



Electoral offences since 2010

Standard Note: SN/PC/06255

Last updated: 29 July 2014

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There has been increasing concern about electoral offences in recent years and in 2012 the Electoral Commission began a review to determine whether there were opportunities to improve confidence in the security of the electoral process. On 8 January 2014 the Commission published its [final report and recommendations](#) on electoral fraud in the UK. The Commission has called for sustained action to address the risk of electoral fraud, especially in higher risk areas, and has called for the introduction of a system under which voters should be required to show proof of identity at the polling station before they can be issued with a ballot paper.

The Labour Government had made provision for the introduction of individual electoral registration (IER) in the *Political Parties and Elections Act 2009* to help combat fraud and, following a commitment in the Coalition's *Programme for government* to speed up its implementation, the *Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013* made provision for the introduction of IER by 2015. IER will be introduced from 10 June 2014 in England and Wales and from 19 September 2014 in Scotland. For further information see Library Standard Note 6764, [Individual Electoral Registration](#).

This Standard Note gives details of the reports published by the Electoral Commission and the Associations of Chief Police Officers on cases of alleged electoral malpractice. The Commission's analysis of cases of alleged electoral malpractice recorded by the police throughout 2013 was published in March 2014. A total of 179 allegations were reported to the police in 2013; 406 allegations had been reported to the police in 2012.

The Note also provides information about the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into electoral conduct which published its [report](#) in October 2013. The cross-party group of MPS and Peers was commissioned by John Mann MP to examine discriminatory behaviour during election campaigns.

A chronology of allegations of electoral malpractice from 2010 to date is given and the different election offences are described; for information about electoral fraud before 2010 see Standard Note 3667, [Postal voting and electoral fraud 2001-09](#).

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1 Election offences

Details of the main electoral offences as set out in the *Representation of the People Act 1983* are given below. The Act largely consolidated the offences from nineteenth century legislation and defined them as corrupt practices. Appendix A to the guidance published by the Electoral Commission and the Association of Chief Police Officers on preventing and detecting electoral malpractice (see Section 3 below) provides more details of all the offences under the *Representation of the People Act 1983* and the penalties.¹

1.1 Undue influence

Section 115 of the *Representation of the People Act 1983* states that an individual is guilty of undue influence if he directly, or indirectly, makes use of, or threatens to make use of, force, violence or restraint, or inflicts or threatens to inflict, injury, damage or harm in order to induce or compel any voter to vote or refrain from voting. A person may also be guilty of undue influence if they impede or prevent the free exercise of the franchise of an elector.

1.2 Personation

Section 60 of the *Representation of the People Act 1983* states that a person is guilty of personation if he votes as someone else (whether that person is living, dead or is a fictitious person), either by post or in person at a polling station as an elector or as a proxy. Further, the individual voting can be deemed guilty of personation if they vote as a person they have reasonable grounds for supposing is dead or fictitious, or where they have reasonable grounds for supposing the proxy appointment is no longer in force. Vote-rigging is personation on a larger scale. The basic technique has been described as follows: vote-riggers consult the marked registers which are available locally after every election and which show who has voted. The vote-rigger notes the names of those who never seem to vote and applies for postal votes in their names. The postal ballot papers do not have to be sent to the voter's home address so these can be directed to the vote-rigger at another address.

1.3 Bribery

Under Section 113 of the *Representation of the People Act 1983* a person is guilty of bribery if he directly or indirectly, by himself or by any other person on his behalf, gives any money or procures any office to or for any voter, in order to induce any voter to vote or refrain from voting.

1.4 Treating

Section 114 of the *Representation of the People Act 1983* states that a person is guilty of treating if either before, during or after an election, he, directly or indirectly, gives or provides or pays wholly or in part the expense of giving or providing any food, drink, entertainment or provision in order to influence corruptly any voter to vote or refrain from voting. Any elector or his proxy who accept such food, drink, entertainment or provision is also guilty of treating.

1.5 Other offences

The *Electoral Administration Act 2006* made provision for new offences of supplying false information to an Electoral Registration Officer and of applying for a postal or proxy vote with

¹ *Guidance on preventing and detecting electoral malpractice*, Electoral Commission and ACPO

the intention of stealing another person's vote by either personating another elector or by wrongfully redirecting another voter's postal vote.

2 Electoral Commission and ACPO guidance

The Electoral Commission and the Association of Chief Police Officers published a revised version of their *Guidance on preventing and detecting electoral malpractice* in February 2013.² The guidance is for police forces in England and Wales

... mainly to support police election Single Point of Contact Officers (SPOCs), working with Electoral Registration Officers, Returning officers and Counting Officers, to minimise the potential for malpractice in the electoral process. It alerts police forces to issues that may arise in the run-up to polling day, on polling day itself and at related events. It also offers guidance on factors to consider when carrying out a force risk assessment. This guidance is for police forces in England and Wales.³

The Commission and ACPO recommend that Electoral Registration Officers, Returning Officers and Counting Officers should use the guidance when preparing integrity plans and point out that although 'occurrences of electoral malpractice are relatively rare, such occurrences often attract considerable media attention and can undermine confidence in the electoral process'.

There is a framework for reporting cases of electoral malpractice; this provides a database of allegations of electoral malpractice and breaches of electoral law. ACPO and the Electoral Commission publish an annual analysis of the allegations (see Section 4 below). If electoral administrators suspect electoral fraud they should report this to the police Single Point of Contact Officer (SPOC). The police investigate the allegations until they are satisfied that no further action is needed or they forward the file to the Special Crime Division of the Crown Prosecution Service.

2.1 Analysis of cases of alleged electoral malpractice in 2010 by the Electoral Commission and ACPO

On 15 February 2011 the Electoral Commission and the Association of Chief Police Officers published a report into allegations of electoral malpractice during the 2010 elections.⁴ Similar reports were published for the elections in 2008 and 2009.

The key findings for 2010 were that 232 cases of alleged electoral malpractice were reported by the police during the election period in Great Britain; 216 in England, 9 in Scotland and 7 in Wales. There were 25 cases reported in Northern Ireland throughout 2010. At the time of the publication of the report 68 cases remained under investigation or were awaiting advice from the Crown Prosecution Service. One case had resulted in a prosecution and conviction but over half of the cases reported, 137 in total, required no further police action.

38% of the cases reported related to voting offences including personation at a polling station and tampering with ballot papers. This was a similar figure to 2009.

34% of the cases were campaign offences including false statements made about a candidate; this was an increase from 2009 when the proportion was 27%.⁵

² *Guidance on preventing and detecting electoral malpractice*, Electoral Commission and ACPO, February 2013

³ *ibid*

⁴ *Analysis of cases of alleged electoral malpractice in 2010*, Electoral Commission and the Association of Chief Police Officers, February 2011

In an article for the website ePolitix Jenny Watson, Chair of the Electoral Commission, argued that the figures showed that electoral fraud was not a significant problem in the UK:

In the context of a general election involving over 45 million eligible voters, 4,150 candidates and 135 registered parties, the small number of cases suggests that some of the allegations of widespread abuses have been misplaced.⁶

2.2 Analysis of cases of alleged electoral malpractice in 2011 by the Electoral Commission and ACPO

The Electoral Commission and the Associations of Chief Police Officers published their analysis of cases of alleged electoral malpractice in 2011 on 20 March 2012.⁷ The report noted that the allegations of fraud in the majority of cases reported had not been substantiated, but that once again there had been an increase in the number of cases involving offences during campaigning. The foreword to the report summarised its findings:

In 2011, the police across the UK reported 270 cases of alleged electoral malpractice. Although outcomes cannot at this stage be reported for every case of alleged electoral malpractice reported in 2011 (because investigations or prosecutions have not concluded), our analysis shows that allegations in the majority of cases have not been substantiated.

Compared with previous years, in 2011 there has been an increase in the proportion of cases of alleged electoral malpractice relating to campaigning offences, including false statements of fact made about candidates and required information missing from the election materials. We will continue to provide access for all candidates and agents to appropriate and timely guidance which helps them to understand and avoid inadvertent breaches of electoral law.

At the same time there has been a reduction in the proportion of cases relating to voting offences, including personation or postal voting offences. Outside our election reporting period we have seen an increase in registration offences being committed for the purpose of financial, benefit and/or ID fraud.

The key findings of the report were as follows:

- A total of 224 cases of alleged electoral malpractice were reported by the police during the election reporting period. 192 of these were reported in England, six in Scotland, six in Wales and 20 in Northern Ireland.
- The most frequently reported category of cases of alleged malpractice were those relating to campaigning offences, such as failure to provide a printer's name and address on election publications and false statements made about a candidate (56% or 125 out of 224). This was a higher proportion of the overall total than reported in 2010 or 2009.
- There has been a notable decrease in the proportion of alleged voting offences to 16% (35 cases) from 38% in 2010 and 40% in 2009.

⁵ *Analysis of cases of alleged electoral malpractice in 2010*, Electoral Commission & the Association of Chief Police Officers, February 2011, p 4

⁶ *Electoral fraud fears 'unfounded'*, Jenny Watson, ePolitix, 23 Feb 2011

⁷ *Analysis of cases of alleged electoral malpractice in 2011*, ACPO and the Electoral Commission, 2012

- No case reported to the police during 2011 has affected the outcome of the election to which it related, and no election has had to be re-run as a result of electoral malpractice.
- As at 31 December 2011, court proceedings have been initiated in one case of personation at a polling station, and one case relating to an imprint offence has been resolved with a caution.
- A further 61 cases (27% of the total) resulted in informal advice being given by the police following investigation.
- Sixty one cases (accounting for 27% of the total) cases remain under investigation or are awaiting advice from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) or the Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) in Scotland.
- A total of 99 cases (44% of the total) required no further police action following investigation, because no offence was committed, there was insufficient or no evidence to bring a prosecution, the offence was not found to be an offence under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA), or no offender could be detected

The geographical distribution of cases

- Cases were concentrated largely within five police forces, who reported 10 or more cases of alleged electoral malpractice: West Midlands; Nottinghamshire; Staffordshire; Northumbria and Northern Ireland.
- Thirteen UK police forces reported no cases of alleged electoral malpractice relating to the May 2011 polls...In 2010, eleven forces reported no cases.⁸

Jenny Watson, Chair of the Electoral Commission, commented on the report's findings and acknowledged that there was still public concern about electoral fraud. Ms Watson said:

The evidence suggests that proven cases of electoral fraud are rare. But this is a serious issue and nobody should be complacent: more can and should be done to prevent electoral malpractice.

We welcome Government plans to introduce individual electoral registration in Great Britain. This will strengthen our electoral system and reduce the risk of fraud. We also want the Government to make progress in reviewing whether voters should provide identification at polling stations.

Electoral malpractice is a criminal offence and those found guilty should expect to be severely punished. Anyone who suspects it is taking place should report this to the police for investigation. As we approach the 2012 polls, we will also be working hard to ensure campaigners are aware of our guidance, so they do not fall foul of the law.⁹

⁸ *Analysis of cases of alleged electoral malpractice in 2011*, ACPO and the Electoral Commission, 2012, p4

⁹ *Perceptions of electoral fraud do not match available evidence: study shows*, Electoral Commission press notice, 20 March 2012

2.3 Electoral Commission's analysis of cases of alleged electoral fraud in 2012

In May 2013 the Electoral Commission published an analysis of cases of alleged electoral fraud in 2012.¹⁰ A total of 406 allegations were reported to the police, this was higher than in 2010 and 2011. The Commission reported that despite the higher number of allegations only a small number had been substantiated and that it was not aware of any which have been resolved with a conviction, nor any which affected the outcome of any election in either May or November 2012. Over half the cases reported were resolved with no further action.

The most commonly reported cases of electoral fraud related to campaigning offences (41%); 26% were alleged voting offences; 23% were registration offences and 6% were nomination related.

A detailed breakdown by police force of the number of cases and allegations in 2012 has been published on the Commission's website.¹¹

2.4 Electoral Commission's analysis of cases of alleged electoral fraud in 2013

In March 2014 the Electoral Commission published its analysis of cases of electoral fraud in 2013.¹² The report covers all allegations reported to the police during the elections in May 2013 and throughout the rest of the year, including three Parliamentary by-elections.

A total of 179 cases of alleged electoral fraud were recorded by police forces in 2013. 73 cases were found either to involve no offence or to have insufficient evidence that a crime had taken place. Three cases (fewer than 2% of the total number of cases reported during the year) resulted in prosecutions:

- A candidate in Loughborough Leicestershire received a four month suspended sentence for failing to reveal a prior criminal conviction.
- A candidate in the Isle of Wight received 150 hours community service for use of false signatures on a nomination form.
- A candidate in Cambridgeshire was ordered to pay £110 costs plus being disqualified from the election process for five years for use of false signatures on a nomination form.¹³

At the time of the publication of the report, 31 cases remained under investigation and in two of these cases court proceedings had been initiated.

3 Electoral Commission's evidence and issues paper

In response to concerns about electoral fraud both amongst the public and those running for election as well as electoral administrators, the Electoral Commission commenced a review in 2012 to determine whether there were opportunities to improve the confidence in the security of the electoral process. In May 2013 the Commission published an evidence and issues paper, *Electoral fraud in the UK*, and asked for responses by 9 August 2013 to inform the next stage of the review.

¹⁰ *Analysis of alleged cases of electoral fraud in 2012*, Electoral Commission, May 2013

¹¹ http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/155336/Analysis-of-cases-of-alleged-electoral-fraud-in-2012.pdf

¹² *Analysis of alleged cases of electoral fraud in 2013: summary of data recorded by police forces*, Electoral Commission, March 2014

¹³ *Ibid*, p3

The Commission stated that the evidence currently available did not support the conclusion that electoral fraud was widespread in the UK but that there was evidence to suggest that:

...electoral fraud is more likely to be reported as having taken place on a significant scale in certain specific places in England. Those places are currently concentrated in a small number of local authority areas – although we should be very clear that we do not believe fraud is likely to have been attempted in more than a handful of wards in any particular local authority area. It is also clear that the majority of cases of alleged electoral fraud relate to local government elections, rather than elections to the UK Parliament or other legislative bodies.¹⁴

The Commission sought views on the following changes to the electoral process:

Postal voting

- **Restricting the availability of postal voting in Great Britain**, so that it is only available to people who can demonstrate that they are physically unable to vote in person at a polling station (as is already the case in Northern Ireland), or introducing these restrictions in specific areas where there has been a recent history of cases of electoral fraud.
- **Providing alternatives to postal voting**, including advance voting, mobile voting facilities for people who are physically unable to vote in person at a polling station, or giving electors the option of ‘cancelling’ their postal vote.
- **Restricting the handling of postal vote applications and postal ballot packs by campaigners and prohibiting the availability of absent voters’ lists before elections**, so that there is a much clearer safeguard against suggestions of improper activity by campaigners, backed by the sanction of offences.¹⁵

Proxy voting

- **Requiring all proxy vote applications to be attested**, so that Electoral Registration Officers can have greater reassurance that the application is based on the elector’s need rather than the result of pressure from someone else.
- **Restricting the number of electors for whom a proxy can be appointed**, so that it is harder to influence the result of an election by organised proxy voting fraud.
- **Restricting the availability of proxy voting**, to specific categories of elector such as service voters or overseas voters.¹⁶

Polling station voting

- **Requiring all voters at polling stations in Great Britain to provide proof of their identity (this is already a requirement in Northern Ireland)**, so that the risk of personation is minimised.

¹⁴ *Electoral fraud in the UK*, Electoral Commission evidence and issues paper, May 2013, p1

¹⁵ *Electoral fraud in the UK*, Electoral Commission evidence and issues paper, May 2013, p3

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p4

- **Introducing statutory restrictions on the activities of campaigners outside polling stations**, so that electors can be confident that their access to the polling station will not be obstructed.¹⁷

4 Electoral Commission's final report and recommendations

The Electoral Commission published its final report and recommendations on 8 January 2014.¹⁸ The Commission made three main recommendations to tighten the security of the electoral system:

- Action should be taken now to protect the integrity of elections in all areas but particularly in higher risk areas. The Commission identified these areas as being: Birmingham, Bradford, Calderdale, Derby, Kirklees, Pendle, Slough, Walsall, Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Coventry, Hyndburn, Oldham, Peterborough, Tower Hamlets and Woking. The Commission expects all EROs, ROs and police forces to have comprehensive plans in place to address the risk of fraud and will continue to provide electoral integrity guidance and support across the UK, but will specifically target its monitoring activities in those areas where there is a higher risk of allegations of electoral fraud in 2014 and beyond.
- A revised Code of Conduct for Campaigners will restrict the involvement of campaigners in absent vote administration processes. The Commission recommends that campaigners at elections and referendums should not take, complete or help to complete postal or proxy vote application forms, nor should they take completed postal ballot papers from voters to post them or deliver them to the Electoral Registration Officer. The Commission plans to discuss these changes with the political parties and will introduce a revised Code of Conduct for Campaigners for elections after May 2014. Details of which parties and campaigners have agreed to follow the code will be made public.
- A requirement for voters to produce ID at polling stations should be implemented after the 2015 elections. The Electoral Commission will publish detailed proposals for a proof of identity scheme by the end of 2014 and wants to see this change in place by 2019.

5 All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Electoral Conduct

The All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into electoral conduct published its [report](#) in October 2013. The cross-party group of MPS and Peers had been established to examine the handling of incidents of discrimination at election time.

The terms of reference of the Inquiry were:

1. To inquire into the culture, practices and malpractices exhibited during election campaigns by electoral candidates and others with a particular focus on discriminatory behaviour.
2. To review whether the current law, regulations, political party and agency measures relating to electoral conduct are appropriate, well-co-ordinated or require amendment and to make recommendations accordingly.

¹⁷ Ibid, p5

¹⁸ [Electoral fraud in the UK: final report and recommendations](#), Electoral Commission, January 2014

3. To uncover what models of good practice exist for assessing and addressing accusations of discriminatory behaviour during elections.

4. To make recommendations, rooted in best practice where possible, for cross-party frameworks to prevent and address accusations of discriminatory conduct.

The Inquiry noted that formerly the Commission for Racial Equality and its regional offices had been key in drawing together evidence of malpractice and misconduct involving discrimination, but little had been done to bridge the gap since the dissolution of these bodies. The Inquiry took oral evidence from the Electoral Commission and the Association of Chief Police Officers and written evidence was submitted by the political parties, academics, individual MPs and others (see the appendix to the report).

The Association of Chief Police Officers told the Inquiry that discriminatory behaviour at elections was likely to be classed as a false statement in contravention of Section 106 of the *Representation of the People Act 1983*. In 2012 some 60 allegations were made under the Act of which 40 were deemed not to be offences; in 8 cases there was insufficient evidence to proceed and in the remaining 12 only 3 had been finalised.¹⁹ ACPO suggested that there was an increasing trend in allegations and that the impact of perceived electoral misconduct can be disproportionate to the reality.²⁰

The Inquiry also examined evidence of discrimination in the media, including social media, and concluded that this demonstrated that there was more that should be done to prevent discrimination in the media and particularly in the press during elections.²¹

A [press notice](#) published with the report noted that it made 30 recommendations, including the following:

- the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) should produce a plan for engaging in work on electoral conduct, including publishing annual guidance on good practice;
- the Electoral Commission should include the EHRC as part of the stakeholder group of experts in tackling race discrimination;
- the Electoral Commission should set out expectations in line with its duties under the public sector equality duty under the *Equality Act 2010*.²²

Section 7 of the [report](#) provides a summary of the conclusions and recommendations.

6 Chronology

(See Standard Note 3667, *Postal voting and electoral fraud 2001-09*, for a chronology from June 2002 to December 2009.)

13 January 2010 The Electoral Commission and the Association of Chief Police Officers published an [Analysis of electoral malpractice at the June 2009 elections](#). The key findings of the analysis were summarised as follows:

¹⁹ [All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Electoral Conduct report](#), 29 October 2013, para 75

²⁰ *Ibid*, para 65

²¹ *Ibid*, para 91

²² [Report of the All-Party Parliamentary inquiry into electoral conduct](#), October 2013

Our analysis shows that there is no evidence of widespread, systematic attempts to undermine or interfere with the June 2009 elections through electoral fraud. No case reported in this analysis has been shown to have affected the outcome of the election to which it related, and no election that took place in June 2009 has had to be re-run as a result of electoral malpractice.

- The number of cases and allegations of electoral malpractice recorded by police forces in Great Britain was very low, particularly compared with the scale of participation at the June 2009 elections, although the nature of the elections which took place in June 2009 were such that attempts to commit large-scale electoral fraud were not expected.
- The size of the cases recorded by police forces relating to the June 2009 elections, in terms of the number of allegations involved in each case, also indicates that there were no apparent attempts to commit large scale electoral fraud. There is some similarity in the nature of cases recorded by police forces relating to the June 2009 elections with those relating to the May 2008 elections.
- The geographical distribution of cases involving allegations of electoral malpractice recorded by police forces suggests that allegations are not confined to any particular area.
- Analysis of the outcomes from the police investigations of cases of electoral malpractice suggests that many recorded allegations have little or no substance.²³

13 January 2010 The *Times* reported that the Conservative Party was challenging the attempt to make the party liable for the costs in the Slough vote-rigging case in 2007. A Conservative candidate at the elections, Esheq Khan, and five other men were all jailed in 2009 by Reading Crown Court (see above). The defeated Labour candidate, Lydia Simmons, who exposed the fraud, pursued Khan for the costs of the case but as he was bankrupt she asked the Conservative Party to pay the £215,000 legal bill. When the party refused Ms Simmons went to the election commissioner, Richard Mawrey QC, for an order that either the national or local Conservative Party should be deemed liable for the costs of the case. The Conservatives challenged Mr Mawrey's power to make such an order, arguing that the election court had ceased to exist once he had delivered his verdict. David Holgate QC, for the Conservatives, said 'my client was not funding the litigation and wasn't running it, wasn't conducting it. This is a sensitive case because there has been no decision whereby a political party is held to account for the costs of an election petition. That has constitutional implications, possibly even ultimately a matter for Parliament.'²⁴ (See **29 November 2010** for outcome)

1 April 2010 Mohammed Munir, a councillor from Walsall, faced criminal charges for allegedly falsely registering electors and applying for proxy votes.²⁵ (see **4 September 2010** for outcome)

²³ *Analysis of electoral malpractice at the June 2009 elections*, Electoral Commission / ACPO, 13 January 2010

²⁴ Tories challenge £215,000 bill over rigged election, *The Times*, 13 January 2010

²⁵ Councillor facing ballot fraud claim, *Birmingham Mail*, 1 April 2010

22 April 2010 Two candidates standing for election to Calderdale Council were arrested on suspicion of electoral fraud relating to proxy vote forms. They were released on bail whilst police inquiries continued.²⁶

26 April 2010 Police in Yorkshire urged electors not to be distracted by the general election when it came to potential fraud in the local elections. The *Yorkshire Post* quoted Detective Chief Inspector Steve Taylor of West Yorkshire Police as saying

Ninety-nine per cent of the complaints we receive are related to local government...

... While everyone's heads are turned to look at the General Election, the local election process leaves itself open.

The newspaper also reported that, at the time of writing, the police in West Yorkshire had already received more complaints about the 2010 local elections than for the two previous years combined. The police had made two arrests after investigating 15 cases. Two Calderdale Council candidates were on police bail.²⁷

27 April 2010 The *Star* (Sheffield) reported that 86 polling cards were left on letterboxes, next to a laundry room, at a student hall of residence in Sheffield, sparking concerns about potential electoral fraud.²⁸

30 April 2010 The *Belfast Telegraph* reported that the number of allowed postal and proxy votes in Northern Ireland has dropped by 47% compared to the 2005 general election. The newspaper quoted the Chief Electoral Officer, Douglas Bain, as saying:

The figures reflect the determined efforts of the office in increasing the numbers legitimately on the register while our warnings about the consequences of fraudulent postal and proxy vote applications and our robust counter-fraud measures are working.²⁹

1 May 2010 The *Times* reported on its own investigation into allegations that parties had been encouraging postal vote applicants to send their forms to local party offices instead of directly to the Electoral Registration Officer. This practice is counter to the Electoral Commission's code of conduct. The *Times* argued that this increases the risk of electoral fraud because the applications include both the signature and date of birth of the applicant. These could be used to falsify a postal vote ballot paper.³⁰

3 May 2010 The *Guardian* reported that police across the country had received over 50 complaints relating to serious voter fraud and irregularities; it also reported that the rise in people registering for postal votes was causing some areas administrative problems.³¹

4 May 2010 The *Yorkshire Post* reported that the increasing number of postal votes was putting pressure on local councils to get them counted and checked in time. The newspaper quoted Peter Stanyon, chairman of the Association of Electoral Administrators, as saying:

²⁶ Two Tory candidates arrested, *Yorkshire Post*, 22 April 2010

²⁷ Exclusive: Yorkshire voters warned of local poll fraudsters, *Yorkshire Post*, 26 April 2010

²⁸ Fraud fears after students' polling cards left lying around, *The Star (Sheffield)*, 27 April 2010

²⁹ Postal and proxy votes have decreased by 47%, *Belfast Telegraph*, 30 April 2010

³⁰ Election law loophole exposes postal votes to danger of fraud; Voters are being asked to send forms to party offices in breach of official guidelines, *Times*, 1 May 2010

³¹ Surge in postal voting brings warnings of electoral fraud: Complaints to police relate mainly to council elections Risk of abuse because no ID is required, say critics, *Guardian*, 3 May 2010

Running from now until the general election, most councils will have large teams of people working until polling day.

We work with software companies to read signatures that do most of the checking for us – but this will be the first General Election since the new regulations requiring signatures and dates of birth, and it has made it an election in itself running alongside the main operation.

Councils will have put the systems in place to cope with the work, but it is still a massive task³²

4 May 2010 The *Independent* reported that one of its reporters was assaulted by a number of youths shortly after investigating allegations of electoral fraud in Tower Hamlets.³³ The reporter was investigating allegations that a number of electors had been falsely registered at the address of a Labour local election candidate.³⁴ The *Guardian* also reported on the assault.³⁵

The report in the *Independent* gave details of postal vote fraud investigations; in London the police had received 28 separate allegations of fraud of which 5 were under investigation. Four of the cases were in Tower Hamlets where 3,123 late postal vote registrations had been received. There had also been 3 allegations in Bradford which were being investigated.³⁶

5 May 2010 The *Times* reported on police investigations of allegations of electoral malpractice at the home of a candidate standing at the local elections in Tower Hamlets. 12 voters had been registered at the address.³⁷

5 May 2010 The Press Association National Newswire reported that the Metropolitan Police had started four criminal investigations into possible election irregularities in Tower Hamlets and one in Ealing; 23 other allegations from 12 boroughs were still being assessed.³⁸

5 May 2010 The *Evening Standard* reported on several cases of minors in London receiving polling cards prior to the 6 May general election.³⁹

5 May 2010 Cleveland police began an investigation into an alleged breach of electoral law on Teeside; poster theft and aggressive behaviour by doorstep activists had been reported by candidates. Dozens of posters advertising the Conservative candidate for Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland had been vandalised.⁴⁰

9 May 2010 The *Sunday Times* reported that 27 people had been registered to a single property in Southall.⁴¹

11 May 2010 An investigation was launched after the Returning Officer for the local elections in Burnley had referred the count in the Daneshouse with Stoneyholme ward to the police after what he described as 'voting irregularities'.⁴²

³² Postal Vote Counting Getting Underway, *Yorkshire Post*, 4 May 2010

³³ 'The first punch came, landing on my nose, sending blood down my face', *Independent*, 4 May 2010

³⁴ Police investigate electoral fraud claims after journalist is beaten up, *Independent*, 5 May 2010

³⁵ Bloody nose for Independent reporter investigating postal vote fraud, *Guardian*, 4 May 2010

³⁶ Police investigate electoral fraud claims after journalist is beaten up, *Independent*, 5 May 2010

³⁷ Police launch inquiry as more voters register at homes of candidates, *Times*, 5 May 2010

³⁸ Police prove allegations of electoral fraud, *Press Association National Newswire*, 5 May 2010

³⁹ Fears of voting fraud grow as children receive polling cards, *Evening Standard*, 5 May 2010

⁴⁰ Police probe into dirty tricks, *Evening Gazette*, 5 May 2010

⁴¹ 27 registered to London flat, *Sunday Times*, 9 May 2010

23 May 2010 A member of Walsall Council pleaded not guilty in court to 11 charges of electoral fraud (see **4 September 2010** for outcome)

25 May 2010 Commonwealth Election Observers released their report on the 2010 UK general election. They found that “while the system is not corrupted it is certainly corruptible”.⁴³

26 May 2010 Police began investigations into alleged fraud in Halifax after 4,000 postal vote ballots were delivered by hand to polling stations on 6 May.⁴⁴

4 September 2010 A member of Walsall Council, Mohammed Munir, was cleared of allegations of electoral fraud. It was alleged that he filled in and signed applications for 11 fictitious men to be added to the electoral register. The *Birmingham Mail* reported that:

...During the trial the court heard that Coun Munir had filled in the forms, but not signed them, for the men living above the Palfry Supermarket, Milton Street. The allegations were made after a rival councillor, and distant cousin to Coun Munir, Allah Ditta, was told by the owner of the flats the buildings were empty. However during questioning Gulfray Iqbar, who also owned the supermarket below the flats, told the court he had allowed tenants to live in the flats but not told the local authority.⁴⁵

7 September 2010 Four men from Bradford were imprisoned for 21 months, and one for 11 months, for attempting to rig the general election for the Bradford West seat in 2005 by fraudulently registering postal votes. The *Times* reported that they made more than 900 fraudulent applications for postal votes.⁴⁶

30 September 2010 In an interview with the *New Statesman* Baroness Warsi claimed that electoral fraud in the general election 2010 had cost the Conservative party three seats.⁴⁷

21 October 2010 In response to a Parliamentary Question in the Lords, the Minister of State, Lord McNally, said that 476 out of the 632 constituencies in Great Britain conducted verification of the personal identifiers for 100% of postal votes returned at the general election. Although the legislation only requires electoral administrators to undertake verification of a minimum of 20%, the funding was made available for 100% verification.⁴⁸

5 November 2010 The election court which heard the petition concerning the election in Oldham East and Saddleworth found Phil Woolas guilty of the illegal practice of making a false statement about a candidate and declared the election void. Mr Woolas ceased to be a Member of Parliament from the date of the court's report, 5 November 2010. Further details can be found in Library Standard Note [SN/PC/5751: Election petition: Oldham East and Saddleworth](#).

6 November 2010 Police are investigating claims of fraud in Labour's candidate selection process for the local elections in Middlesbrough on 5 May 2011. The *Evening Gazette* reported that accusations focused on whether applications being made for registrations on

⁴² Police probe Burnley Council elections over 'voting irregularities', *Burnley Express*, 11 May 2010

⁴³ *The Royal Commonwealth Society & the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK Branch Commonwealth Observer Team to the UK General Election 2010*, final Report, 25 May 2010

⁴⁴ Major electoral fraud alleged in marginal seat, *Independent*, 26 May 2010

⁴⁵ Councillor cleared of election fraud charge, *Birmingham Mail*, 4 September 2010

⁴⁶ Five jailed for plot to rig postal votes in favour of Conservative candidate, *Times*, 7 September 2010

⁴⁷ [Exclusive: Baroness Warsi says electoral fraud cost Tories the election](#), *New Statesman*, 30 September 2010

⁴⁸ HL Deb 21 October 2010 cWA 188

the electoral roll were genuine. The newspaper quoted a Labour North spokesperson as saying:

The Labour Party has received a complaint regarding alleged party membership irregularities in the run-up to the local government selections in University Branch...

...The Labour Party has suspended the selection process and the University Branch whilst an internal investigation is carried out⁴⁹

29 November 2010 The *Times* reported that Lydia Simmons had been unsuccessful in her attempt to find the Conservative Party liable for her court costs in lieu of Esheq Khan's bankruptcy (see **13 January 2010**). Lord Justice Leveson ruled that as the election court and the election commissioner had concluded the business for which the court was set up he did not have the authority to re-open his decision as to costs and consider making an order against a third party. Lady Justice Smith and Lord Justice Maurice Kay agreed.^{50 51 52}

3 December 2010 The *Walsall Express and Star* reported that Ali Hayder Munir, a Conservative Party member, was jailed for three months after admitting two charges of making false applications for proxy votes at the Walsall Council elections in 2008.⁵³ Munir, the son of Mohammed Munir (who was charged but later cleared of election fraud, see **4 September 2010**) was expelled from the Conservative Party.

9 February 2011 The *Burnley Express* reported that Asif Manzur will appear before Burnley Magistrate's Court on 3 March 2011 to face allegations that he conspired to defraud the Return Officer of Burnley Council in connection with the May 2010 local elections in the Daneshouse and Stoneyholme Ward of Burnley.⁵⁴

15 February 2011 The Electoral Commission and the Association of Chief Police Officers published a report into allegations of electoral malpractice during the 2010 elections.⁵⁵

24 February 2011 Sussex Police received two reports of 'double voting' in the May 2010 general election. One has been dropped due to a lack of evidence but the second is under investigation (as of 24 February 2011)⁵⁶

1 March 2011 John Spellar MP said that in light of the Electoral Commission's recent report on fraud in the May 2010 general election, Baroness Warsi should apologise for her comments in September 2010 that electoral fraud had cost the Conservative Party seats.⁵⁷

7 March 2011 The Electoral Commission released new guidance on preventing and detecting electoral malpractice.⁵⁸

⁴⁹ Party Fraud Probe Begins. *Evening Gazette*, 6 November 2010

⁵⁰ No third-party costs; Law Report. *Times*, 29 November 2010

⁵¹ The Conservative and Unionist Party v The Election Commissioner & Ors [2010] EWHC 285 (Admin) (19 February 2010) <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2010/285.html>

⁵² Conservative and Unionist Party v Election Commissioner & Ors [2010] EWCA Civ 1332 (23 November 2010) <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2010/1332.html>

⁵³ Calls for inquiry on vote rigging at council, *Walsall Express and Star*, 3 December 2010

⁵⁴ Man accused of election fraud bid in Burnley Council elections, *Burnley Express*, 09 February 2011

⁵⁵ *Analysis of cases of alleged electoral malpractice in 2010*, Electoral Commission & the Association of Chief Police Officers, February 2011

⁵⁶ Police investigate Worthing and Shoreham election fraud claims, *Argus Lite*, 24 February 2011

⁵⁷ MP Demands Warsi Poll Claim Apology, *Press Association*, 01 March 2010

⁵⁸ *Guidance on preventing and detecting electoral malpractice and other 2011 electoral integrity products*, Electoral Commission, 7 March 2011

19 April 2011 Warren Bradley, a Liberal Democrat councillor in Liverpool, was suspended by the party after he resigned as leader over allegations of fraud. It is alleged that Bradley nominated his son, Daniel Bradley, for election without seeking his consent. The *Daily Post* reported that the son did not want to stand and that the signature on the nomination papers was forged.⁵⁹

26 April 2011 The BBC reported that Rochdale Council had received a number of allegations of pressure being exerted on people into handing over uncompleted postal votes. The leader of the Council, Colin Lambert, said that the allegations covered six wards and all three of the main parties were involved.⁶⁰

1 May 2011 *Bedfordshire on Sunday* reported allegations by a local council election candidate that over 100 postal votes had gone missing. He had also raised concerns over the number of people registering for postal votes; 1,900 out of 6,000 eligible voters.⁶¹

4 May 2011 Three of the former councillors convicted of electoral fraud during the 2004 local elections in Birmingham were declared bankrupt due to overwhelming legal costs.⁶²

11 May 2011 The *Derby Evening Telegraph* reported that police were called to a polling station in Normanton after reports that voters felt intimidated by political activists outside. Police confirmed that they were investigating the incident.⁶³

17 May 2011 Conservatives were considering a challenge to a local election result in the Birmingham ward of Harborne after allegations that an election official went missing with two ballot boxes which were subsequently tampered with. Police arrested and bailed an 82 year old woman and a 52 year old man in connection with the allegations.⁶⁴

20 May 2011 Police are investigating a number of allegations about the conduct of Poole's local elections. The *Bournemouth Echo* reported that Conservative, Liberal Democrat and the Poole People Party members were involved. Most of the allegations reportedly stemmed from statements made in campaign literature. The police are also investigating a complaint made in relation to a by-election in the Newtown ward last September.⁶⁵

22 May 2011 A candidate who stood in the May 2011 local elections in the Queens Park ward of Bedford Borough Council has contacted police alleging that some voters were impersonating former residents of the ward at polling stations.⁶⁶

28 May 2011 Birmingham City Council Leader, Mike Whitby, is reported to have said that he would outsource the collection and counting of votes in the city to a security firm if he was not convinced that the council's elections office was competent to carry out the job itself. The *Birmingham Mail* reported this in the wake of allegations that two ballot boxes went missing on 5 May in Harborne ward (see **17 May 2011**). Mr. Whitby was said to be demanding a root and branch review of the elections office.⁶⁷

⁵⁹ Bradley is suspended by Lib-Dems after quitting as leader, *Daily Post (Liverpool)*, 19 April 2011

⁶⁰ [Postal vote fraud complaints made to Rochdale Council](#), *BBC News*, 26 April 2011

⁶¹ Concern as postal vote ballot papers go missing, *Bedfordshire on Sunday*, 1 May 2011

⁶² Vote fraud trio made bankrupt, *Birmingham Mail*, 4 May 2011

⁶³ Calls for security staff at polling stations as cops probe complaints, *Derby Evening Telegraph*, 11 May 2011

⁶⁴ Tories in poll challenge bid, *Birmingham Mail*, 17 May 2011

⁶⁵ Poole electoral conduct probe is launched, *Bournemouth Echo*, 20 May 2011

⁶⁶ Police to study claims over Queens Park poll, *Bedfordshire on Sunday*, 22 May 2011

⁶⁷ Chief: we may go private on Brum voting, *Birmingham Mail*, 28 May 2011

2 June 2011 The *Western Mail* reported that it expected the police to hand over files to the Crown Prosecution Service in relation to allegations that two Members of the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) were elected whilst being members of disqualifying institutions. Police are investigating whether the two may have committed electoral fraud by not resigning these positions prior to election to the NAW. The two Assembly Members say they did so unknowingly.⁶⁸

15 July 2011 Asif Manzur, a Liberal Democrat polling agent in Burnley, was jailed for eighteen months after he admitted stealing a book of unused ballot papers at a polling station and marking a number of them in favour of the Liberal Democrat candidate and putting them in the ballot box. Manzur admitted conspiring to defraud the Returning Officer.⁶⁹

12 January 2012 A Conservative candidate at a by-election for Ashford Council was arrested on suspicion of electoral fraud. Cengizhan Cerit was arrested after an investigation by the Returning Officer into alleged similarities in handwriting on postal votes was handed over to the police for further scrutiny.⁷⁰

13 January 2012 The Conservative candidate at a by-election for Ashford council was arrested on suspicion of voting fraud; suspicions were raised about alleged similarities in the handwriting on postal votes.⁷¹

February 2012 The Electoral Commission and the Association of Chief Police Officers published a revised version of their *Guidance on preventing and detecting electoral malpractice*. This was later updated in October 2012.

3 February 2012 Warren Bradley, the former Liberal Democrat leader of Liverpool city council, has been charged with perjury following a police investigation into allegations that he nominated his son as a candidate without his son's consent (see **19 April 2011**).⁷² Bradley was subsequently fined £1,000.⁷³

21 February 2012 The *Evening Standard* reported that 'dozens of flats' in Tower Hamlets were occupied by up to eight people per bedroom according to the electoral register. Allegations of electoral fraud have been made before in the borough and a spokesman for Tower Hamlets said that the local authority would look into the matter. The *Standard* reported concern about the possibility of electoral fraud with the London Mayoral elections due to take place in May.⁷⁴

23 March 2012 The *Evening Standard* reported that the Electoral Commission had reviewed the electoral registration procedures in Tower Hamlets where officials had had to remove 127 names from the electoral register. The *Standard* had obtained a dossier showing a total of 550 people were registered to vote in 64 properties in the borough.⁷⁵

16 April 2012 an article in the *Independent* by Mary Ann Sieghart called for a tightening of the rules on postal voting. Sieghart highlighted the practice of Biraderi amongst British Asian

⁶⁸ Police to hand over electoral fraud files, *Western Mail*, 2 June 2011

⁶⁹ Burnley polling agent jailed over election fraud, *Lancashire Telegraph*, 15 July 2011

⁷⁰ Suspicious postal votes lead to landlord's arrest, *Kentish Express*, 12 January 2012

⁷¹ Suspicious votes lead to arrest, *Kent Messenger*, 13 January 2012

⁷² Ex-council chief to be charged with perjury, *Liverpool Daily Post and Echo*, 3 February 2012

⁷³ Ex-council leader Warren Bradley fined for perjury, *Independent*, 16 March 2012

⁷⁴ Mayor voter fraud fears, *Evening Standard*, 21 February 2012

⁷⁵ Tower Hamlets ordered to tighten up its electoral register amid voting fraud fear, *Evening Standard*, 23 March 2012

communities and said that postal voting did not guarantee a secret ballot, particularly for women.⁷⁶

20 April 2012 A police investigation was launched after a tailor's mannequin was nominated as an independent candidate called Helena Torry for election in Aberdeen. Election agent Renee Slater was charged in connection with an alleged offence under the *Representation of the People Act 1983*.⁷⁷

26 April 2012 The *Independent* and the *Evening Standard* reported that Labour and Conservative councillors in Tower Hamlets had written to the Electoral Commission giving details of instances where they alleged electoral fraud had occurred. The councillors said they were concerned about the unprecedented number of households which had recently signed up for postal votes in the borough and also about reports that postal votes were being collected from voters.⁷⁸ The Commission issued a statement and said that it had passed on the allegations to the Metropolitan police.⁷⁹

Judge Richard Mawrey said almost nothing had been done to tackle electoral fraud since he disqualified six Birmingham councillors in 2005. Interviewed on BBC Radio 4, he said that local elections were still vulnerable to vote rigging and that 'where a small number of votes will make a considerable difference, then the opportunities for fraud are enormous, the chances of detection very small, and a relatively modest amount of fraud will guarantee you win the election.'⁸⁰

27 April 2012 The *Peterborough Evening Telegraph* reported that the police had received five allegations of postal voting fraud, one of which was that a person claiming to be a council worker was knocking on doors asking for completed postal ballot forms.⁸¹

28 April 2012 The *Huddersfield Daily Examiner* reported that the police were investigating allegations of electoral fraud in the Dewsbury South ward ahead of the local elections for Kirklees council.⁸²

30 April 2012 The local government minister, Grant Shapps, has written to the Electoral Commission about the allegations of electoral fraud in Tower Hamlets and called on the Commission to be more pro-active in investigating the situation.⁸³ The chair of the Electoral Commission, Jenny Watson, responded to Mr Shapps to reiterate that allegations of electoral fraud in Tower Hamlets were being taken seriously and dealt with appropriately by the Commission. Ms Watson said that all specific allegations had been referred to the police for investigation and that the Commission was taking steps to ensure that any risks to the integrity of the elections were being addressed.⁸⁴

⁷⁶ [How dodgy postal votes may decide our next government](#), by Mary Ann Sieghart, *Independent*, 16 April 2012

⁷⁷ You have the right to remain silent..., *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 20 April 2012

⁷⁸ Widespread allegations of electoral fraud in Tower Hamlets, *Independent*, 26 April 2012
Police probe London voting fraud, *Evening Standard*, 26 April 2012

⁷⁹ [Electoral Commission statement on allegations of electoral fraud in Tower Hamlets](#), 26 April 2012

⁸⁰ Widespread allegations of electoral fraud in Tower Hamlets, *Independent*, 26 April 2012 and Local polls open to fraud, *Daily Telegraph*, 27 April 2012

⁸¹ Five reports of voting fraud made, *Peterborough Evening Telegraph*, 27 April 2012

⁸² Poll fraud probe, *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 28 April 2012

⁸³ Watchdog attacked over electoral fraud, *Evening Standard*, 30 April 2012

⁸⁴ [Letter from Jenny Watson, chair of the Electoral Commission, to Grant Shapps, Minister for Housing and Local Government](#), 30 April 2012

1 May 2012 The British National Party's candidate for mayor of Liverpool, Mike Whitby, has been arrested on suspicion of faking signatures on his nomination papers.⁸⁵ This followed a complaint made to Merseyside Police after an investigation by the *Liverpool Echo*.⁸⁶

Police officers are to be stationed at every polling station in Tower Hamlets on 3 May as the Metropolitan police began an investigation into electoral fraud in the borough. The police said they would also investigate claims that a recent by-election in the Banglatown and Spitalfields ward had been rigged.⁸⁷

3 May 2012 The *Independent* reported that a Conservative councillor in Tower Hamlets had sent a dossier of evidence to the Electoral Commission which gave details of flats where it was suspected that a large number of 'ghost voters' had been registered for postal voting.⁸⁸

The *Express* reported that Nick de Bois MP had cross-checked the names of constituents who were seeking his help with immigration problems and had found that 21 out of a sample of 100 had been wrongly registered to vote. Mr de Bois urged a strengthening of the rules on electoral registration.

10 May 2012 The *Electoral Registration and Administration 2012-13* was introduced. The Bill provides a legislative framework for the introduction of individual electoral registration.

23 May 2012 Second reading of the *Electoral Registration and Administration 2012-13*.

25 May 2012 The *Evening Standard* reported that a formal request had been made by Stephen Hammond MP to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) asking for a team to examine voting in Tower Hamlets for evidence of systematic electoral abuse.⁸⁹

31 May 2012 The *Lancashire Telegraph* reported that Andrew Stephenson, MP for Pendle, was meeting the Electoral Commission to discuss allegations of postal voting fraud in his constituency. The article also reported that the police were stepping up an investigation into electoral fraud in Hyndburn and Blackburn at the local elections.⁹⁰

23 August 2012 The *Docklands and East London Advertiser* reported that the *Evening Standard* has apologised to a senior figure in Tower Hamlets council's legal department for accusing her of concealing electoral fraud in the borough.⁹¹

15 September 2012 The *Huddersfield Daily Examiner* reported that three cases of alleged electoral fraud in this year's Kirklees council election have been referred to the Crown Prosecution Service.⁹²

21 September 2012 The *Liverpool Echo* reported that the BNP candidate for Liverpool mayor who was arrested on suspicion of election fraud will not face charges.⁹³

⁸⁵ BNP man arrested over 'fake signatures', *Western Mail*, 1 May 2012

⁸⁶ BNP man arrested in election fraud inquiry: Echo probe uncovers alleged fake signatures, *Liverpool Echo*, 1 May 2012

⁸⁷ Police to guard voting booths at Tower Hamlets, *Evening Standard*, 1 May 2012

⁸⁸ Local elections: 'They knock on the door and ask us to give them our ballot papers', *Independent*, 3 May 2012

⁸⁹ MPs ask international observers to probe mayor election 'fraud', *Evening Standard*, 25 May 2012

⁹⁰ Watchdog takes up MP's electoral fraud fight, *Lancashire Telegraph*, 31 May 2012

⁹¹ Evening Standard apologises to senior figure in tower hamlets council, *Docklands and East London Advertiser*, 23 August 2012

⁹² Poll fraud cases for scrutiny, *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 15 September 2012

8 December 2012 The *Mail Online* reported that a pensioner accused of registering a mannequin as a candidate in a city council election is to face trial.⁹⁴

12 December 2012 The *Lancashire Telegraph* reported that East Lancashire MPs have backed an inquiry into possible election fraud.⁹⁵

11 January 2013 The *Scotsman* has reported that a pensioner has been cleared of registering a dummy to stand in a local government election in Aberdeen after the case was thrown out.⁹⁶

26 January 2013 The *Manchester Evening News* reported that around 450 postal votes were rejected for not being completed correctly at last year's local elections.⁹⁷

5 February 2013 The *Daily Mail* reported that Cengizhan Cerit (Conservative) tried to rig the Ashford local council by-election by forging signatures on his nomination form. He was caught out by a spelling mistake. He also tried to apply for hundreds of postal votes to rig the election result. Cerit was sentenced on **8 February 2013**. The *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail* reported that Cerit had been jailed for 12 months.^{98 99} Judge Adele Williams told him: "This was a fraud which struck at the heart of democracy. You tried to corrupt the legitimate electoral process. You sought to interfere with legitimate electoral process of our democracy. This is a very serious matter indeed."¹⁰⁰

6 February 2013 *BBC News* reported that Councillor Allan Pennington (Conservative) was challenging a High Court ruling requiring him to give up his seat after a number of votes cast at the local election at Prestatyn in May 2012 were wrongly allocated to him instead of his opponent Paul Penlington.¹⁰¹

19 March 2013 Four women appeared in court as part of an investigation into allegations of fraud at the local elections in Derby in 2012. Tameena Ali and Samra Ali were charged with personation offences; Nasreen Akhtar was charged with misconduct in public office and Noshiela Maqsood was charged with perverting the course of justice.¹⁰²

March 2013 The Electoral Commission published its report on the outcome of investigations into allegations of electoral fraud in Tower Hamlets in 2012.¹⁰³ The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) recorded and investigated a total of 64 cases involving 154 separate allegations of electoral fraud in relation to elections in Tower Hamlets in April and May 2012:

- The MPS identified three cases involving five allegations where there was evidence to suggest that an offence may have been committed,

⁹³ No charges for BNP city mayor hopeful; Court case 'not strong enough', *The Liverpool Echo*, 21 September 2012

⁹⁴ Pensioner accused of registering a mannequin as a candidate in a city council election is to face trial, *Mail Online*, 8 December 2012

⁹⁵ East Lancashire MPs back probe over possible election fraud, *Lancashire Telegraph*, 12 December 2012

⁹⁶ Dummies can stand for election, court signals, after case thrown out, *news.scotsman.com*, 11 January 2013

⁹⁷ Report shows 450 postal votes were rejected, *Manchester Evening News*, 26 January 2013

⁹⁸ Tory councillor tried to rig election, *Daily Telegraph*, 9 February 2013

⁹⁹ Tory candidate who was caught out by a spelling mistake as he tried to forge election results is jailed for 12 months, *The Daily Mail*, 8 February 2013

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*

¹⁰¹ Prestatyn vote mix-up: Allan Pennington challenges court, *BBC News*, 6 February 2013

¹⁰² Four women charged with election fraud following city vote last year, *Derby Evening Telegraph*, 19 March 2013

¹⁰³ *Allegations of electoral fraud in Tower Hamlets in 2012: report on the outcome of investigations*, Electoral Commission, March 2013

but where there was insufficient evidence to prove an offence or identify a suspect. No further action was able to be taken in these cases.

- The MPS identified 13 cases involving 44 allegations of false registrations where the information held by the ERO was found to be accurate, and there was no evidence of any offences having been committed.
- The MPS identified 48 cases involving 105 allegations where there was no evidence that an offence appeared to have been committed.¹⁰⁴

The Electoral Commission made a number of recommendations aiming to rebuild the confidence and trust between the key participants in the election process in Tower Hamlets: the ERO and Returning Officer for Tower Hamlets should commence a review of all current electoral registration and election integrity processes; the Metropolitan Police should review its plans for policing elections in 2014 and elected representatives, political parties, candidates and campaigners should make a clear public commitment to following the Electoral Commission's Code of Conduct for campaigners. The Commission itself would monitor the plans of the ERO, the RO and the police in the twelve months before the next elections in 2014.

May 2013 The Electoral Commission published an analysis of cases of alleged electoral fraud in 2012.¹⁰⁵

May 2013 The Electoral Commission published an evidence and issues paper, *Electoral fraud in the UK*.

27 July 2013 Nasreen Akhtar, a polling clerk, was jailed for 14 months for her part in personation offences at the local elections in Derby in May 2012. Nasreen Akhtar helped her nieces, Tameena Ali and Samra Ali, to cast fraudulent votes by pretending to be someone else. Tameena Ali and Samra Ali were given eight month prison sentences, suspended for 18 months.¹⁰⁶ Judge John Wait said it was "fundamental for a working democracy" that elections were done fairly and that "if corrupted, those elections have no democratic mandate."

13 August 2013 A UKIP candidate, Hugh Mennie, who stood at the Cambridgeshire county council elections in May has been charged over allegations that he forged signatures to stand as a candidate.¹⁰⁷

25 August 2013 The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) said it was looking into referrals made to it about the election of the PCCs for North Wales and Hampshire. The allegations referred to the use of false addresses on their nomination forms.¹⁰⁸

3 September 2013 The press reported that Nigel Kennedy, the violinist, had revealed in an interview that he had taken a friend to the polling station at the 2010 general election to vote using his wife's polling card as she was away.¹⁰⁹ The allegation of personation was raised as

¹⁰⁴ ibid

¹⁰⁵ *Analysis of alleged cases of electoral fraud in 2012*, Electoral Commission, May 2013

¹⁰⁶ Jail for polling station clerk who played part in election day fraud, *Derby Evening Telegraph*, 27 July 2013

¹⁰⁷ UKIP candidate charged over election fraud claims, *Daily Telegraph*, 13 August 2013

¹⁰⁸ Police and Crime Commissioners accused of electoral fraud, *Daily Telegraph*, 25 August 2013

¹⁰⁹ *Violinist Nigel Kennedy could face vote fraud probe*, BBC News online, 3 September 2013

a point of order in the House of Commons; the Speaker, John Bercow, said it was a matter for the police.¹¹⁰

25 September 2013 Alex MacLeod, a Highland councillor, resigned over alleged misconduct involving election expenses.¹¹¹

11 October 2013 Alex MacLeod is charged of forming a fraudulent scheme to be elected as a councillor for Landward Caithness in the Highland Council election in 2012 and of knowingly declaring a false home residence in his nomination paper.¹¹²

18 October 2013 The Crown Prosecution Service decided not to prosecute Michael Mates for making a false declaration of his address when he stood for election as a Police and Crime Commissioner. In a statement, the CPS said: "Having considered the reasons why Michael Mates was at the address provided, we have determined that there is sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction in this case. However, in view of the likely penalty that would be imposed, Michael Mates' age, the fact that the election did not have to be re-run and that his culpability was relatively low, we do not consider that a prosecution would be in the public interest."

29 October 2013 The [report](#) of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Electoral Conduct was published. The Inquiry had been established to investigate a reported 'void' across all political parties in the handling of incidents of discrimination at election time.¹¹³ (See Section 5 above)

1 November 2013 A UKIP candidate at the 2013 Isle of Wight council elections, Richard Wilkins, was banned from standing for election for 5 years after admitting that he forged signatures on his nomination form. Wilkins was also ordered to complete 150 hours of community service.¹¹⁴

8 November 2013 Labour councillor, Susan Shinnick, is under investigation by Essex police for 'treating' after claims were made that she had bribed elderly voters with cakes to win a local by-election in Stifford Clays ward in Thurrock, Essex.¹¹⁵

23 November 2013 In an interview with the *Daily Telegraph*, the Attorney General, Dominic Grieve, referred to the problem of electoral fraud in comments he made about corruption in public life.¹¹⁶

8 January 2014 The Electoral Commission published its final report and recommendations on electoral fraud in the UK and called for sustained action to address the risk of fraud, especially in higher risk areas. The Commission also called for the introduction of a system under which voters should be required to show proof of identity at the polling station before they can be issued with a ballot paper and recommended that campaigners should not be involved in the process of assisting people to complete postal vote application forms or take

¹¹⁰ [HC Deb 3 September 2013 c165](#)

¹¹¹ Highland councillor resigns over misconduct claims, *Scotsman*, 25 September 2013

¹¹² Former SNP councillor accused of electoral fraud, *Scotsman*, 11 October 2013

¹¹³ [All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Electoral Conduct report](#), 29 October 2013

¹¹⁴ [UKIP candidate admits election fraud](#), *Isle of Wight County Press online*, 1 November 2013

¹¹⁵ [Councillor accused of bribing elderly with cakes](#), *Daily Telegraph*, 8 November 2013

¹¹⁶ [Minister: Corruption is rife in the Pakistani community](#), *Daily Telegraph*, 23 November 2013 and [Attorney General forced to apologise after saying corruption is 'endemic' in Britain's Pakistani community](#), *Daily Mail online*, 24 November 2013

completed postal ballot papers from voters to post them or deliver them to the Electoral Registration Officer.¹¹⁷

14 February 2014 Police in Luton announced an investigation into historical allegations of postal fraud.¹¹⁸

21 February 2014 Allegations of electoral fraud at the Northumberland County Council elections are being investigated by the police following a complaint by a UKIP candidate.¹¹⁹

10 March 2014 A number of PQs asked by Chris Ruane MP about electoral fraud and postal voting were answered by Gary Streeter MP representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission.¹²⁰ Details were given of the amount spent by the Commission on research into voter registration and postal ballot fraud. The Commission intends to conduct an additional research project related to fraud in 2014; this will focus on 'identifying whether certain demographic or cultural factors mean that specific communities are more vulnerable to electoral fraud.'¹²¹

11 March 2014 Richard Mawrey QC, who has tried a number of electoral fraud cases, said in an interview with the BBC that postal voting was open to fraud 'on an industrial scale' and called for an end to postal voting on demand.¹²² Cabinet Office Minister Greg Clark responded that postal voting had been 'very important in making sure that people can access the franchise' and added that he thought it was important that 'a relatively small number of cases of abuse, which need to be addressed and clamped down very firmly, don't prevent other people - the vast majority of people - using it in a law-abiding way.'¹²³

25 March 2014 The *Evening Standard* reported that police had launched an investigation into allegations of electoral fraud in Tower Hamlets. There have been claims that 'bogus workers', believed to be supporters of Independent mayor, Lutfur Rahman, posed as housing staff whilst canvassing residents.¹²⁴

17 April 2014 Norfolk County councillor, Matthew Smith, is charged with seven counts of supplying a nomination paper to a Returning Officer knowing it to contain a forged signature.¹²⁵

4 May 2014 The *Sunday Times* reported that police will patrol polling stations in towns and cities identified by the Electoral Commission as being vulnerable to electoral abuse in the forthcoming elections. In Tower Hamlets polling stations will be surrounded by a 'sterile area' in which voters cannot be canvassed.¹²⁶

21 May 2014 Clare Pritchard, Deputy Leader of Hyndburn Council, was suspended by the Labour Party after her father accused her of electoral fraud. The police are investigating

¹¹⁷ *Electoral fraud in the UK: final report and recommendations*, Electoral Commission, January 2014

¹¹⁸ Police in Luton investigate postal fraud allegations after meeting with Labour party representatives, *Luton on Sunday*, 14 February 2014

¹¹⁹ Police called in following vote fraud allegations, *Newcastle Journal*, 21 February 2014

¹²⁰ [HC Deb 10 March 2014 c78W – 88W](#)

¹²¹ [HC Deb 10 March 2014 c80W](#)

¹²² *Scrap 'on demand' postal voting to curb fraud says judge*, BBC Online 11 March 2014

¹²³ *ibid*

¹²⁴ 'Bogus officials canvassed for mayor' before East End ballot, *Evening Standard*, 25 March 2014

¹²⁵ UKIP councillor in court accused of electoral malpractice, *Future News- Media Planner*, 17 April 2014

¹²⁶ Police patrols to combat voter fraud in Asian areas, *Sunday Times*, 4 May 2014

allegations that four voters from other wards had been registered to vote at Pritchard's home address in Milnshaw ward.¹²⁷

23 May 2014 Following the elections on 22 May, police in Manchester, Bradford, London and Birmingham have received complaints about "ghost" voters, false statements by candidates and multiple attempts to vote by a single person' and have launched inquiries. There are 14 investigations in Greater London relating to false declarations on election papers, intimidation and tampering with postal votes. The West Midlands police received 11 allegations of electoral fraud. In Manchester the police have launched five inquiries; three into the eligibility of candidates to stand, one into a claim that someone had voted twice and one into false statements on election leaflets.¹²⁸

28 May 2014 The Electoral Commission said that an investigation would take place into events at the count in Tower Hamlets after recounts and suspension of the count at 3am on Saturday night after the election.¹²⁹

The *Daily Telegraph* reported Labour Mile End councillor Rachel Sanders' comments on the *Today* programme that there had been intimidation at polling stations in Tower Hamlets with "huge crowds at some, shouting at people or encouraging them to vote in a particular way."¹³⁰

1 June 2014 In Birmingham a Liberal Democrat candidate, Waheed Rafiq, reported that he had witnessed election workers telling people how to vote at polling stations in Washwood Heath and Hodge Hill in May 2014. Mr Rafiq said "most of the local population...vote according to caste, or as we call it Biradaree, and tradition. I saw for myself that some voters were asking the polling clerk which way they should vote and were being instructed accordingly."¹³¹

4 June 2014 Police have arrested a man on suspicion of conspiracy to defraud as they investigate eight allegations of electoral malpractice in Tower Hamlets. The *Evening Standard* reported that a total of 84 complaints have been received about the May elections in the borough.¹³²

15 June 2014 *The Sunday Telegraph* reported that police were investigating allegations that candidates at the elections in Tower Hamlets in May made false statements on their nomination papers. On May the 22nd Aktaruz Zaman did not win a seat, but he stood again on July 3rd under the name "Mohammed Aktaruzzaman" and gave a new address in Bromley-by-Bow. The handwriting on the nomination papers and pictures on election leaflets show them to be the same man. Multiple postal votes came from houses that were not lived in and many genuine voters had their uncompleted ballot papers removed from them against their will by Mr. Rahman.¹³³

¹²⁷ Senior East Lancs politician suspended after election fraud accusation, *Lancashire Telegraph*, 21 May 2014

¹²⁸ Police asked to investigate more than 50 allegations of electoral fraud, *Guardian*, 23 May 2014

¹²⁹ Election watchdog to probe Tower Hamlets count delays, as last results finally announced, *Independent*, 28 May 2014

¹³⁰ Voter intimidation in Tower Hamlets, *Daily Telegraph*, 28 May 2014

¹³¹ Probe after poll workers 'told people how to vote'; Complaint from losing Lib Dem election candidate, *Sunday Mercury*, 1 June 2013

¹³² Tower Hamlets vote fraud allegations: man arrested and eight investigations ongoing, *Evening Standard*, 4 June 2014

¹³³ First fake votes, now police look into 'bogus' council Hamlets, *The Sunday Telegraph*, 15 June 2014

17 June 2014 A local election petition has been brought following the elections on 22 May 2014 in Tower Hamlets seeking to have the election of the mayor, Lutfur Rahman, declared void. Library Standard Note 6937, *Local election petitions*, gives further details.

25 June 2014 A Labour councillor for Barking and Dagenham is under investigation for making a false statement on his nomination papers.¹³⁴

1 July 2014 The Electoral Commission published its review of the count in Tower Hamlets at the May 2014 elections.¹³⁵ A *press notice* issued by the Commission summarised its findings and identified two main factors that led to the count being delayed. The first related to access to the count and the second to inadequate resource management during the verification and the count. The Commission called for immediate and sustained action “to provide reassurance to voters, candidates and campaigners that future election counts will be well-managed and efficiently delivered” and recommended that the Returning Officer should publish his overall plans for the management of the count at the 2015 General Election by the beginning of December 2014. The Commission also recommended that communication at the count between counting staff and others present should take place in English only and that all those attending the count should commit to behaving according to the rules set out in advance by the Returning Officer.¹³⁶

29 July 2014 The High Court rejected a request by Lutfur Rahman, Mayor of Tower Hamlets, to dismiss an election petition against his election in May. An Election Commissioner will now be appointed by the High Court to hear the petition later in the year. The High Court ordered the petitioners to provide more information about their allegations so that the Mayor and the returning officer, John Williams, can respond to the claims.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ East London Labour councillor Sam Tarry under investigation over claims of electoral fraud, *Evening Standard*, 25 June 2014

¹³⁵ *Delays at the verification and count for the May 2014 elections in Tower Hamlets, report of the Electoral Commission's review*, Electoral Commission, July 2014

¹³⁶ *Action needed to restore confidence in Tower Hamlets election counts*, Electoral Commission news release, 1 July 2014

¹³⁷ *Muslim mayor's vote-rigging trial goes ahead, High Court rules*, Times Online, 29 July 2014