</b>	November 14	November 21	November 25	December 14	February 4 (1919)
<b>1922</b>	October 23	-	October 26	November 15	November 20
<b>1923</b>	November 13	November 16	November 16	December 6	January 8 (1924)
<b>1924</b>	October 9	October 9	October 9	October 29	December 2
<b>1929</b>	April 24	May 10	May 10	May 30	June 25
<b>1931</b>	October 6	October 7	October 7	October 27	November 3
<b>1935</b>	October 23	October 25	October 25	November 14	November 26
<b>1945</b>	May 23	June 15	June 15	July 5 <sup>21</sup>	August 1
<b>1950</b>	January 11	January 21	February 3	February 23	March 1
<b>1951</b>	September 19	October 4	October 5	October 25	October 31
<b>1955</b>	April 15	May 6	May 6	May 26	June 7
<b>1959</b>	September 8	September 18	September 18	October 8	October 20
<b>1964</b>	September 15	-	September 25	October 15	October 27
<b>1966</b>	February 28	March 10	March 10	March 31	April 18
<b>1970</b>	May 18	May 29	May 29	June 18	June 29
<b>1974</b>	February 7	-	February 8	February 28	March 6
<b>1974</b>	September 18	-	September 20	October 10	October 22
<b>1979</b>	March 29	-	April 7	May 3	May 9
<b>1983</b>	May 9	-	May 13	June 9	June 15
<b>1987</b>	May 11	-	May 18	June 11	June 17
<b>1992</b>	March 11	March 16	March 16	April 9	April 27
<b>1997</b>	March 17	March 21	April 8	May 1	May 7
<b>2001</b>	May 8	-	May 14	June 7	June 13
<b>2005</b>	April 5	April 7	April 11	May 5	May 11
<b>2010</b>	April 6	April 8	April 12	May 6	May 18

<sup>21</sup> July 12 in twenty two constituencies and July 19 in one, because of local holiday weeks

## Intervals in days

Year	Announcement to dissolution	Dissolution to assembly	Polling day to assembly
1918	11	71	52
1922	3	25	5
1923	3	53	33
1924	0	54	34
1929	16	46	26
1931	1	27	7
1935	2	32	12
1945	23	47	27
1950	23	26	6
1951	16	26	6
1955	21	32	12
1959	10	32	12
1964	10	32	12
1966	10	39	18
1970	11	31	11
1974(F)	1	26	6
1974(O)	2	32	12
1979	9	32	6
1983	4	33	6
1987	7	30	6
1992	5	42	18
1997	22	29	6
2001	6	30	6
2005	6	30	6
2010	6	36	12

Source: FWS Craig *British Electoral Facts 1832-1987* Table 14.02, as amended

## 2 By – elections

### 2.1 By-election timetable

The writ for a by-election is issued on the same day as a motion in the Commons for the Speaker to make out the warrant for the issue of a writ. By parliamentary convention the Chief Whip of the party to which the previous Member belonged will usually arrange for the motion to be moved. This convention causes difficulties when the seat is vacated by an Independent. The most recent incidence of this was the death of the Independent, Peter Law, on 25 April 2006. On this occasion the writ for the seat of Blaenau Gwent was moved by a Labour Whip on 6 June 2006. The seat was subsequently won by another Independent.

The writ is issued by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery and sent to the Returning Officer or acting Returning Officer for the constituency. The by-election timetable is set in motion following the issue of the writ, but is more flexible than the general election timetable as the acting Returning Officer has some discretion in fixing the last day for the delivery of nomination papers and the subsequent polling day. In practice the motion is normally timed to ensure that the warrant is made with a particular polling day generally - Thursday - in mind, but the actual decision is for the acting Returning Officer, and there is no procedure for an appeal against the day chosen. Thursday has become a convention but there have been post war by-elections where polling day has been on another day.<sup>22</sup>

The *Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013* has lengthened the by-election timetable from between 13 to 19 working days to between 21 and 27 working days. No date has yet been set for the implementation of the new lengthened timetable. See Standard Note 06609 [By-election timetables](#).

The current wording of the Election Rules allow for a minimum 13 day timetable, but until the South Shields writ of 15 April 2013, no such by-election occurred in the last few decades. The possibility of such a short timetable arises only where the notice of election is published on Day 1. The timetable allows for the notice to be made up to and including Day 3 (see below). Instead the 15 day timetable has been the most commonly used in the post war period.

Saturdays, Sundays, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday, bank holidays and any day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning are disregarded in the timetable. A bank holiday for a by-election only counts if it is a bank holiday in that part of the United Kingdom in which the constituency is situated.

#### 1.1 Model by-election under the current Parliamentary Election Rules

Issue of writ	Day 0
Receipt of writ	Day 1
Last day for publication of notice of election (4pm)	Day 3 (this could take place on Day 1)

<sup>22</sup> The most recent example was the by election at Hamilton on 31 May 1978 which was a Wednesday; apparently this was chosen because the acting Returning Officer wished to avoid a clash with a World Cup match on TV. Earlier examples are given in Appendix 22 of *Chronology of British by-elections 1833-1987*, FWS Craig (1987)

<p>Last day for delivery of nomination papers/withdrawals of candidature/appointment of election agents (4pm)</p> <p>Statement of persons nominated published at close of time for making objections to nomination papers (5pm on Day 6,7 or 8 as the case may be) or as soon afterwards as any objections are disposed of</p>	<p>To be fixed by the acting returning officer; not earlier than 3 days after the notice of publication of election and not later than 7 days</p>
<p>Last day of receipt of absent voting applications (5pm)</p>	<p>11 days before polling day</p>
<p>Last day for appointment of polling and counting agents</p>	<p>2<sup>nd</sup> day before polling day</p>
<p>Polling Day</p>	<p>To be fixed by the acting returning officer: between days 13 to 19 , depending on the day fixed as the last for the delivery of nomination papers</p>

## 2.2 Model by-election timetable under *Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013*

<p>Issue of writ</p>	<p>Day 0</p>
<p>Receipt of writ</p>	<p>Day 1</p>
<p>Last day for publication of notice of election (4pm)</p>	<p>Day 3</p>
<p>Last day for delivery of nomination papers/withdrawals of candidature/appointment of election agents (4pm)</p> <p>Statement of persons nominated published at close of time for making objections to nomination papers (5pm on Day 6,7 or 8 as the case may be) or as soon afterwards as any objections are disposed of</p>	<p>To be fixed by the acting returning officer; not earlier than Day 6; not later than Day 8</p>
<p>Last day of receipt of absent voting applications (5pm)</p>	<p>11 days before polling day</p>
<p>Last day for appointment of polling and counting agents</p>	<p>5th day before polling day</p>
<p>Polling Day</p>	<p>To be fixed by the acting returning officer: between days 21 to 27, depending on the day fixed as the last for the delivery of nomination papers</p>

Note: - in computing any period of time for the purposes of the timetable, the following days are disregarded: Saturdays, Sundays, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday, bank holidays and any day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning. A by election timetable of 21 days is only possible when the Notice of election is made on Day 1. This would mean that nominations would close on Day 4.

### 2.3 Period between vacancy and moving the writ

There is a convention that the writ should be moved within about three months of the seat becoming vacant, but this is not a statutory or parliamentary requirement. Appendix 1 to this paper gives details of when the writ was moved for each by-election since 1974. A Parliamentary Information List gives a separate list of by-elections held more than 3 months after a vacancy occurred since 1974.<sup>23</sup>

In 1973 a Speaker's Conference on Electoral Law recommended that the three month rule on the moving of a writ be embodied in a resolution of the House.<sup>24</sup>

1. The Conference, conscious that the intervals before the issue of by election writs have on occasion been unduly prolonged, put forward the following guidelines:

(a) The motion for a writ for a by-election should normally be moved within three months of a vacancy arising.

(b) It is inexpedient for by-elections to be held in August, or at the time of local elections in April/May, or in the period from mid-December to mid-February before (under present arrangements) a new Register is issued.

(c) Consequently, if this restriction should bring the date of the by-election into one of these periods, the by-election should if practicable be held earlier. If this is impractical the period should be lengthened by the shortest possible additional time. The total period (from vacancy to the moving of the writ) should not be more than four months.

(d) In the fifth year of a Parliament, some relaxation of these guidelines should be allowed, in order if possible to avoid by-elections being held immediately before a general election.

These recommendations have not been implemented.

The Conference also recommended a relaxation of the arrangements for the issuing of writs during a recess, to allow the Speaker some discretion to issue a warrant only when asked by representatives of the appropriate party (para. 2.3). The Speaker was, at that time, required to issue a warrant for election to certain categories of vacant seats upon the application of any two Members during the recess without any consideration of the duration of the vacancy. However, the *Recess Elections Act 1975* still requires the Speaker to issue a writ on application of any two Members during the recess and the Speaker's Conference recommendation has not been acted upon.<sup>25</sup>

The Speaker's Conference noted that a maximum time limit would increase the likelihood of a by-election being in progress when Parliament had been dissolved:

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<sup>23</sup> Standard Note 6576 *By-elections held more than three months after vacancy*

<sup>24</sup> Cmnd 5500 1973

<sup>25</sup> The Speaker is required to give six days notice in the London Gazette before the writ can be issued and the recess must be long enough to allow the writ to be issued before the Commons meets again. See Parliament and Constitution Centre Standard Note no 529 *Recess Elections Act* for details of the procedure.

4. One consequence of putting a maximum on the period in which a by-election must be held is to increase the possibility that a by-election will be in train when Parliament is dissolved. If this happens, the writ for the General Election should manifestly cancel the earlier writ for the by-election; and similar provisions with regard to candidates' expenses should apply as now in the case when a poll is abandoned because of the death of a candidate.

Writs for by-elections have occasionally been issued, and then superseded due to an ensuing general election. A writ was issued for Warwick and Leamington on 5 November 1923 with a polling day of 22 November but Parliament was dissolved on 12 November and the by-election did not take place; the general election was held on 7 December.<sup>26</sup>

In 1983, a motion to issue a writ for the constituency of Cardiff North West was passed on 19 April 1983<sup>27</sup> but then a motion was passed on 10 May 1983<sup>28</sup> discharging the Speaker's warrant. The moving of the writ on 19 April 1983 is interesting in that it was moved by the Plaid Cymru MP Dafydd Wigley (although the Member who had died on February 10 was Michael Roberts, a Conservative) and a Government amendment was carried which required the warrant to be issued by the Speaker on 10 May.<sup>29</sup> In the event the general election was announced on 9 May, dissolution took place on 13 May and the election was on June 9 1983.

There is no statutory provision providing for the cancellation of a by-election when a general election is in progress. It is presumed that an Acting Returning Officer would consider the writ to have been superseded if the by-election were due to take place at a date when Parliament had been dissolved, since the Member could not be elected to a Parliament which no longer existed. If the conduct of the by-election were to be contested in an election court<sup>30</sup>, the view may be taken that the Acting Returning Officer had acted sensibly in cancelling the election, although there had been no strict statutory authority for such action. The position where the day fixed for the by-election falls between the Government's announcement of a general election and actual dissolution is much less clear-cut, since a Parliament would still exist. It is possible, for example, that an election court would uphold a decision by the Acting Returning Officer to cancel the election.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand if Parliament were still in existence on polling day the Acting Returning Officer might well consider he had no authority to cancel the election.

In 1979 the by-election for Liverpool Edge Hill took place on 29 March, and Parliament was dissolved on 7 April. On 28 March 1979 the Government lost a confidence vote and the then Prime Minister, Jim Callaghan, announced immediately after the vote that he would ask Her Majesty on the following day for a dissolution.<sup>32</sup> David Alton, the successful candidate, took his seat on 3 April 1979, and asked a number of Parliamentary Questions before dissolution.<sup>33</sup>

For information about by-elections in this Parliament see Library Standard Note SN/SG/05832, [By-elections since 2010](#).

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<sup>26</sup> The candidate was Anthony Eden on both occasions. See *Anthony Eden* [1986] by Robert Rhodes James pp.72-73. A writ was also apparently issued for a by-election in the University of London on September 15 1924, and Parliament was dissolved on October 9 (*Chronology of British Parliamentary Elections 1833-1983* [1983] F.W.S Craig pxi)

<sup>27</sup> HC Deb 19 April 1983 c164-171

<sup>28</sup> HC Deb 10 May 1983 c737

<sup>29</sup> See *Parliamentary Practice* (1989) p.277 fn2

<sup>30</sup> As provided for in Part III of the *Representation of the People Act 1983*

<sup>31</sup> The problem of election expenses remains as there is no statutory provision governing the calculation of candidates' expenses when a poll is countermanded, except where a candidate has died [s.76(3) *RPA* 1983]

<sup>32</sup> HC Deb 28 March 1979 c589

<sup>33</sup> See Hansard index vol 965 for details

### 3 Local election timetables in England and Wales<sup>34</sup>

The current local election timetable of 25 days dates from the *Local Government Act 1972*. It is set out in Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the *Local Elections (Principal Areas) Rules 1986*.<sup>35</sup> In theory, the earliest day for publication of notice of election is 32 days before polling day, but the remaining deadlines are fixed days before polling day. The timetable is calculated backwards from polling day, in contrast to the parliamentary timetable which is counted forwards from issuing of the writ. This causes some problems when local elections are combined with general elections or by-elections as certain key dates, such as closing time for nomination of candidates are not aligned.

#### 3.1 Local authority election timetable for 2 May 2013 in England and Wales<sup>36</sup>

Event	Working days before poll (deadline if not midnight)	Date
Publication of notice of election	Not later than 25 days	Not later than Tuesday 26 March 2013
Delivery of nomination papers	From the date stated on the notice of election	On any working day during the hours stated on the notice of election until the deadline for delivery of nomination papers
Deadline for delivery of nomination papers	19 days (noon)	Noon on Friday 5 April 2013
Publication of statement of persons nominated	17 days (noon)	Noon on Tuesday 9 April 2013
Deadline for the notification of appointment of election agents	16 days (noon)	Noon on Wednesday 10 April 2013
Deadline for withdrawals of nomination	16 days (noon)	Noon on Wednesday 10 April 2013
Deadline for new postal vote applications and for changes to existing postal or proxy votes	11 days (5pm)	5pm on Wednesday 17 April 2013
Registration deadline	11 days	Wednesday 17 April 2013
Deadline for new applications to vote by proxy (not postal proxy), except for medical emergencies	6 days (5pm)	5pm on Wednesday 24 April 2013
Publication of notice of poll	Not later than 6 days	Not later than Wednesday 24 April 2013
Publication of notice of alteration to the register	5 days	Thursday 25 April 2013
Deadline for notification of appointment of polling and counting agents	5 days	Thursday 25 April 2013
First date that electors can apply for replacements for lost postal votes	4 days	Friday 26 April 2013

<sup>34</sup> The administration of local government elections is devolved in Scotland

<sup>35</sup> SI 2214/1986

<sup>36</sup> Source: Electoral Commission

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/search?isadvanced=false&query=timetable+&form=simple&daat=on>

## Appendix I – By-Election Writs Since 1974

### By-elections since May 2010

Constituency	Date of vacancy	Date of Writ	Date of by-election	Calendar Days to issue writ from date of vacancy
Oldham East and Saddleworth	Annulment of Phil Woolas' General Election Victory 5 November 2010	16 December 2010	13 January 2011	41
Barnsley Central	Resignation of Eric Illsley 9 February 2011	9 February 2011	3 March 2011	0
Leicester South	Resignation of Sir Peter Soulsby 1 April 2011	5 April 2011	5 May 2011	4
Belfast West	Resignation of Gerry Adams 26 January 2011	16 May 2011	9 June 2011	110
Inverclyde	Death of David Cairns 9 May 2011	8 June 2011	20 June 2011	30
Feltham and Heston	Death of Alan Keen 10 November 2011	24 November 2011	15 December 2011	14
Bradford West	Resignation of Marsha Singh 29 February 2012	6 March 2012	29 March 2012	6
Cardiff South and Penarth	Resignation of Alun Michael 22 October 2012	23 October 2012	15 November 2012	1
Corby	Resignation of Louise Mensch 29 August 2012	23 October 2012	15 November 2012	55
Manchester Central	Resignation of Tony Lloyd 22 October 2012	23 October 2012	15 November 2012	1
Croydon North	Death of Malcolm Wicks 29 September 2012	8 November 2012	29 November 2012	40
Middlesbrough	Death of Sir Stuart Bell 13 October 2012	8 November 2012	29 November 2012	26
Rotherham	Resignation of Denis MacShane 5 November 2012	8 November 2012	29 November 2012	3
Mid Ulster	Resignation of Martin McGuinness 2 January 2013	11 February	7 March 2013	40
Eastleigh	Resignation of Chris Huhne 5 February 2013	7 February 2013	28 February 2013	2
South Shields	Resignation of David Miliband April 15	15 April 2013	2 May 2013	0



**By-elections since May 2005**

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Date of vacancy</b>	<b>Date of Writ</b>	<b>Date of by-election</b>	<b>Calendar Days to issue writ from date of vacancy</b>
Cheadle	Death of Patsy Calton 29 May 2005	23 June 2005	15 July 2005	25
Livingston	Death of Rt Hon Robin Cook 6 August 2005	8 September 2005	29 September 2005	33
Dunfermline & W Fife	Death of Rachel Squire 6 January 2006	19 January 2006	9 February 2006	13
Blaenau Gwent	Death of Peter Law 25 April 2006	6 June 2006	29 June 2006	42
Bromley and Chislehurst	Death of Eric Forth 17 May 2006	6 June 2006	29 June 2006	20
Ealing Southall	Death of Piara Khabra 20 June 2007	28 June 2007	19 July 2007	8
Sedgefield	Resignation of Tony Blair 27 June 2007	28 June 2007	19 July 2007	1
Crewe and Nantwich	Death of Gwyneth Dunwoody 17 April 2008	30 April 2008	22 May 2008	13
Henley	Resignation of Boris Johnson after becoming Mayor of London 4 June 2008	5 June 2008	26 June 2008	1
Haltemprice and Howden	Resignation of David Davies 18 June 2008	19 June 2008	10 July 2008	1
Glasgow East	Resignation of David Marshall 30 June 2008	1 July 2008	24 July 2008	1
Glenrothes	Death of John Macdougall 12 August 2008	13 October 2008	6 November 2008	62
Norwich North	Resignation of Ian Gibson 5 June 2009	30 June 2009	23 July 2009	25
Glasgow North East	Resignation of Speaker Martin 22 June 2009	16 October 2009	12 November 2009	116

**By-elections 2001- 2005**

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Date of vacancy</b>	<b>Date of Writ</b>	<b>Date of by-election</b>	<b>Calendar Days to issue writ from date of vacancy</b>
Ipswich	Death of Jamie Cann 15 October 2001	1 November 2001	22 November 2001	17
Ogmore	Death of Ray Powell 7 December 2001	21 January 2002	14 February 2002	45
Brent East	Death of Paul Daisley 18 June 2003	21 August 2003 Writ issued during the recess	18 September 2003	64
Birmingham Hodge Hill	Resignation of Rt Hon Terry Davis to take up post of Secretary General of the Council of Europe 23 June 2004	24 June 2004	15 July 2004	1
Leicester South	Death of Jim Marshall 27 May 2004	24 June 2004	15 July 2004	28
Hartlepool	Resignation of Rt Hon Peter Mandelson to take up post of European Commissioner 8 Sep 2004	9 September 2004	30 September 2004	1

**By-elections 1997- 2001**

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Date of vacancy</b>	<b>Date of Writ</b>	<b>Date of by-election</b>	<b>Calendar Days to issue writ from date of vacancy</b>
Uxbridge	Death of Sir Michael Shersby 8 May 1997	9 July 1997	31 July 1997	62
Paisley South	Death of Gordon McMaster 28 July 1997	9 October 1997 Writ issued during the recess	6 November 1997	73
Beckenham	Resignation of Piers Merchant 21 Oct 1997	30 October 1997	20 November 1997	9
Winchester	General Election result challenged; election petition	28 October 1997	20 November 1997	
Leeds Central	Death of Rt Hon	19 May 1999	10 June 1999	10

	Derek Fatchett 9 May 1999			
Eddisbury	Resignation of Rt Hon Sir Alastair Goodlad 28 June 1999	30 June 1999	22 July 1999	2
Hamilton South	Elevation to Peerage of Rt Hon George Robertson 24 August 1999	25 August 1999 Writ issued during the recess	23 September 1999	1
Wigan	Death of Roger Stott 8 August 1999	1 September 1999	23 September 1999	24
Kensington & Chelsea	Death of Rt Hon Alan Clark 5 September 1999	3 November 1999	25 November 1999	59
Ceredigion	Resignation of Cynog Dafis 10 January 2000	11 January 2000	3 February 2000	1
Romsey	Death of Sir Michael Colvin 24 February 2000	6 April 2000	4 May 2000	42
Tottenham	Death of Bernie Grant 8 April 2000	25 May 2000	22 June 2000	47
South Antrim	Death of Clifford Forsythe 27 April 2000	15 August 2000 Writ issued during the recess	21 September 2000	110
Glasgow Anniesland	Death of Rt Hon Donald Dewar 11 October 2000	31 October 2000	23 November 2000	20
Preston	Death of Audrey Wise 2 September 2000	31 October 2000	23 November 2000	59
Bromwich W	Resignation of Rt Hon Betty Boothroyd 23 October 2000	31 October 2000	23 November 2000	8
Falkirk W	Resignation of Dennis Canavan 11 November 2000	29 November 2000	21 December 2000	18

**By-elections 1992 - 1997**

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Date of vacancy</b>	<b>Date of Writ</b>	<b>Date of by-election</b>	<b>Calendar Days to issue writ from date of vacancy</b>
Newbury	Death of Judith Chaplin 19 February 1993	14 April 1993	6 May 1993	54

Christchurch	Death of Robert Adley 13 May 1993	7 July 1993	29 July 1993	55
Rotherham	Death of James Boyce 25 January 1994	13 April 1994	5 May 1994	78
Barking	Death of Jo Richardson 1 February 1994	17 May 1994	9 June 1994	105
Eastleigh	Death of Stephen Milligan 7 February 1994	17 May 1994	9 June 1994	99
Newham NE	Death of Ron Leighton 28 February 1994	17 May 1994	9 June 1994	78
Bradford S	Death of Bob Cryer 12 April 1994	17 May 1994	9 June 1994	35
Monklands E	Death of John Smith 12 May 1994	14 June 1994	30 June 1994	33
Dagenham	Resignation of Bryan Gould 17 May 1994	17 May 1994	9 June 1994	0
Dudley W	Death of Dr John Blackburn 12 October 1994	23 November 1994	15 December 1994	42
Islwyn	Resignation of Neil Kinnock 20 January 1995	24 January 1995	16 February 1995	4
Perth & Kinross	Death of Sir Nicholas Fairbairn 19 February 1995	2 May 1995	25 May 1995	72
North Down	Death of James Kilfedder 20 March 1995	23 May 1995	15 June 1995	33
Littleborough & Saddleworth	Death of Geoffrey Dickens 17 May 1995	6 July 1995	27 July 1995	50
Hemsworth	Death of Derek Enright 31 October 1995	9 January 1996	1 February 1996	70
Staffordshire	Death of Sir David Lightbown 12 December 1995	12 March 1996	11 April 1996	91
Barnsley E	Death of Terry Patchett 11 October 1996	20 November 1996	12 December 1996	40
Wirral S	Death of Barry Porter 3 November 1996	3 February 1997	27 February 1997	92
Meriden	Death of Ian Mills 16 January 1997	By-Election still pending at date of General Election		
Don Valley	Death of Martin Redmond 20 January 1997	By-Election still pending at date of General Election		

**By-elections 1987 - 1992**

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Date of vacancy</b>	<b>Date of Writ</b>	<b>Date of by-election</b>	<b>Calendar Days to issue writ from date of vacancy</b>
Kensington	Death of Sir Brandon Rhys Williams 18 May 1988	22 June 1988	14 July 1988	35
Epping Forest	Death of Sir John Biggs-Davison 17 September 1988	23 November 1988	15 December 1988	67
Glasgow Govan	Resignation of Bruce Millan 18 October 1988	19 October 1988	10 November 1988	1
Pontypridd	Death of Brynmor John 13 December 1988	1 February 1989	23 February 1989	50
Richmond (Yorks)	Resignation of Leon Brittan 31 December 1988	1 February 1989	23 February 1989	32
Vale of Glamorgan	Death of Sir Raymond Gower 22 February 1989	12 April 1989	4 May 1989	49
Glasgow Central	Death of Robert McTaggart 23 March 1989	22 May 1989	15 June 1989	60
Vauxhall	Resignation of Stuart Holland 18 May 1989	22 May 1989	15 June 1989	4
Staffordshire Mid	Death of John Heddle 19 December 1989	28 February 1989	22 March 1990	71
Upper Bann	Death of Harold McCusker 12 February 1990	24 April 1990	17 May 1990	71
Bootle	Death of Allan Roberts 20 July 1990	17 October 1990	8 November 1990	89
Eastbourne	Death of Ian Gow 30 July 1990	26 September 1990	18 October 1990	58
Bradford North	Death of Pat Wall 6 August 1990	17 October 1990	8 November 1990	72
Paisley North	Death of Allen Adams 5 September 1990	8 November 1990	29 November 1990	64
Paisley South	Death of Norman Buchan 23 October 1990	8 November 1990	29 November 1990	16
Ribble Valley	Elevation to Peerage of David Waddington 4 December 1990	13 February 1991	7 March 1991	71

Neath	Death of Donald Coleman 14 January 1991	12 March 1991	4 April 1991	57
Monmouth	Death of Sir John Stradling Thomas 29 March 1991	23 April 1991	16 May 1991	25
Liverpool, Walton	Death of Eric Heffer 27 May 1991	13 June 1991	4 July 1991	17
Kincardine	Death of Alick Buchanan-Smith 29 August 1991	16 October 1991	7 November 1991	48
Hemsworth	Death of George Buckley 14 September 1991	16 October 1991	7 November 1991	32
Langbaugh	Death of Richard Holt 20 September 1991	16 October 1991	7 November 1991	26

### By-elections 1983 - 1987

Constituency	Date of vacancy	Date of Writ	Date of by-election	Calendar Days to issue writ from date of vacancy
Penrith & The Border	Elevation of Rt Hon William Whitelaw to Peerage, 11 June 1983	6 July 1984	28 July 1983	25
Chesterfield	Resignation of Rt Hon Eric Varley 16 January 1984	6 February 1984	1 March 1984	21
Cynon Valley	Death of Ioan Evans 10 February 1984	4 April 1984	3 May 1984	54
Stafford	Death of Rt Hon Sir Hugh Fraser 6 March 1984	4 April 1984	3 May 1984	29
Surrey SW	Death of Rt Hon Viscount Macmillan of Ovenden 10 March 1984	4 April 1984	3 May 1984	25
Portsmouth S	Death of Bonner Pink 6 May 1984	18 May 1984	14 June 1984	12
Enfield, Southgate	Death of Sir Anthony Berry 12 October 1984	21 November 1984	13 December 1984	40
Brecon & Radnor	Death of Tom Hooson 8 May 1985	12 June 1985	4 July 1985	35
Tyne Bridge	Death of Harry	12 November	5 December 1985	40

	Cowans 3 October 1985	1985		
Antrim E	Roy Beggs resigned seat in protest at Anglo-Irish Agreement and was re-elected in the by-election 17 December 1985	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0
Londonderry E	William Ross resigned seat in protest at Anglo-Irish Agreement and was re-elected in the by-election 17 December 1985	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0
Fermanagh & S Tyrone	Ken Maginnis resigned seat in protest at Anglo-Irish Agreement and was re-elected in the by-election 17 December 1985	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0
Lagan Valley	Rt Hon Sir James Molyneux resigned seat in protest at Anglo-Irish Agreement and was re-elected in the by-election 17 December 1985	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0
Mid-Ulster	Rev Dr William McCrea resigned seat in protest at Anglo-Irish Agreement and was re-elected in the by-election 17 December 1985	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0
Newry & Armagh	Jim Nicholson resigned seat in protest at Anglo-Irish Agreement, however Seamus Mallon won the seat in the by-election 17 December 1985	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0
Antrim N	Rt Hon Reverend Ian Paisley resigned seat in protest at Anglo-Irish Agreement and was re-elected in the by-election 17 December 1985	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0
N Down	Sir James Kilfedder resigned seat in protest at	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0

	Anglo-Irish Agreement and was re-elected in the by-election 17 December 1985			
Strangford	John D. Taylor resigned seat in protest at Anglo-Irish Agreement and was re-elected in the by-election 17 December 1985	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0
Antrim S	Clifford Forsythe resigned seat in protest at Anglo-Irish Agreement and was re-elected in the by-election 17 December 1985	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0
S Down	Rt Hon Enoch Powell resigned seat in protest at Anglo-Irish Agreement and was re-elected in the by-election 17 December 1985	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0
Upper Bann	Harold McCusker resigned seat in protest at Anglo-Irish Agreement and was re-elected in the by-election 17 December 1985	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0
Belfast E	Rt Hon Peter Robinson resigned seat in protest at Anglo-Irish Agreement and was re-elected in the by-election 17 December 1985	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0
Belfast N	Sir Cecil Walker resigned seat in protest at Anglo-Irish Agreement and was re-elected in the by-election 17 December 1985	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0
Belfast S	The Rev Martin Smyth resigned seat in protest at Anglo-Irish Agreement and was re-elected in the by-election 17 December 1985	17 December 1985	23 January 1986	0
Fulham	Death of Martin Stevens 10 January 1986	13 March 1986	10 April 1986	62



Ryedale	Death of John Spence 4 March 1986	15 April 1986	8 May 1986	42
Derbyshire W	Resignation of Matthew Parris 15 April 1986	17 July 1986	8 May 1986	93
Newcastle-u-Lyme	Resignation of John Golding 25 June 1986	25 June 1986	17 July 1986	0
Knowsley N	Resignation of Robert Kilroy-Silk 1 October 1986	23 October 1986	13 November 1986	22
Truro	Death of David Penhaligon 22 December 1986	17 February 1987	12 March 1987	57
Greenwich	Death of Guy Barnett 24 December 1986	3 February 1987	26 February 1987	41
Kirkcaldy	Death of Harry Gourlay 20 April 1987	By-Election still pending at date of General Election		
Lewisham Deptford	Death of Rt Hon John Silkin 26 April 1987	By-Election still pending at date of General Election		

**By-elections 1979 - 1983**

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Date of vacancy</b>	<b>Date of Writ</b>	<b>Date of by-election</b>	<b>Calendar Days to issue writ from date of vacancy</b>
Southend East	Death of Sir Stephen McAdden 26 December 1979	22 February 1980	13 March 1980	58
Glasgow Central	Death of Thomas McMillan 30 April 1980	6 June 1980	26 June 1980	37
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	Death of Frank Maguire 5 March 1981	20 March 1981	9 April 1981	15
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	Death of Bobby Sands 5 May 1981	28 July 1981	20 August 1981	84
Warrington	Resignation of Sir Thomas Williams on appointment as a Circuit Court Judge 30 May 1981	26 June 1981	16 July 1981	27
Croyden North West	Death of Robert Taylor 19 June 1981	21 September 1981 Writ issued during the recess	22 October 1981	94

Crosby	Death of Rt Hon Sir Graham Page 1 October 1981	4 November 1981	26 November 1981	34
Belfast South	Death of Reverend Robert Bradford 14 November 1981		4 March 1982	
Glasgow Hillhead	Death of Sir Thomas Galbraith 2 January 1982	3 March 1982	25 March 1982	60
Beaconsfield	Death of Sir Ronald Bell 27 February 1982	4 May 1982	27 May 1982	66
Mitcham & Morden	Bruce Douglas-Mann sought re-election on joining the Social Democratic Party 4 May 1982	11 May 1982	24 June 1982	7
Coatbridge & Airdrie	Death of James Dempsey 12 May 1982	27 May 1982	24 June 1982	15
Gower	Death of Ifor Davies 6 June 1982	11 August 1982 Writ issued during the recess	16 September 1982	66
Birmingham Northfield	Death of Jocelyn Cadbury 31 July 1982	30 September 1982 Writ issued during the recess	28 October 1982	61
Peckham	Death of Harry Lamborn 21 August 1982	23 September 1982 Writ issued during the recess	28 October 1982	33
Glasgow, Queen's Park	Death of Frank McElhone 22 September 1982	8 November 1982	2 December 1982	47
Bermondsey	Resignation of Rt Hon Bob Mellish 1 November 1982	31 January 1983	24 February 1984	91
Darlington	Death of Edward Fletcher 13 February 1983	28 February 1983	24 March 1983	15
Cardiff West	Death of Michael Roberts 10 February 1983	By-Election still pending at date of General Election		
Rhondda	Death of Alec Jones 20 March 1983	By-Election still pending at date of General Election		

**By-elections 1974 - 1979**

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Date of vacancy</b>	<b>Date of Writ</b>	<b>Date of by-election</b>	<b>Calendar Days to issue writ from date of vacancy</b>
Woolwich West	Death of William Hamling 19 March 1975	6 June 1975	26 June 1975	79
Coventry North West	Death of Maurice Edelman 14 December 1975	13 February 1976	4 March 1976	61
Sutton, Carshalton	Elevation of Robert Carr to Peerage (Lord Carr of Hadley) 17 December 1975	20 February 1976	11 March 1976	65
Wirral	Resignation of Selwyn Lloyd 4 February 1976	20 February 1976	11 March 1976	16
Rotherham	Death of Brian O'Malley 6 April 1976	7 June 1976	24 June 1976	62
Thurrock	Death of Hugh Delargy 4 May 1976	25 June 1976	15 July 1976	52
Walsall N	Resignation of John Stonehouse 27 August 1976	15 October 1976	4 November 1976	49
Workington	Elevation of Frederick Peart to Peerage (Lord Peart) 10 September 1976	15 October 1976	4 November 1976	35
Newcastle C	Resignation of Edward Short on appointment as Chairman of Cable and Wireless Ltd. 13 October 1976	15 October 1976	4 November 1976	2
Cambridge	Resignation of David Lane on appointment as Chairman of the Racial Equality Commission 12 November 1976	12 November 1976	2 December 1976	0
Birmingham, Stechford	Resignation of Roy Jenkins on appointment as a European Economic Community Commissioner 5 January 1977	11 March 1977	31 March 1977	65
City of London & Westminster	Resignation of Christopher Tugendhat on appointment as a European Economic	4 February 1977	24 February 1977	30

	Community Commissioner 5 January 1977			
Grimsby	Death of Anthony Crosland 19 February 1977	4 April 1977	28 April 1977	44
Ashfield	Resignation of David Marquand on appointment to a post with the European Economic Community Commission 5 April 1977	6 April 1977	28 April 1977	1
Saffron Walden	Death of Peter Kirk 17 April 1977	17 June 1977	7 July 1977	61
Birmingham, Ladywood	Resignation of Brian Walden 17 June 1977	28 July 1977	18 August 1977	41
Bournemouth East	Resignation of John Cordle 25 July 1977	4 November 1977	24 November 1977	102
Ilford North	Death of Mrs Millie Miller 29 October 1977	10 February 1978	2 March 1978	104
Glasgow, Garscadden	Death of William Small 18 January 1978	20 March 1978	13 April 1978	61
Wycombe	Death of Sir John Hall 19 January 1978	7 April 1978	27 April 1978	78
Lambeth C	Death of Marcus Lipton 22 February 1978	4 April 1978	20 April 1978	41
Hamilton	Death of Alexander Wilson 23 March 1978	10 May 1978	31 May 1978	48
Epsom & Ewell	Elevation of Sir Peter Rawlinson to Peerage (Lord Rawlinson of Ewell) 6 April 1978	7 April 1978	27 April 1978	1
Manchester, Moss Side	Death of Frank Hatton 16 May 1978	23 June 1978	13 July 1978	38
Penistone	Death of John Mendelson 20 May 1978	23 June 1978	13 July 1978	34
Pontrefract	Death of Joseph Harper 24 June 1978	6 October 1978 Writ issued during the recess	26 October 1978	97
Berwick and E. Lothian	Death of John Mackintosh 30 July 1978	29 September 1978 Writ issued during the recess	26 October 1978	61
Clitheroe	Death of David Walder 26 October 1978	9 February 1979	1 March 1979	106

Knutsford	Resignation of John Davies 6 November 1978	9 February 1979	1 March 1979	95
Liverpool, Edge Hill	Death of Sir Arthur Irvine 17 December 1978	9 March 1979	29 March 1979	82
Barnet, Chipping Barnet	Death of Reginald Maudling 14 February 1979		Seat vacant at Dissolution	
Derbys NE	Death of Thomas Swain 2 March 1979		Seat vacant at Dissolution	
Abingdon	Death of Airey Neave 30 March 1979		Seat vacant at Dissolution	
Batley and Morley	Death of Sir Alfred Broughton 2 April 1979		Seat vacant at Dissolution	