

# National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

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When replying please

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All believers in the United Kingdom

Dearly loved Friends,

As you may be aware, almost two years ago, the National Assembly announced its intention to set up a project to review Assembly boundaries across the UK. Clear definitions of local Assembly boundaries ensure that any address can be readily mapped to its correct Bahá'í community, and so underpin the accuracy of electoral rolls for local Assemblies and unit conventions.

Assembly boundaries were last set at Ridván 2001 for most of the United Kingdom, with some adjustments in subsequent years. The structure of local government though inevitably changes; ward names and boundaries from 2001 are likely to have changed and may no longer be in use. Assembly boundaries need therefore to be periodically reviewed and updated.

The setting of boundaries is based upon guidance received from the Universal House of Justice. This includes a direction, that has not been previously implemented, that boundaries of Local Assembly jurisdiction within metropolitan counties should be divided by using civic boundaries for towns and electoral wards for rural areas. These metropolitan counties are: Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire.

London and Northern Ireland are outside of the current review. London's boroughs were re-confirmed at Ridván 2001 as the boundaries for London communities. In Northern Ireland, Assembly boundaries were reviewed in 2015 in the light of local government reorganisation, as a result of which new boundary definitions for Northern Ireland came into effect at Ridván 2015.

After reviewing the first phase of the work of its project team, the National Assembly approved new Assembly boundary definitions that came into effect at Ridván this year for Greater Manchester and Surrey. Learning from the implementation of this first phase is informing planning for the next phase which will focus on the remaining parts of England at Ridván 2019. Scotland and Wales will follow at Ridván 2020. It is hoped that the changes that will come into effect next Ridván will be announced by the end of 2018 thus giving Local Spiritual Assemblies and communities plenty of time to prepare for the elections in April 2019.

The friends should be assured, however, that initial indications are that whilst some changes are inevitable, the review is not likely to result in any radical changes across the country. Rather, it will assist in our having a more accurate definition of communities and create the potential, as the Cause of God grows in these islands, for more Local Spiritual Assemblies to be established in areas – both

urban and rural – throughout the United Kingdom.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,



Patrick O'Mara,  
Secretary