

Part J – Performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers in Great Britain

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1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this guidance is to assist Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to complete their self-assessment reports against the Electoral Commission's performance standards published on 21 July 2008.



The self-assessment form can be downloaded from our website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/performance-standards/assessment-criteria

1.2 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 (EAA) amended the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) to give the Commission powers to set standards of performance for EROs, Returning Officers (ROs)¹ and Referendum Counting Officers (RCOs) in Great Britain.² Under these provisions, the Commission may:

- determine and publish standards of performance for relevant electoral officers in Great Britain (EROs, ROs and RCOs)
- direct relevant officers to provide the Commission with reports regarding their performance against the published standards
- publish its assessment of performance by the relevant officers against the published standards

1.3 In August 2009 we issued a Direction to Report under PPERA, which required EROs to provide us with a report on performance against the standards. This is the second year EROs have been directed to report against these standards. Returns should be submitted by 11 December 2009.

¹ The performance standards provisions introduced by the EAA do not apply to local government elections in Scotland.

² Sections 9A and 9B, PPERA, as amended by Section 67, EAA. See Section 5 for the full legislative text.

2 Development of performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers

Development of standards

2.1 The Commission consulted on a draft set of performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) between March and June 2008 and received 57 responses. We also discussed the contents of the standards at a number of seminars nationwide and one-to-one with a number of electoral administrators. We published a response to the consultation exercise, outlining the comments that we received and explaining the reasons for any changes to the standards.

2.2 In October 2008 the Commission directed EROs across Great Britain to complete and return a self-assessment against the 10 standards. The deadline for returning the information was 16 January 2009. We received information from all 404 EROs in Great Britain, representing a return rate of 100%. We published our first analysis of EROs performance in April 2009,³ which is available on our website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/performance-standards alongside a web tool that gives a breakdown of individual ERO performance, and allows comparison between different authorities across Great Britain.

Links with guidance and support from the Commission

2.3 The Commission has statutory powers to provide advice and assistance to EROs on the interpretation and administration of electoral law, and on the promotion of electoral participation. We currently provide a range of guidance and advisory services, briefing events, research and practical tools for use by EROs and their staff. These are delivered through our devolved and regional offices across Great Britain as well as through our head office in London.

2.4 The performance standards for EROs are intended to both reflect and support our guidance. In particular, they reflect those priority areas where we believe there would be significant risk to confidence in the effectiveness of the electoral process if the standards were not met.

2.5 The first round of reporting of EROs' performance against the standards highlighted areas where improvements are needed, specifically relating to integrity, participation and planning. We used these findings to identify opportunities to provide further support and assistance.

³ *Performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers in Great Britain: First analysis of Electoral Registration Officers' performance* (Electoral Commission, 2005) available at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/performance-standards.

3 The performance standards framework

3.1 The performance standards framework sets out what needs to be achieved to support a well-run electoral registration process, and to provide an objective process for assessing performance against commonly agreed standards.

Objectives for performance standards

3.2 The standards outline the key requirements to support the effective delivery of an Electoral Registration Officer's (ERO's) statutory duty. The performance standards framework, including the reporting and assessment process, has a number of related purposes:

- **public accountability** – providing assurance that a well-run electoral registration process is in place to support complete and accurate electoral registers
- **service benchmarking** – enabling individual EROs to compare performance against their peers, identify and share good practice and identify opportunities for improvement over time
- **policy development and evaluation** – providing evidence to policy makers to support improvements in the legislation and funding for electoral registration

3.3 We expect that the framework will continue to be used by a range of individuals and groups, including:

- **electors** – those who are eligible to vote, and therefore dependent on the electoral registration process to be able to do so
- **EROs** – responsible for delivering the statutory electoral registration functions. The standards help to ensure that delivery of electoral registration functions are well planned and managed by making clear the expected approach in relation to a number of key areas.
- **councillors** – responsible for appointing EROs, and providing resources for EROs to carry out their statutory duties. The standards framework can help to provide assurance that electoral registration functions are delivered effectively and provide value for money.
- **electoral administrators** – administer the electoral registration process on behalf of EROs. The standards support the development of effective plans for the delivery of electoral registration services.
- **governments and policy makers** – responsible for ensuring that an effective legal structure is in place to support the delivery of electoral registration functions. The standards framework can help to assess the performance of the legal framework, and to identify areas where performance improvement may need to be supported by legislative change or further guidance and advice.
- **elected representatives/members of legislatures** – responsible for scrutinising government policy and legislative proposals. The standards framework can help to provide confidence in the electoral registration

process They can also help to support the scrutiny of policy or legislative proposals.

3.4 The performance standards framework focuses initially on identifying agreed and consistent minimum standards of performance for EROs. However, we also aim to support improvement beyond the minimum standard wherever possible. The framework helps to highlight where additional work may be required to support key electoral registration processes. However, the Commission has no legal powers to direct EROs in the conduct of their statutory duties, and the responsibility for delivering any improvement will remain with individual EROs.

4 The self-assessment process

Completing the performance standards

4.1 This section explains in more detail the self-assessment process for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and contains explanatory notes on completing the assessment against the 10 performance standards.

4.2 The Electoral Commission has a legal power to direct EROs to provide a report on their performance against the published standards (see Section 5 for full details of the legislation). The self-assessment process ensures that the standards are reflective of the work, knowledge and experience of the ERO. We appreciate that much of the operational work and day-to-day duties may be carried out by other staff. However, it must be remembered that the legal responsibility for the delivery of the electoral registration function remains with the ERO.

4.3 The aim of the self-assessment process is to support a simple, but comprehensive and systematic review of the statutory duties of an ERO. The result should be an honest assessment which recognises areas not only where performance is at or above the specified standard, but also where there may be room for improvement.

4.4 The basis of the self-assessment is derived from four key questions within the performance standards framework.

1. Do EROs have the appropriate plans and processes in place to satisfy the definition of the standards?
2. How well do these plans and processes meet the needs and interests of the key stakeholders?
3. Do EROs review and evaluate the plans and processes they have, making changes or improvements where necessary?
4. How well are the plans and programmes supported?

4.5 Although EROs should use the four questions as the basis of their approach, the questions should be flexibly interpreted in the light of the individual ERO's specific goals, taking into account any contextual factors. Under each standard there is space provided for EROs to provide additional information to further support their assessment.

4.6 The nature of self-assessment will vary according to the criteria in each standard. EROs will need to demonstrate an understanding of what they do well, what needs improving, and how this improvement can be monitored, achieved and evaluated over time. The key test of the resulting self-assessment report is its ability to demonstrate how high quality is sustained and improvement is ensured. An annual self-assessment report gives the opportunity to evaluate what is done well and what needs to improve.


4.7 The performance standards are grouped in four subject areas representing the most important areas that EROs should focus on to keep and

maintain a complete and accurate electoral register. The first key subject area (Completeness and accuracy of electoral registration records) is supported by the standards in the other three subject areas, listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers in Great Britain

Subject area	Performance standards
Completeness and accuracy of electoral registration records	1. Using information sources to verify entries on the register of electors and identify potential new electors 2. Maintaining the property database 3. House-to-house enquiries
Integrity of the registration process	4. Maintaining the integrity of registration and absent vote applications 5. Supply and security of the register and absent voter lists
Encouraging participation in the registration process	6. Public awareness strategy 7. Working with partners 8. Accessibility and communication of information
Planning and organisation	9. Planning for rolling registration and the annual canvass 10. Training

4.8 EROs are asked to assess themselves against each of the 10 standards according to three different categories: 'Not currently meeting the standard', 'Performance standard', and 'Above the performance standard'. The assessments are to be made in accordance with this guidance, which outlines the level of performance we would expect in order to satisfy the particular criteria at each level.

 The ERO should assess themselves against the 10 standards by putting one tick in the box for each standard that matches their current level of performance. All requirements of the particular level chosen by the ERO must be met. Where an ERO feels that their performance falls between two standards, the ERO should mark themselves at the lower level and use the free text boxes to explain the assessment they have chosen.

4.9 For some of the standards there are two levels of performance in the 'Not currently meeting the standard' section, and in one case, two levels of performance in the 'Above the standard' section. Within the 'Not currently meeting the standard' section, the lower level indicates that the officer does not carry out any activities towards meeting the standard, while the second level indicates that some of the activities we would expect are being carried out, but not sufficiently to meet the standard.

4.10 The sections within each standard are cumulative. Therefore, if the ERO assesses themselves against 'Above the standard' we expect that they also carry out all the measures listed in the 'Performance standard'.

4.11 The self-assessment form should be returned to the relevant Electoral Commission devolved or English regional office by 11 December 2009. Once the form has been returned and the returns collated, we will contact a random sample of EROs to arrange verification of evidence. Any verification activities carried out by us will look at the evidence held by EROs, not only to demonstrate that their self-assessment is accurate, but also to look at initiatives and practices which could be shared, with a view to improving performance more widely. Furthermore, a thorough analysis of the information will enable us to identify general and specific activities that might be required to support EROs who are performing below the required standard.



EROs are not required to send in any evidence when returning their self-assessment form. However, the Commission will ask to see evidence from a sample of EROs at a later date during the verification process in January to February 2010.

4.12 After we have received all the self-assessment forms and verified the selected sample, we will publish details of each ERO's assessment of their performance against the standards on our website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/performance-standards.

4.13 We will also undertake an analysis of the returns, which will aim to build a national picture of performance. This will also identify any trends or anomalies, as well as areas where there may be evidence of good practice that could be shared and considered further. In addition, the analysis will assist in identifying areas where we need to provide further assistance or guidance. Further, it will play a role in reviewing the standards and ensuring that they contain relevant and appropriate information.

4.14 The following pages contain the published performance standards for EROs in Great Britain and explanatory notes to assist in the completion of the self-assessment form. We have made references to the relevant parts of the Commission's guidance for EROs where appropriate.

Completeness and accuracy of electoral registration records

Performance standard 1: Using information sources to verify entries on the register of electors and identify potential new electors		Supports vision themes: Integrity – a secure process for registration and voting	
Subject: Completeness and accuracy of electoral registration records			
This standard aims to ensure EROs use appropriate sources of information to verify records on the register of electors and identify potential new electors.			
Performance against the standard		Assessment	Evidence to support assessment
Not currently meeting the performance standard	1. The ERO relies solely on annual canvass returns and rolling registration applications to maintain the register of electors and uses no other sources of information to verify records.		
	2. The ERO uses the records they have the power to inspect to verify entries on the register of electors during the annual canvass period only. The ERO ensures that electors who are reported as having moved or died are removed.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> details of what records are checked
Performance standard	3. The ERO proactively identifies and uses the records they are entitled to inspect, throughout the year, including during the annual canvass period, to verify and validate data held on the electoral register.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> details of what records are checked and when
Above the performance standard	4. The ERO takes a proactive approach throughout the year to identify and contact potential electors who may have moved into, or within, the local authority area, such as by using council tax records to identify residents of newly occupied properties.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> details of what records are checked and when details of what contact is made and what action is taken

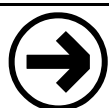
Performance standard 1: Using information sources to verify entries on the register of electors and identify potential new electors

Meeting the performance standard (level 3)

4.15 To meet the 'Performance standard' the ERO should be able to provide details outlining the records they use, throughout the year, to verify and validate entries on the register.

4.16 The records EROs are entitled to inspect in order to verify and validate entries on the register of electors include:

- the records produced periodically by the registrar of births and deaths for the area⁴
- council tax records
- housing records
- such other records of the council (including third parties providing a function of the council) that may assist them in carrying out their registration function



Part E – Improving completeness and accuracy (Section 2) provides further information on sources of information for electoral registration.

Above the performance standard (level 4)

4.17 To be 'Above the performance standard', in addition to the above, the ERO should be able to demonstrate that they have also taken steps to proactively identify and contact potential new electors. They should be able to provide details of the contact made with new residents arriving in, and moving within, the local authority area and the action taken to register them.

4.18 Sources of information the ERO may seek to use throughout the year to assist with identifying and contacting potential electors could include:

- residential/care/nursing homes
- educational halls of residence
- landlords of private properties in multiple occupancy (Houses in Multiple Occupancy – HMOs)
- shelters and hostels for those without permanent residences
- estate agents and letting agents

4.19 The ERO may also liaise with council tax departments to ensure that registration forms are sent out to residents of newly occupied properties

⁴ In Scotland, it is the registrar of births, deaths and marriages.

and/or included in home-mover packs. The ERO should make attempts to follow up such action, if required, to ensure returns from these properties.

Performance standard 2: Maintaining the property database		Supports vision themes:	
Subject: Completeness and accuracy of electoral registration records		Integrity – a secure process for registration and voting	
This standard aims to ensure EROs use all appropriate sources of information available to them to ensure all relevant properties are included in the property database.			
Performance against the standard		Assessment	Evidence to support assessment
Not currently meeting the performance standard	1. The ERO takes no steps to maintain an accurate property database.		
	2. The ERO updates the property database on an annual basis only, following the annual canvass.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of when the system has been updated
Performance standard	3. The ERO maintains a property database on a continuous basis throughout the year, using available records including council tax, planning and building control and the authority's Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG)/Corporate Address Gazetteer (CAG).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of what records have been checked and how often
Above the performance standard	4. The ERO also uses relevant external sources, such as Royal Mail and/or Land Registry/Registers of Scotland, and undertakes other activities to update the property database.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of what records have been checked and how often, or attempts to check records • details of contact made with external sources

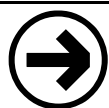
Performance standard 2: Maintaining the property database

Meeting the performance standard (level 3)

4.20 To meet the 'Performance standard' the ERO should be using the records that are available to them, on a continuous basis throughout the year to maintain the property database. The ERO should be able to provide details outlining which records they use and when.

4.21 Records the ERO may wish to use to maintain the property database include:

- council tax
- planning and building control
- Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG)/ Corporate Address Gazetteer (CAG)



Part E – Improving completeness and accuracy (Section 2) provides further information on sources of information for electoral registration and how they may be useful.

Above the performance standard (level 4)

4.22 To be 'Above the performance standard', in addition to the above, the ERO should also be able to provide details of what external sources they have used, or have proactively attempted to use and how often, as well as details of other activities undertaken to update the property database.

4.23 Other external sources of information the ERO may wish to use include:

- Royal Mail – can provide information on postcodes. Postcode updates are published on an annual basis and can be downloaded free of charge from www.royalmail.com/postcodeupdates. EROs may also obtain postcodes for particular addresses, or addresses for postcodes, from www.royalmail.com.
- Returned letters – can be an indication that the property is no longer habitable and the ERO should therefore monitor any mail that is returned to the office as undelivered on an ongoing basis.

4.24 Other activities used to maintain the database may include using canvassers to validate the database when making house-to-house enquiries. EROs should ensure that canvassers receive clear instructions about recording and reporting property related issues that they identify, for example if a building has been demolished, flats converted back to a house or a new property built. Where poll cards are hand-delivered by electoral staff, this exercise can also be used as a mid-year check of the database.

Performance standard 3: House-to-house enquiries		Supports vision themes:	
Subject: Completeness and accuracy of electoral registration records		Integrity – a secure process for registration and voting	
This standard aims to ensure that EROs make the necessary house-to-house enquiries to ensure that all eligible residents are registered (Section 9A and 10(5) of RPA 1983).			
Performance against the standard		Assessment	Evidence to support assessment
Not currently meeting the performance standard	1. The ERO has no plan setting out when to carry out house-to-house enquiries.		
	2. The ERO has a written plan setting out when to carry out house-to-house enquiries but has not met the objectives identified in their plan.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> plan and timescales
Performance standard	3. The ERO has a comprehensive written plan ensuring that properties which have not responded to the annual canvass and, where the ERO is not otherwise satisfied that eligible electors are resident, are subject to house-to-house enquiries on at least one or more occasions. Progress against the plan is monitored including actions such as recording contact with residents made by canvassers.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> canvassing plan canvass results records
Above the performance standard	4. The ERO has developed and put in place a specific strategy for carrying out house-to-house enquiries. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying when and how house-to-house enquiries should be carried out considering any needs or difficulties associated with particular areas and preparing accordingly the monitoring of canvasser performance providing for personal visits to be carried out throughout the year in connection with the identification of eligible residents in conjunction with plans for identifying potential newly eligible residents 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> canvassing strategy

Performance standard 3: House-to-house enquiries

Meeting the performance standard (level 3)

4.25 To meet the 'Performance standard', the ERO is required to have a comprehensive canvass plan. All plans should document:

- criteria for when house-to-house enquiries should be made
- progress against the criteria outlined on page 12, such as recording contact with residents

4.26 It is important to note that this need not be a separate plan from the plan required to meet Performance standard 9: Planning for rolling registration and the annual canvass, as long as the plan meets all of the requirements outlined in the standard. The plan should document the effective delivery of the annual canvass and be sufficiently clear and detailed so that it can be followed by any persons delegated to carry out work on behalf of the ERO.

4.27 Section 9A of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983) places a duty on EROs to take all steps that they consider to be necessary for the purpose of compiling complete and accurate electoral registers. The steps set out in Section 9A, which include making house-to-house enquiries on one or more occasions, are not required to be taken in any particular order. However, if no response has been received and the ERO considers that insufficient information has been received to enable them to determine whether a person/persons should be registered at a particular address, the ERO should then make such house-to-house enquiries as are necessary to enable them to fulfil their duty under Section 9A of the RPA 1983.

4.28 In certain individual cases there may be circumstances that could lead an ERO to not canvass a particular address, for example, in an extreme case where for reasons of personal safety the ERO may deem it not safe to send a personal canvasser to an address. However, in arriving at such a decision, the ERO would need to be able to demonstrate that they had carried out a proper assessment of the circumstances and that all options had been considered. EROs must ensure that appropriate resources are provided to enable house-to-house enquiries to be carried out in order to comply with their statutory duties under Section 9A of the RPA 1983 and to meet the standard.



Part C – The annual canvass (Sections 1, 2, 3 and 6) provides information on planning for and undertaking the annual canvass.

Other resources to support the delivery of the annual canvass, including a template canvass plan, are available to download from our website at: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-electoral-administrators/electoral-registration/managing-electoral-registration-services

All registration support material is available to download in Microsoft Word format to enable EROs to adapt it to their own local circumstances.

Above the performance standard (level 4)

4.29 To be 'Above the performance standard', in addition to the above, EROs should also have documented:

- When and how house-to-house enquiries should be carried out, for example:
 - where there are non-responses to requests for information
 - where the ERO has received information that the resident requires personal assistance or
 - when information on residents at a property needs to be verified
- Consideration of any needs or difficulties associated with particular areas. This may include identification of any areas that are more challenging to canvass and any relevant additional training for staff working in those areas.
- How canvasser performance will be monitored. For example, comparing response rates for each canvasser's round against the previous year's returns at the same point in the canvass, comparing response rates of similar 'rounds' to each other, and through frequent communication between canvassers, supervisors and the ERO.
- Their approach to carrying out house-to-house enquiries throughout the year in connection with the identification of eligible residents.

Integrity

Performance standard 4: Maintaining the integrity of registration and absent vote applications Subject: Integrity		Supports vision themes: Integrity – a secure process for registration and voting	
This standard aims to ensure that EROs have a process in place to identify any patterns of activity that might indicate electoral malpractice.			
Performance against the standard		Assessment	Evidence to support assessment
Not currently meeting the performance standard	1. The ERO does not carry out any checks to ensure the integrity of registration and absent vote applications.		
	2. The ERO has an informal system in place to check the integrity of registration and absent vote applications but does not document these.		
Performance standard	3. The ERO has a comprehensive written plan outlining what steps are to be taken to deal with concerns about specific registration or absent vote applications. Suspicious registration and absent vote applications that meet the criteria identified in the plan are referred to local police/Single Point of Contact (SPOC), with whom the ERO has appropriate links. The ERO also has in place a threshold number of absent vote applications being directed to any one address. The ERO retains registration forms for the life of the register and original absent vote applications are kept until the application is cancelled, or replaced by a new form.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> written plan details of what the threshold is for the number of absent vote applications being directed to any one address

Integrity (continued)

<p>Above the performance standard</p>	<p>4. The ERO has carried out a risk assessment for identifying and dealing with registration and absent vote applications which may be of concern, in particular applications from multi-resident properties, those requesting signature waivers for absent votes, and multiple applications for redirection of absent votes to a single address. The ERO acknowledges all applications for registration on receipt of the application, and not only on grant or refusal of the application.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written plan • details of what the threshold is for the number of absent vote applications being directed to any one address. • risk assessment documentation
	<p>5. The ERO continuously evaluates the risk assessment for identifying and dealing with registration and absent vote applications which may be of concern. The ERO engages with staff in other council services to carry out checks and offers advice to staff of multi-electoral establishments such as landlords, wardens, care staff and other accommodation administrators on the registration and absent voting process. The ERO carries out checks on the signatures and dates of birth provided on a sample of absent vote applications against any other signature or date of birth that they hold or that they are entitled to inspect such as rolling registration application forms.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • risk assessment documentation • written plan • details of what the threshold is for the number of absent vote applications being directed to any one address • details of who the ERO engages with and how often and what is done • details of how the sample of absent vote applications has been devised • details of findings of checks

Performance standard 4: Maintaining the integrity of registration and absent vote applications

Electoral malpractice definition

4.30 Electoral malpractice can be defined to include actions or conduct which is contrary to electoral legislation or other legislation relevant to the electoral registration process.

4.31 The RPA 1983 defines most offences for electoral registration and postal voting applications. Other legislation, such as that relating to forgery and false statements, or common law provisions may also apply.

Meeting the performance standard (level 3)

4.32 To meet the 'Performance standard' the ERO should ensure that a written plan is in place outlining steps to be taken to deal with concerns about specific registration or absent vote applications.

4.33 The plan should identify:

- Triggers that may indicate potential irregularities. Trigger situations may include:
 - when a certain number of postal votes are redirected to a particular address (details of what the threshold is for the number of absent vote applications being directed to any one address should be documented in the plan)
 - when the ERO has reason to question the registration or absent vote applications presented to them, such as a number of forms completed in the same hand, or a large number of forms from the same property
- The processes to be undertaken within the ERO's office before reporting situations to the relevant police officer/SPOC. For example, if the ERO has any doubts about the eligibility of any applicant, they have the power to require any person to provide information relating to the eligibility of that applicant, namely regarding their age, nationality, residence and whether or not they are disqualified. The ERO may also want to use their power to inspect other council records as part of the process of considering the application. Even after entries have been made on the register, EROs have the power to conduct a review of registration and they should do so where they believe that a person is not entitled to remain on the electoral register.
- When suspicious registration and absent vote applications are to be referred to local police/SPOC
- Policy for retention of registration and absent vote forms showing that original registration forms are retained for the life of the register and original absent vote applications are kept until the application is cancelled or replaced by a new application. Retention of registration and absent vote forms includes either scanned images or paper copies. The Commission does, however, recommend the retention of original paper

copies of applications where possible. This would enable checks to be carried out in the event of the identification of clerical errors or a malpractice investigation.



Part E – Improving completeness and accuracy (Section 4) includes information on what to look for and what action to take when the ERO has concerns about specific registration or absent vote applications.

A template integrity plan is available to download from our website at:

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-electoral-administrators/electoral-registration/managing-electoral-registration-services

Above the performance standard (level 4)

4.34 To be 'Above the performance standard', in addition to the above, the ERO should also be able to provide risk assessment documentation. The required risk documentation should include the general risks that are common to all areas, such as applications requesting signature waivers for absent votes and multiple applications for redirection of absent votes to a single address. The risk documentation should also include those specific risks identified for the ERO's area.

4.35 The ERO must also acknowledge all applications for registration when the application is received and not only on grant or refusal of the application.

Above the performance standard (level 5)

4.36 To be at level 5 'Above the performance standard', in addition to the above, the ERO should also regularly evaluate the risk assessment, be able to provide details of the people they engage with on integrity related issues, offer advice to staff of multi-electoral establishments and provide details of checks conducted on absent vote applications.

4.37 The ERO should monitor the risks outlined in the risk assessment documentation required to meet level 4 'Above the performance standard' on an ongoing basis. The risk assessment documentation should then be updated where appropriate.

4.38 The ERO should keep a record of the people they engage with in other council services, such as council tax, and include the frequency of contact and what is done as a result.

4.39 The ERO should be able to provide details of their policy on checking samples of absent vote applications, for example, the total number of signatures and dates of birth checked and against which records, and the results of any checks made. The ERO should also provide details of the processes to be followed specifically if signatures and dates of birth do not match.

Performance standard 5: Supply and security of the register and absent voter lists		Supports vision themes:	
Subject: Integrity		Integrity – a secure process for registration and voting	
This standard aims to ensure that once published, EROs ensure the full register is made available for public inspection and supplies copies of the register and absent voter lists to those prescribed in legislation.			
Performance against the standard		Assessment	Evidence to support assessment
Not currently meeting the performance standard	1. The ERO has not supplied electoral registration information to those entitled to receive it.		
Performance standard	2. The ERO publishes and supplies the electoral register and absent voter lists to those entitled to receive them. The ERO provides training or guidance to those staff who will be supervising access to the register as well as guidance for recipients of the register as to the correct usage of their copy of the register.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of publication of the register date • training plan or copy of guidance given to staff • copy of guidance given to recipients
Above the performance standard	3. The ERO has a recorded complaints procedure in respect of the supply and publication of the electoral register. The ERO maintains a written record of any complaints received and action taken. The ERO records all transactions of sales and supply of the full and edited register and maintains an up to date record of the details of those organisations entitled to receive it.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • log of complaints or enquiries, and action taken due to them • record of transactions and sales

Performance standard 5: Supply and security of the register and absent voter lists

Meeting the performance standard (level 2)

4.40 To meet the 'Performance standard' the ERO is required to publish and supply the electoral register and absent voter lists to those entitled to receive them, provide a copy of the guidance and/or details of the training that is given to staff supervising access to the register, and a copy of guidance given to recipients of the register.



Part H – Access and supply (Section 4) lists those who the ERO has a duty to supply full copies of the electoral register to.

4.41 The ERO should provide training or guidance notes to those staff who will be supervising inspection of the register, giving details of how that access should be provided, and to ensure that they are aware of the rules surrounding access to the register. Similar guidance notes should also be developed for those who purchase copies of the register of electors to remind them of the legislation surrounding use of the register.



Part H – Access and supply (Section 3) provides information on the process of inspection of the register.

A guidance note for those who supervise access to the register is available to download from our website at:

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-electoral-administrators/electoral-registration/managing-electoral-registration-services

Above the performance standard (level 3)

4.42 To be 'Above the performance standard', the ERO should be able to demonstrate that they have a complaints process in place in respect of the supply and publication of the electoral register. A complaints log should detail any complaints received, action taken and the dates that this occurred.

4.43 It is important to note that a complaints process put in place by the council will suffice to meet the criteria for this level as long as the ERO can demonstrate that the log used enables the process outlined above to be followed.

4.44 The ERO should also maintain an up-to-date record of the details of those organisations entitled to receive the full and edited register and be able to provide a record of who has been supplied with copies of the register and when, including any fees paid.

Participation

Performance standard 6: Public awareness strategy		Supports vision themes:	
Subject: Participation		User focus – an easy and accessible process for candidates and electors	
This standard aims to ensure that EROs develop and maintain an effective and appropriate public awareness strategy.			
Performance against the standard		Assessment	Evidence to support assessment
Not currently meeting the performance standard	1. The ERO has no specific public awareness strategy in place.		
	2. The ERO does not maintain a written public awareness strategy, and relies on unstructured management controls such as oral or written updates. Objectives, risks and resources are not formally documented.		
Performance standard	3. The public awareness strategy is documented including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying target audiences • clearly defined objectives and success measures • risks – identification and mitigation • resources (financial and staffing) • evaluation plan which records the results of the activities undertaken 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written strategy • evaluation plan • risk register

Participation (continued)

Above the performance standard	4. In addition to the above, the public awareness strategy also includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a specific participation budget with a breakdown of how this will be used• assessment of the needs of those different audiences and the most effective methods of reaching them• plans for different activities at different parts of the year• evaluation that leads to proactive analysis of lessons learned in order to inform recommendations for new or improved participation activity for the future		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• written strategy• evaluation plan• risk register• participation budget• evidence of proactive evaluation such as lessons learned reports and/or recommendations to improve future activity
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Performance standard 6: Public awareness strategy

Meeting the performance standard (level 3)

4.45 To meet the 'Performance standard' the ERO must have a written strategy, evaluation plan and a risk register to cover the public awareness activities that they undertake.

4.46 It is important to note that this need not be a separate strategy from the strategy required to meet Performance standard 5 of the Commission's *Performance standards for Returning Officers* (March 2009) available at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/performance-standards. Indeed, depending upon the structure and split of responsibilities of the local registration and elections functions, there may well be benefits in a joint strategy for both registration and elections as there is an obvious overlap between the two in terms of participation and communication activity. A joint strategy may also encourage effective working partnerships between EROs and Returning Officers, communications teams and others within the council.

4.47 All strategies should cover the points below, as outlined in the standard:

- identifying target audiences – it is important to identify which groups are under-represented in terms of electoral registration in the area and those the ERO wants to reach through their activity
- clearly defined objectives and success measures, i.e. what does the ERO want to achieve and what will success look like?
- risks – identification and mitigation – the strategy or a separate risk register should identify all risks and the necessary actions which are identified to reduce or mitigate risks
- resources (financial and staffing) – it is important to consider how much budget is available and whether there are any resources that can be accessed, for example the Ministry of Justice Electoral Participation Fund⁵
- evaluation plan that records the results of the activities undertaken, and is necessary for measuring the effectiveness of a project and demonstrating achievements



Advice on developing a public awareness strategy and evaluating public awareness work, including examples of success measures and evaluation methods, can be found in *Part I – Accessibility and participation*.

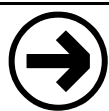
Further information including a template for a public awareness strategy, a template evaluation plan and practical advice can also be found on the Commission's Do Politics website at www.dopolitics.org.uk.

⁵ See page 25 for more details of the Ministry of Justice Electoral Participation Fund.

Above the performance standard (level 4)

4.48 To be 'Above the performance standard', in addition to the requirements above, the public awareness strategy should document a specific participation budget, assess the needs of different audiences and the most effective methods of reaching them, plan for different activities at different parts of the year and have evidence that findings of the evaluation plan have been acted upon.

4.49 When developing a public awareness strategy, budget considerations should be taken into account. To be 'Above the performance standard', EROs should be able to provide evidence that they have planned and used a dedicated participation or publicity budget effectively. The public awareness strategy should include reference to the budget and a breakdown of how the funds will be spent.



The Ministry of Justice has an Electoral Participation Fund (a total of £2.5 million per financial year), which EROs and ROs in England and Wales can claim against to offset expenditure that they have incurred in pursuance of Section 69 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (EAA). The fund is available for activities relating to any statutory election and/or registration. The nominal maximum entitlement that a given ERO or RO will be entitled to will be determined by reference to local authority area and calculated on a 'per local elector' basis. Claims may also be submitted jointly with other local authorities. For further details, please contact the Ministry of Justice Elections and Democracy Division on 0203 334 3837.



In Scotland, funding is provided to local authorities via their Grant Aided Expenditure, which is intended to be used to meet the responsibilities arising from EAA. While it is not ring-fenced money, it should be available to encourage participation in elections, to make preparations for new duties being introduced and any other obligations imposed by the Act. Sheila Scobie at the Scotland Office can be contacted on 0131 244 9009 for further details.

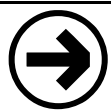
4.50 In addition to the evaluation plan described above to meet 'Performance standard' (which documents the activities undertaken and the results achieved), the ERO should be able to provide evidence that they have undertaken proactive evaluation in order to be 'Above the standard'. The purpose of proactive evaluation is to analyse the activity and results in order to agree lessons learned that can be used to inform recommendations for new or improved participation activity in the future. Proactive evaluation might include evaluation meetings with key stakeholders/partners, evaluation reports setting out lessons learned from the activities undertaken, or comparison of the results achieved compared to the targets set in order to understand what worked well and what did not.

Performance standard 7: Working with partners		Supports vision themes:	
Subject: Participation		User focus – an easy and accessible process for candidates and electors	
This standard aims to ensure that EROs have researched the merits in working with appropriate partners, and work with them where appropriate to promote electoral participation.			
Performance against the standard		Assessment	Evidence to support assessment
Not currently meeting the performance standard	1. The ERO has given no consideration to working with any possible partners to promote electoral participation.		
	2. The ERO has identified the possibility and benefits of working with partners but has not acted upon the findings of this work.		
Performance standard	3. The ERO has consulted other departments of the local authority to promote electoral participation and has evaluated the costs/benefits of a joint working arrangement, and has ensured that duplication of effort and unnecessary expenditure is avoided.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> records of meetings/discussions/correspondence with other departments record of work undertaken (such as evaluation plan showing results of joint working)
Above the performance standard	4. The ERO actively engages with other departments of the local authority and has identified and consulted with external bodies (such as other authorities, other EROs, local media and community groups) to determine whether working with partners can help achieve the objectives of the public awareness strategy. Joint work has been undertaken where appropriate. The ERO has also developed an evaluation methodology for all activities undertaken with external partners and uses this to plan future work.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> records of meetings/discussions/correspondence with other departments and external bodies record of work undertaken and evaluation of the specific value added by joint working plans for future joint working building on the relationships developed

Performance standard 7: Working with partners

Meeting the performance standard (level 3)

4.51 To meet the 'Performance standard' the ERO must have consulted with other departments of their appointing local authority and be able to provide records of meeting/correspondence. The ERO is also required to evaluate the costs/benefits of a joint working arrangement and able to provide evidence of such evaluation to support the assessment.

 *Part I – Accessibility and participation* includes examples of how to work with partners, such as organising a local working group to input on the public awareness strategy, or tying participation work into existing events. The Commission's Do Politics website www.dopolitics.org.uk also provides:

- advice on working with the media, including template press releases for different audiences, and tips on being interviewed
- case studies of participation work done by a range of organisations with different target audiences
- a regular newsletter highlighting relevant projects run by a range of organisations

4.52 In order to evaluate a joint working arrangement EROs should consider all possible partners, what value they can add to the activity that is planned, and any risks associated with any joint working. If then deemed appropriate the ERO should also be able to demonstrate what work this led to being undertaken.

Above the performance standard (level 4)

4.53 To be 'Above the performance standard', in addition to the above, the ERO should be able to provide a record of correspondence with external bodies and also be able to provide the evaluation methodology for activities undertaken which is used to inform the planning of future joint working.

4.54 Possible external bodies that the ERO may want to engage with will depend on local circumstances, but may include:

- other EROs or ROs in the surrounding area
- local media such as newspapers or radio stations
- voluntary sector groups who may represent, or have influence with, target audiences (e.g. youth democracy organisations, Operation Black Vote, disability organisations)
- schools and colleges
- housing associations
- sports clubs
- faith groups



Advice on evaluating participation activity, including ways to involve partners, can be found in *Part I – Accessibility and participation*.

The Commission's Do Politics website at www.dopolitics.org.uk also provides:

- a template evaluation plan
- a template evaluation report
- a glossary of evaluation terms
- information and guidance on public awareness work

Performance standard 8: Accessibility and communication of information		Supports vision themes:	
Subject: Participation		User focus – an easy and accessible process for candidates and electors	
This standard aims to ensure that EROs effectively communicate electoral registration information and provide a simple and user friendly way to access the information to encourage registration applications.			
Performance against the standard		Assessment	Evidence to support assessment
Not currently meeting the performance standard	1. The ERO provides information in one format and has not taken account of the needs of different audiences (for example translation or alternative formats). There are no response mechanisms in place (such as phone, website or email) to ensure that information is correctly and appropriately communicated.		
Performance standard	2. The ERO takes note of relevant legislation and specific research that has been carried out and/or consultation with appropriate organisations to determine the appropriate languages and formats to communicate with the relevant audiences. The ERO then communicates information in the most accessible way (website/hard-copy/telephony services) in the appropriate languages and formats. The ERO ensures that all outgoing communication provides the contact details of the local office to allow interested parties to respond and find out further information.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • record of research undertaken • examples of how the appropriate languages and formats have been decided • details of how the most accessible method of communicating information has been decided • details of the appropriate number of communication mediums have been decided
Above the performance standard	3. The ERO is responsive to changes in the demographics of the local authority area and actively researches whether further formats or languages are necessary. The ERO's staff identify and provide support for those who have difficulty filling out the necessary forms both at their offices and at the electors' homes (when requested) throughout the year. The ERO measures and records the success of different dissemination methods and bases future work on this evaluation.		<p>In addition to the evidence outline above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of the appropriate number of communication mediums have been decided • details of what monitoring takes place • details outlining method for providing support • evaluation plan

Performance standard 8: Accessibility and communication of information

Meeting the performance standard (level 2)

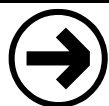
4.55 To meet the 'Performance standard' the ERO should be able to demonstrate what considerations have been made in deciding whether to produce information in alternative languages and formats (which may include taking note of relevant legislation, specific research and consultation with appropriate organisations), and provide details of how the most accessible method of communicating information has been decided. The ERO also ensures that all outgoing communication provides the contact details of the local office.

4.56 The ERO will need to take note of specific research and/or consult with appropriate organisations to determine appropriate languages and formats. This may include:

- discussing with relevant departments within the local authority (e.g. communications, youth and community service teams, access officer)
- liaising with other EROs
- using research carried out by organisations, such as the Commission, Local Government Association or government departments
- working with organisations that represent certain audiences, such as Operation Black Vote, the Federation of Poles in Great Britain, or the UK Youth Parliament

4.57 The ERO should be able to provide details of how the most accessible method of communicating information has been decided. Different audiences will need to be approached differently, and a single communication method or format will not necessarily be sufficient to reach all audiences. The ERO should consider and document:

- The communication needs of different audiences, for example, what barriers do they have that may prevent them from participating?
- The communication habits of different audiences – how do they like to receive information? How much detail do they need? What kind of media do they engage with most (e.g. radio, press, face-to-face, leaflets through the door)?



Part I – Accessibility and participation includes information about understanding and communicating with different audiences.

The Commission's Do Politics website at www.dopolitics.org.uk also provides:

- a range of free materials such as leaflets in audio, large-print and Braille and translated into different languages and posters (available to download or order in hard copy)

- ideas and advice for improving access to information about the electoral process
- ideas for activities and events for different audiences
- case studies of work by a range of organisations to reach different audiences

Above the performance standard (level 3)

4.58 To be 'Above the performance standard', in addition to the above, the ERO should also be able to provide details of what monitoring takes place to enable them to be responsive to changes in the demographics of the area, provide details outlining the method for providing support for those who have difficulty filling out the necessary forms and provide evidence of the evaluation that measures and records the success of different dissemination methods.

4.59 Once accessibility practices have been put in place, it is important that the ERO remains responsive to changes in the demographics of the area by actively researching whether further formats or languages are necessary. Monitoring may include:

- meeting regularly with stakeholders such as other local authority departments, community groups and other EROs, which will help the ERO to stay abreast of such changes
- feedback about accessibility needs (such as requests for additional translations), which should be logged systematically and reviewed so that new materials or information required can be scheduled and implemented

4.60 The ERO should also provide details outlining the method for providing support for those who have difficulty filling out the necessary forms both at their offices and at the electors' homes (when requested) throughout the year.

4.61 Additionally, the ERO should have a robust evidence base for why they have chosen particular methods. The ERO should measure and record the success of different dissemination methods and base future work on this evaluation. An evaluation plan of the different dissemination methods may include consideration of the following points:

- what methods work most effectively?
- what other options are there and what evidence is there about which approaches work best?
- results of surveys/questionnaires/feedback about different methods



Advice on evaluation, including examples of success measures and evaluation methods, can be found in *Part I – Accessibility and participation*.

Further information including a template evaluation plan and practical advice can also be found on the Commission's Do Politics website at www.dopolitics.org.uk.

Planning and organisation

Performance standard 9: Planning for rolling registration and the annual canvass Subject: Planning and organisation		Supports vision themes: Professionalism – a clear and consistent approach to delivery	
This standard aims to ensure that EROs have developed robust planning processes for rolling registration and the annual canvass.			
Performance against the standard		Assessment	Evidence to support assessment
Not currently meeting the performance standard	1. The ERO does not have a comprehensive written plan, and relies on unstructured management controls such as oral or written updates, and past experience only. Objectives, risks and resources are not documented.		
Performance standard	2. The ERO has put in place formal, written plans for rolling registration and the annual canvass. These should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly defined objectives and success measures • risks – identification and mitigation • recruitment of temporary/permanent staff where needed • financial resources • evaluation plan recording the results of the activities undertaken 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan(s) • risk register • identification of required resources • business continuity arrangements
Above the performance standard	3. In addition to the above, the ERO has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planned for a specific budget for rolling registration and for the annual canvass, with a breakdown of how this will be used • identified and assessed the needs of the most hard to reach audiences • a business continuity plan/succession plan to mitigate unforeseen circumstances such as staff absences 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan as described above • business continuity plan

Performance standard 9: Planning for rolling registration and the annual canvass

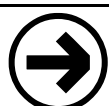
Meeting the performance standard (level 2)

4.62 To meet the 'Performance standard' the ERO should have a written plan for managing rolling registration and the annual canvass.

4.63 All plans should cover:

- clearly defined objectives and success measures, i.e. what do you want to achieve and what will success look like?
- risks – identification and mitigation – the plan or separate risk register should identify all risks and the necessary actions identified to reduce or mitigate risks
- recruitment of temporary/permanent staff where needed
- identification of financial and other resources – it is important to consider how much budget is available
- evaluation plan recording the results of the activities undertaken, which is necessary for measuring the effectiveness of a project and demonstrating achievements

4.64 The above plans and information should be sufficiently clear and detailed so that they can be followed by any persons delegated to carry out work on behalf of the ERO. It is important to note that this need not be a separate plan from the plan required to meet Performance standard 3: House-to-house enquiries, as long as the plan meets all the requirements outlined in the standard.



Template plans for managing rolling registration and the annual canvass are available to download from our website at:
www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-electoral-administrators/electoral-registration/managing-electoral-registration-services

Above the performance standard (level 3)

4.65 To be 'Above the performance standard', in addition to the above, the plan should also outline the budget, and identify the most hard-to-reach audiences and any particular needs they may have.

4.66 The identification of need among the most hard-to-reach audiences should include how the ERO plans to maximise registration in these groups.

4.67 There should be business continuity plans in place to cover for the loss of staff, loss of service and loss of venue. These should identify what can be done if such risks do occur, and ensure that the options for dealing with such eventualities are clearly set out. These can also be outlined in the risk register. There is a great deal of expertise within local authorities in managing risk that could be called upon to assist with this process.

Performance standard 10: Training		Supports vision themes:	
Subject: Planning and organisation		Professionalism – a clear and consistent approach to delivery	
This standard aims to ensure that EROs have provided appropriate training for staff to deliver the rolling registration and annual canvass processes.			
Performance against the standard		Assessment	Evidence to support assessment
Not currently meeting the performance standard	1. The ERO provides no training to either permanent or temporary staff other than a basic induction.		
	2. The ERO provides basic relevant training for permanent members of staff only, to ensure awareness and understanding of legislative requirements.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schedule of training activities
Performance standard	3. The ERO provides the relevant training to both permanent and temporary staff to ensure awareness and understanding of legislative requirements.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schedule of training activities
Above the performance standard	4. The ERO has put in place a comprehensive written training plan for both permanent and temporary staff, and evaluates the effectiveness of the plan (by using a system of feedback and review) on an annual basis.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schedule of training activities • training plan • evaluation plan and reports

Performance standard 10: Training

Meeting the performance standard (level 3)

4.68 To meet the 'performance standard' all staff (whether permanent or temporary) should receive training to understand and carry out their roles.

4.69 The schedule of training activities will list the topics covered in the training, and should cover when and how that training will be delivered. The schedule should cover all training given to ensure awareness and understanding of legislative requirements, whether provided by internal or external sources to:

- permanent staff
- temporary staff working in the ERO's office
- those undertaking house-to-house enquires
- those monitoring staff undertaking house-to-house enquires
- the ERO by their staff



Part C – The annual canvass (Section 2) provides information on canvasser training.

Other resources are available to download from our website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-electoral-administrators/electoral-registration/managing-electoral-registration-services.

The resources include:

- canvasser instruction manual template
- purpose of the annual canvass of electors statement
- template PowerPoint canvasser briefing session

Above the performance standard (level 4)

4.70 To be 'Above the performance standard', in addition to the above, the ERO should also be able to provide a training plan and an evaluation plan.

4.71 The training plan will expand on the schedule by including details of the information that will be covered and the methods and activities by which these are to be delivered. The plan may include copies or links to presentations and notes of information to be conveyed.

4.72 The evaluation plan, whether contained in the training plan or forming a separate document, should monitor the effectiveness of the training and include methods of evaluating training activities and how the training can be adapted to enable continuous improvement. Methods of evaluating individual training activities may include the provision of feedback forms for staff attending training activities. The evaluation plan should not only monitor the effectiveness of individual training activities but also the effectiveness of the training plan as a whole, and be used to update and inform future training.

5 Legislation

Sections 9A and 9B, Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000

9A Setting of performance standards

- (1) The Commission may from time to time—
 - (a) determine standards of performance for relevant officers, and
 - (b) publish, in such form and in such manner as they consider appropriate, the standards so determined.
- (2) The standards of performance are such standards as the Commission think ought to be achieved by—
 - (a) electoral registration officers in the performance of their functions;
 - (b) returning officers in the administration of the elections specified in subsection (6);
 - (c) counting officers in the administration of the referendums specified in subsection (7).
- (3) Before determining standards under subsection (1), the Commission must consult—
 - (a) the Secretary of State, and
 - (b) any other person they think appropriate.
- (4) The Commission may determine different standards for different descriptions of relevant officers.
- (5) When the Commission publish standards under subsection (1) they must send a copy of the published standards to the Secretary of State who must lay a copy of the published standards before each House of Parliament.
- (6) The elections specified in this subsection are—
 - (a) an election mentioned in section 5(2);
 - (b) a parliamentary by-election;
 - (c) an election under section 9 of the Scotland Act 1998 (constituency vacancies);
 - (d) an election under section 8 of the Government of Wales Act 1998 (vacancies in constituency seats);
 - (e) a local government election in England or Wales.
- (7) The referendums specified in this subsection are—
 - (a) a referendum to which Part 7 applies;
 - (b) a referendum under Part 2 of the Local Government Act 2000.
- (8) For the purposes of this section and sections 9B and 9C, the relevant officers are—
 - (a) electoral registration officers;
 - (b) in relation to elections within subsection (6), returning officers;
 - (c) in relation to referendums within subsection (7), counting officers.

9B Returns and reports on performance standards

- (1) The Commission may from time to time issue directions to relevant officers to provide the Commission with such reports regarding their level of performance against the standards determined under section 9A(1) as may be specified in the direction.
- (2) A direction under subsection (1)—
 - (a) must specify the relevant officer or officers to whom it is issued (and may specify a description or descriptions of relevant officers),
 - (b) may require the report or reports to relate to such elections or referendums (or both) as may be specified in the direction, and
 - (c) may require the report or reports to be provided in a form specified in the direction.
- (3) A report provided to the Commission in pursuance of subsection (1) may be published by the relevant officer to whom it relates.
- (4) The Commission shall from time to time prepare and publish (in such manner as the Commission may determine) assessments of the level of performance by relevant officers against the standards determined under section 9A(1).
- (5) An assessment under subsection (4)—
 - (a) must specify the relevant officer or officers to whom it relates;
 - (b) must specify the period to which it relates;
 - (c) may specify the elections or referendums (or both) to which it relates.
- (6) The Commission must not prepare an assessment under subsection (4) unless they have received reports in pursuance of subsection (1) from the relevant officer or officers for the matters to which the assessment relates.
- (7) Before publishing an assessment under subsection (4), the Commission shall—
 - (a) provide to each relevant officer a copy of those parts of the assessment which relate to him;
 - (b) have regard to any comments made by him regarding the factual accuracy of the assessment.

6 Vision for quality electoral services

In the United Kingdom people have the right to say who governs them. They therefore have a right to vote (or not to vote) in secret for who they want, in a way that is easy for them to vote, and to have their vote counted. They expect that electoral services (registration and elections) should be enshrined in the core values of public office and should support the modernising and ethical standards agenda in public service.

	Electors can expect	Candidates and parties can expect	Those involved in administration can expect	Those involved in Government and the Electoral Commission can expect
Integrity – a secure process for registration and voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To know information held about them is accurate and to be clear how it is used • Their vote is confidential and they can make it free from pressure • To know their vote is counted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes which are transparent and checked • Accurate results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from bodies such as the Electoral Commission, government departments and local authorities • Independence from political parties • Police, courts and prosecutors who are conversant with electoral law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The results of any election are accepted by the public and candidates • The voter has confidence in both the process and the results
User focus – an easy and accessible process for candidates and electors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A voting process that is easy to understand • To have a choice of ways to vote • To be able to vote in a way that suits their lifestyle and needs • Information and advice which is accurate, prompt and easy to understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To know how to stand for election • Consistency of approach and realistic timescales • Clarity and impartiality in the process • A clear process of redress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External suppliers who deliver what is expected of them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral staff are proactive in encouraging registration and voting • Participating in democracy seen as part of active citizenship

<p>Professionalism – a clear and consistent approach to delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To know if they are eligible to register and vote • To know how and when to register and what to do if they move • To know where to get information and advice • To know who and what they are voting for • Young people to be educated and registering and voting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those involved in administration of the process to be fully conversant with electoral law • Consistent application of electoral law and processes • Clear and timely information, advice and guidance • An appropriate balance between speed and quality in the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the legislative framework and associated rules are clear and consistently applied • Focused and timely training and guidance • Legislation is introduced in a timely manner • That the electoral service is recognised as a customer facing service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service operates in line with the legislation • There is consistency in service delivery
<p>Value for money – efficient and effective service delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective use of public money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral administrators to have the right skills • Timely quality checks to be carried out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate resources are available to deliver what is expected • Local context, issues and priorities are recognised • Appropriately skilled staff are available in areas such as project management, contract management and Information Communication Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum registration of eligible citizens • Maximum participation in elections • Appropriate use of public money