

South Yorkshire police commissioner slams election



Shaun Wright and supporters celebrate his election as South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner.

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The police and crime commissioner for South Yorkshire has criticised the Government's handling of last year's election after publication of a damning report.

Shaun Wright was elected as the county's first commissioner in November.

An inquiry by the Electoral Commission has criticised the government for mistakes before and during the elections, saying voters did not know enough about the role or candidates.

In South Yorkshire, just 15 per cent of the electorate voted.

Only one in five people said they had enough information on their local candidates to make an informed decision.

And more than half said they found it difficult to access information about candidates, according to the Commission inquiry.

But a spokeswoman for Mr Wright blamed the Government for not informing the public enough about the elections.

She said: "The findings contained in the Electoral Commission report are not surprising.

"There was no funding or support from the Tory-led government to publicise their own policy – which resulted in derisory turnouts across the country.

"It fell to candidates to do all they could to engage the electorate, and we're proud of the campaign we ran in South Yorkshire."

The Green Party did not field a candidate in Sheffield and branded the elections a waste of money.

Green Central Coun Jillian Creasy said: "The system of a chief constable answerable to a police authority made up of elected councillors from across the region wasn't broken and didn't need fixing.

"People didn't vote or spoilt their ballot papers because they didn't want a highly paid, party political police commissioner."

Commissioners set budgets and can hire and fire chief constables.

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