

Emergency measures enabled hundreds of postal votes to be processed

An ad-hoc facility in Edinburgh's City Chambers has allowed around four hundred people to retain their right to vote in the 2024 general election.

Paul Lawrence, Chief Executive of the council and Chief Returning Officer with full responsibility for the Election Count said that the timing of the election – over the Edinburgh school holidays – caused issues for voters who had planned to go on holiday.

The returning officer explained that he and his team wanted to ensure these people were able to vote.

He said: “We wanted to do everything we could to ensure those people, particularly those going away on the Sunday/Monday could exercise their democratic rights. So we simply set up a facility in the city chambers on the high street and said, “If you're registered to vote by post, and it hasn't arrived and you're going away, please come in and we'll do our best to help you – and we think that was around 400 people.”

This scheme by the election team is some good news in contrast to what has been reported across the UK, with other election teams struggling under the pressure of the sudden summer election.

But there were council staff who were going on pre-booked holidays so “finding staff for the polling places and for the count has not been straightforward”.

Although Mr Lawrence is new to his position in Edinburgh he has considerable experience and has been involved in elections since 2001.

