

Part A – Context

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1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this guidance is to assist Electoral Registration Officers with particular points of practice and procedure in relation to electoral registration. It also covers applications for absent voting, as the Electoral Registration Officer has a duty to process these and must keep a record of all those applications which have been granted.

1.2 This manual is issued in accordance with the Electoral Commission's power under Section 10(3) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) to provide advice to Electoral Registration Officers, and is offered as such.

1.3 No expression of views on the part of the Commission can alter the application of any legislation to any particular case, or substitute any authoritative judicial interpretation of it. The Commission's role is to offer general assistance only, and it must be for Electoral Registration Officers and their own legal advisers to reach conclusions based on the details of any particular case. This guidance should not be relied on as legally definitive and the Electoral Commission cannot accept any responsibility for any errors or omissions, or any act arising from them.

1.4 The guidance covers:

- **legislative requirements** – a guide to what Electoral Registration Officers must do, with reference to the relevant legislative provisions
- **practical advice** – what Electoral Registration Officers are advised to do in order to ensure consistency and good practice
- **information** – contextual and background information where no action is required

1.5 This manual only covers electoral registration in England, Scotland and Wales. It does not cover electoral registration in Northern Ireland.

2 Legislation

2.1 The main body of electoral legislation affecting electoral registration is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Relevant legislation

Full title	Abbreviation	Summary of provisions relevant to registration
Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended)	RPA 1983	This Act contains provisions relevant to the franchise and its exercise, and the appointment and duties of the Electoral Registration Officer.
Representation of the People Act 1985	RPA 1985	This Act contains provisions relevant to the franchise.
Government of Wales Act 2006	GWA	This Act replaces the 1998 Act, which originally established the National Assembly for Wales and makes provisions regarding the franchise.
The Scotland Act 1998	Scotland Act 1998	This Act established the Scottish Parliament and makes provisions regarding the franchise.
Representation of the People Act 2000 (Schedule 4)	RPA 2000	This Schedule sets out the requirements for absent voting applications.
Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000	PPERA	This Act established the Electoral Commission and gives it powers to issue advice to Electoral Registration Officers and to set performance standards for electoral services.
European Parliamentary Elections (Franchise of Relevant Citizens of the Union) Regulations 2001	European (Franchise) Regulations 2001	These regulations set out who is entitled to register as an elector at a European Parliamentary election, and the process for registration.

Table 1 (cont.): Relevant legislation

Full title	Abbreviation	Summary of provisions relevant to registration
Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 (as amended by the Representation of the People (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2002 and 2006, and the Representation of the People (England and Wales) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2006)	RPR 2001	These regulations make provisions in respect of a number of areas, including the electoral registration and absent voting processes.
Representation of the People (Scotland) Regulations 2001 (as amended by the Representation of the People (Scotland) (Amendment) Regulations 2002, 2006, 2007 and 2008)	RPR 2001	These regulations make provisions in respect of a number of areas, including the electoral registration and absent voting processes.
European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002	EPE Act 2002	This Act makes provision regarding the franchise for European Parliamentary elections.
Electoral Administration Act 2006	EAA	This Act makes provisions in respect of a number of areas, including in relation to the registration of electors and the retention of information by the Electoral Registration Officer.
Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services (Scotland) Act 2006	LEARS	This Act effectively replicates the provisions of the EAA for Scottish local government elections.

Table 1 (cont.): Relevant legislation

Full title	Abbreviation	Summary of provisions relevant to registration
National Assembly for Wales (Representation of the People) Order 2007	NAW (RoP) Order 2007	This Order includes provisions relating to absent voting at Welsh Assembly elections.
Representation of the People (Absent Voting at Local Government Elections) (Scotland) Regulations 2007	RP (AV) (Scotland) Regulations	These Regulations disapply Part IV of the Representation of the People (Scotland) Regulations 2001 (as amended) in respect of Scottish local government elections, and the relevant provisions are reproduced in these Regulations.
The Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Order 2007 (as amended by the Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) (Amendment) Order 2007 and 2008)	Scottish Parliament Order	This Order includes provisions relating to absent voting at Scottish Parliamentary elections.

2.2 The guidance should be read in conjunction with the legislation referred to in Table 1 above, any legislation cited in the main body of the manual and any other legislation to which electoral legislation may refer – e.g. the RPA 1983 has within it a reference to the Postal Services Act 2000 in relation to the definition of ‘universal service provider’.

2.3 All references to the relevant provisions of electoral legislation made throughout the manual will be contained in footnotes, using the abbreviations shown in Table 1 above.

3 Roles and responsibilities

The Electoral Registration Officer¹

3.1 In order to be able to vote in elections in Great Britain, a person's name must be included in the register of electors. Responsibility for compiling the register of electors lies with the Electoral Registration Officer.



In England, the council of every district and London borough is required to appoint an officer of the council to be the Electoral Registration Officer. In the City of London, the Common Council must appoint an officer as the Electoral Registration Officer.



In Wales, the appointment of the Electoral Registration Officer is made by the county or county borough council. The person appointed must be a current officer of the council.



In Scotland, the Electoral Registration Officer must be appointed by the local authority. The person appointed must either be an officer of that council or an adjoining council, or an officer appointed by a combination of local authorities.

3.2 Electoral Registration Officers have several statutory functions. Each Electoral Registration Officer has a duty to maintain a register of Parliamentary electors and a register of local government electors,² as well as a register of those citizens of European Union member states who are entitled to vote at European Parliamentary elections³ and those peers living outside the UK who have made a declaration to vote at European Parliamentary elections.⁴ These registers contain the details of all those who are registered to vote and must be combined as far as is practicable. Any reference to 'the register' in this guidance manual should therefore be construed as a reference to the combined registers unless otherwise stated.

3.3 The Commission's interpretation of the duty to maintain the registers contained in Section 9 of the RPA 1983 is that the registers should be complete and accurate. Essentially this means that only eligible people should be on the register and that the information contained on the register in respect of these people is accurate.

3.4 For the purposes of maintaining the electoral register, the Electoral Registration Officer has a statutory duty to conduct an annual canvass⁵ and to maintain the register throughout the year by way of the rolling registration

¹ The appointment of the Electoral Registration Officer is described in Section 8, RPA 1983.

² Section 9, RPA 1983.

³ Regulation 5(2), European (Franchise) Regulations 2001.

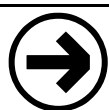
⁴ Section 3(7), RPA 1985.

⁵ Section 10(1), RPA 1983.

process.⁶ These two strands of maintaining the register are of equal importance. The duty set out in Section 9A of the RPA 1983 to take all steps that are necessary in order to maintain the register is equally applicable to the rolling registration process as to the annual canvass.

3.5 The Electoral Registration Officer must also produce an edited version of the register. The edited register contains only the names of those on the full register who have not taken the decision to opt out of their details appearing on the edited register.⁷ The edited version of the register is produced whenever the full register is revised.

3.6 While the edited register is available for general sale, the full register is only available for public inspection under supervision and its supply and sale is limited to certain persons and organisations.



Further information on the inspection, sale and supply of the electoral register can be found in Part H, 'Access and supply'.

3.7 Any expenses properly incurred by an Electoral Registration Officer in the performance of their functions shall be paid by the local authority that appointed them.⁸ These functions include the duties of the Electoral Registration Officer that are set out in legislation and detailed throughout this guidance manual, and any further duties imposed by a direction of the Secretary of State.⁹

3.8 The Electoral Registration Officer must also ensure that all staff involved in registration are fully trained in the relevant aspects of the registration process.¹⁰ Careful consideration should be paid to what part of the process staff are allocated to, and their training should be managed accordingly; for example, if staff have access to the full electoral register, they should be made aware of the penalty for misuse of that data. Appropriate training on the electoral registration software is essential for all who will be required to use it. Additionally, the Electoral Registration Officer should ensure that office staff dealing directly with the public, and those working at any contact centres or call management centres, are trained to identify non-standard questions and to refer these to qualified staff. Any staff undertaking electoral registration work do so on behalf of the Electoral Registration Officer and must follow whatever instruction is given by them for answering questions and dealing with enquiries.

⁶ Section 13A, RPA 1983.

⁷ Regulation 93, RPR 2001.

⁸ Section 54, RPA 1983.

⁹ Section 52, RPA 1983.

¹⁰ Section 9A(2)(e), RPA 1983.

3.9 If an Electoral Registration Officer is found guilty of any act or omission in breach of their official duty, they will be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale.¹¹

The Deputy Electoral Registration Officer

3.10 The council can approve a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer, known as a Depute in Scotland,¹² who can carry out the duties and powers of the Electoral Registration Officer.¹³ Unlike Returning Officers, the Electoral Registration Officer cannot appoint a deputy themselves, unless the power to do so has been delegated to them by the council. The council may give a deputy full or particular powers and this should be made clear in the appointment. The appointment of a deputy may be useful in undertaking procedures such as hearings of registration applications, objections and reviews.

Staff of the Electoral Registration Officer

3.11 The council that appointed the Electoral Registration Officer **is required** to provide officers to assist the Electoral Registration Officer in carrying out their statutory functions.¹⁴ In England and Wales, if the position of Electoral Registration Officer is vacant or the Electoral Registration Officer is incapable of acting, any of the duties and powers of the Electoral Registration Officer may be carried out by the proper officer of the council.¹⁵

Council staff

3.12 Many council staff may be involved in the registration of electors: for example, during the canvass period council frontline staff may be asked to help complete canvass forms; indeed those providing personal care may be able to assist where the resident would otherwise have been unable to complete the form.

3.13 The Electoral Registration Officer may therefore find it useful to prepare a guidance note for any such staff on the basics of electoral registration and the correct way of helping a resident complete their registration form.

3.14 Other council departments may assist in the registration of electors. Some local authorities, for example, send out welcome packs to new residents and application forms for registration could be included in these.

¹¹ Section 63, RPA 1983. The fine is currently a maximum of £5,000.

¹² Throughout this manual, all references made to 'Deputy Electoral Registration Officer' should be read as 'Depute' in respect of Scotland.

¹³ Section 52(2), RPA 1983.

¹⁴ Section 52(4), RPA 1983.

¹⁵ Section 52(3), RPA 1983.



Departments of the council that appointed the Electoral Registration Officer and that work with new residents or new properties must allow their databases to be accessed by the Electoral Registration Officer for registration purposes. Further consideration of data sharing and data protection is given in Part E, 'Improving completeness and accuracy'.

Temporary staff

3.15 Levels of workload within the electoral registration office can vary throughout the year, generally peaking in the canvass and election periods. In many cases, these busy periods require temporary staff and canvassers to assist the normal office staff.

3.16 It is useful to have a pool of people who have experience of working in electoral registration and who have been found to be effective. Re-employing experienced temporary staff ensures a continuity of knowledge. Such staff would also have experience and understanding of the software systems that are central to the electoral registration process.



Part C, 'The annual canvass', contains guidance specific to working with canvassers, who will often be temporary staff.

3.17 With applications for registration allowed up until 11 working days before an election, the workload of the electoral registration office may be particularly high in the lead-up to an election. In this period, the employment and training of temporary staff may become a necessary expense in addition to normal registration costs, and planning for this should be made in advance.

External dependencies

Contractors

3.18 When contracting printing, electoral software or any other function, it should be made clear to suppliers that the registration of electors has to be carried out in accordance with electoral legislation. The responsibility for complying with legislation, however, remains with the Electoral Registration Officer at all times and does not transfer in any way to the contractor.

Printers

3.19 The printing of electoral registration and canvass forms will often be undertaken by professional printers, who may be either an internal department of the council or a private contractor.

3.20 It is essential that there is a formal, written contract or agreement for any work undertaken by contractors. Local authorities have formal procedures for procurement and the letting of contracts which Electoral Registration Officers may be able to adopt. There will also be experienced managers within the appointing council whose expertise can be used to ensure that appropriate

and rigorous contract management procedures are followed, thereby minimising risk.

3.21 Any contract with a contractor should contain specific provisions relating to security of the data provided by the Electoral Registration Officer. The contract should be such that these provisions also cover any subcontractors used to deliver the work. Information pre-printed on canvass forms is taken from the full register and so the contractor should be made aware of the penalties for using the data for anything other than the contracted work.

3.22 Additionally, it is recommended that contracts for electoral registration work specifically require the following:

- Disclosure of any subcontractors and their role.
- Clear lines of communication between the printer, any subcontractors and the Electoral Registration Officer.
- Electoral Registration Officers to be provided with proofs of all items. The proofs should be provided both electronically and in hard copy format.
- Electoral register data held by printers should be destroyed as soon as practicable after the work to which it relates has been completed.

3.23 The Electoral Registration Officer must remain in control of the process and take steps to ensure that any company contracted to do work does not make any decisions without their authorisation. Any variations from the agreed specification could result in a breach of legislation and, potentially, a breach of duty.

3.24 In order to assist contractors and suppliers in delivering their work on time, it is essential to keep to agreed timescales for providing the information or data they need to do their job. If there is slippage for any reason, advise the contractors of this as early as possible and agree a revised timetable.

3.25 All stages of the procurement and production processes should be documented. In particular, keep a formal record of the production process in order to be able to demonstrate that it was undertaken in accordance with the law.

3.26 If it is difficult to find a suitable printer, then the British Printing Industry Federation or the Scottish Print Employers Federation may be contacted for assistance:

British Printing Industry Federation

Farringdon Point
29–35 Farringdon Road
London EC1M 3JF
Tel: 020 7915 8319

Scottish Print Employers Federation

48 Palmerston Place
Edinburgh EH12 5DE
Tel: 0131 220 4353

Electoral software systems

3.27 The management of the registration of electors is in most cases reliant on specialised electoral software systems. They can either be one of several systems produced specifically for the task by software suppliers or a bespoke system produced by the Electoral Registration Officer.

3.28 As the responsibility for complying with electoral legislation rests with the Electoral Registration Officer, they should ensure that their chosen system is able to meet all the legislative requirements regarding the registration of electors.

4 Budgets

4.1 The budget for registration should be settled between the Electoral Registration Officer and the council which appointed them, and should be sufficient to allow the Electoral Registration Officer to fulfil their duty to maintain the register.



In Scotland, if the Electoral Registration Officer is acting on behalf of more than one local authority, each local authority must contribute to the registration budget.

4.2 Expenditure will fall into two main categories: funding the annual canvass; and funding the year-round registration process, known as 'rolling registration'. The expenses of registration must be properly accounted for by the Electoral Registration Officer and then paid by the council,¹⁶ which is in contrast to the provision of adequate staffing resource in order to assist the Electoral Registration Officer, which is a direct duty of the council.¹⁷

4.3 Each local authority is required to provide its Electoral Registration Officer with adequate funds to carry out house-to-house, postal or other enquiries as are necessary in order to produce a complete and accurate register of electors.

4.4 As part of the planning process, the Electoral Registration Officer will need to consider what budget they require in order to carry out their statutory functions. The Electoral Registration Officer will need to ensure that they have sufficient resources in place in order to be able to organise their annual canvass process in such a way to ensure that they are prepared for the potential of there being an election during the canvass period.

4.5 The Commission does not make any specific recommendations in regard to budgeting, as budget allocations will clearly depend on the resources made available to each individual Electoral Registration Officer. The Commission does, however, recognise the major impact funding has on electoral registration activity, and will be collecting information on expenditure relating to the electoral registration function at the end of each financial year.

4.6 The following paragraphs highlight areas that should be considered in building up a budget for electoral registration.

Budget timetable

4.7 Council timetables for budget setting can vary but will generally commence in September or October each year with the preparation of working sheets and draft estimates. Care should be taken in order to ensure the accurate calculation of estimated costs. Any bids for additional funding will need to be fully justified.

¹⁶ Section 54, RPA 1983.

¹⁷ Section 52(4), RPA 1983.

4.8 By the end of December, budget proposals will generally have been discussed and approved by the council's management team, with council members then giving consideration to the budgets at the end of January and into February.

Staff costs

4.9 Most local authorities have some form of time sheet or time recording mechanism which can be used to assess the time spent by staff on electoral registration duties, and subsequently to calculate staffing costs. In preparing a budget, an estimated assessment of staffing requirements needs to be made. Most computerised budgetary systems produce monthly updates which allow figures to be revised and provide more accurate estimates at intervals throughout the budget year.

Overheads

4.10 Overheads, sometimes termed 'central costs' or 'on costs', cover costs that are difficult to allocate in any way other than as an amount split proportionally between sections or persons. Overheads can include such things as office accommodation, fixed furnishings, insurance and security arrangements.

4.11 Employer liabilities, such as National Insurance and pension contributions, must also be considered.

Information technology

4.12 Maintenance costs, licences and such like will depend upon the amount and types of IT equipment used: computers (hardware and software), scanners, printers, photocopiers, telephones and fax machines all need to be taken into consideration. Provision should also be made for the supply of consumable items such as printer cartridges, CDs and DVDs.

4.13 Computer hardware costs and internal support staff from the council's computer section are often outside the control of individual sections. Where they are provided on a corporate basis, costs may be allocated as overheads.

Canvassers' fees

4.14 Payments to canvassers will depend on the canvass method used and the role canvassers are asked to undertake. Some canvassers will both deliver and enquire on non-returned forms whereas others will only do the latter, and indeed some will be employed to do only the former. It will be necessary to ensure that adequate funds are allocated to cover canvassers' fees.



More detailed consideration of how canvassers could be remunerated can be found in Part C, 'The annual canvass'.

Temporary office staff

4.15 Temporary office staff may be used to process registration forms during busy periods and would usually be based in the offices used by the Electoral Registration Officer. If a need or possible need for such staff is identified, adequate provision will need to be contained in the budget.

Printing and stationery

4.16 As it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between stationery and printing, these two items can be shown under one heading. The major items that will need to be included are:

- Canvass forms. These will generally need to be personalised with existing data, although they may still be addressed to 'The Occupier'. Additionally, these forms may need to be produced with bar codes for compatibility with electoral software systems, and this may also impact on the cost.
- Other items of electoral registration stationery, such as absent vote application forms that are purchased from outside printers.
- Envelopes, if used for delivery and/or return.
- Leaflets and reminders.
- Cost of producing registers.
- Paper, pens and other office stationery items.

Publicity

4.17 Section 69 of the EAA imposes a duty on Electoral Registration Officers to encourage electoral participation. Electoral Registration Officers must have regard to any guidance issued by the Commission on this matter.¹⁸

4.18 It is recommended that each Electoral Registration Officer has a dedicated publicity budget. Additionally, the Ministry of Justice administers a participation fund to assist Electoral Registration Officers in the fulfilment of their participation duty. Further information on this fund can be found in 'Additional sources of funding' below and in Part I, 'Accessibility and participation'.

Education and training

4.19 Staff who are well trained in electoral registration, project planning and other similar areas are more likely to deliver complete and accurate electoral registers.

4.20 Staff could be encouraged to increase their knowledge by studying for appropriate qualifications, such as National Vocational Qualifications, Scottish Vocational Qualifications, and the Association of Electoral Administrators' Foundation Course, Certificate and Diploma.

¹⁸ Section 69(2), EAA.

4.21 Provision should be made for staff to attend training and briefing events organised by the Commission and other organisations such as the Association of Electoral Administrators and local authorities. Consideration should also be given to providing training for staff around customer care, project management, equal opportunities and computer literacy.

Postage

4.22 In addition to the cost of day-to-day postal requirements, the electoral registration budget needs to take into account postage costs specifically associated with registration and absent vote applications. In local authorities where some form of postal canvass is used for delivering electoral registration forms, provision will need to be made for this cost. In the past, bulk postage discounts could be negotiated with Royal Mail, often taking into account the council's whole postage costs, but it is now generally necessary to 'Walksort' mail in order to obtain any discount. Other Royal Mail services that may be considered are the use of business reply or freepost envelopes. It may also be pertinent to consider the prices of alternative delivery providers in order to determine whether any savings can be made.

Equipment

4.23 Costs to be considered may include equipment such as bar code readers and scanners used in the office and items such as identity cards and other kit used by canvassers, e.g. shoulder bags.

Books, statutes and reports

4.24 Provision should be made for the purchase of specific publications on electoral registration matters, together with copies of government statutes and any other relevant technical papers. Offices should be equipped with reference books such as *Schofield's Election Law* and/or *Parker's Law and Conduct of Elections*.¹⁹



Electoral Commission guidance materials are available free of charge, downloadable from the Commission's website. Additionally, Electoral Registration Officers can sign up to receive the Commission's circulars and alerts, which are used to send out further information and guidance.

Any amendments made to this manual in future will be notified via circulars, with the relevant sections being made available for downloading, printing off and insertion into the manual, and will not be issued as hard copies.

Any Electoral Registration Officer who does not already receive the Commission's circulars should email extra@electoralcommission.org.uk to be added to the mailing list.

¹⁹ Neither of these volumes covers Scottish electoral law. Although not updated to reflect all recent legislative changes, the closest equivalent for Scotland would be *The Laws of Scotland: Stair Memorial Encyclopaedia*, Volume 15.

Additional sources of funding

Participation fund

4.25 The Ministry of Justice has a fund to assist Electoral Registration Officers and (Acting) Returning Officers in fulfilling their duty to encourage participation. The Electoral Registration Officer should be aware of the current arrangements for this fund and should ensure that they claim their allowance in order to assist them in the performance of this duty. Further information on funding participation activities can be found in Part I, 'Accessibility and participation'.



In Scotland, funding is provided to local authorities via their Grant Aided Expenditure, which is intended to be used to meet their responsibilities arising out of the EAA.

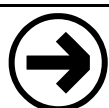
Joint working and sharing costs

4.26 In many instances, working with other nearby authorities can help to create a greater impact without incurring additional expense. Pooling participation budgets, for example, may help in enabling wider campaigns to be carried out.

4.27 Other parts of the registration budget, such as money allocated to printing, could also be pooled with neighbouring authorities to achieve the cost savings often associated with bulk orders.

Income from register sales

4.28 Certain credit reference agencies and government agencies may purchase a copy of the full electoral register.



Further information regarding the sale of the electoral register can be found in Part H, 'Access and supply'.

4.29 While there is only a small number of organisations that may purchase the full electoral register, any company or individual may purchase the edited register or particular sections of it, for example specific wards.

4.30 There is no express right for council departments that are entitled to receive a copy of the register to receive it free of charge from the Electoral Registration Officer. In some instances it may be appropriate to seek a recharge of the material cost and perhaps also a reimbursement for staff time.

5 Statutory bodies and government departments

The Electoral Commission

Background

5.1 The Electoral Commission is an independent body, established by the UK Parliament in November 2000. The Commission reports directly to the UK Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons, known as the Speaker's Committee.

Statutory functions

5.2 The Electoral Commission has a number of statutory functions and powers in relation to electoral registration, which are set out in PPERA. These include:

- setting and publishing performance standards for electoral services and collecting information on the costs of electoral services from Electoral Registration Officers, Returning Officers and referendum Counting Officers²⁰
- attending at certain electoral registration proceedings²¹
- promoting public awareness of electoral matters²²
- providing advice and assistance to those involved in the electoral registration process²³
- being consulted by the UK Government on proposals to amend electoral law²⁴

Performance standards

5.3 Sections 9A to 9C of PPERA allow the Commission to set and monitor performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers, Returning Officers and referendum Counting Officers and to collect information on the costs of electoral services. The Commission will introduce a performance standards framework for electoral registration by the summer of 2008 and will expect the first reports against this framework from Electoral Registration Officers following the 2008 annual canvass.

Provision of advice

5.4 Section 10 of PPERA allows the Commission to provide advice and assistance to Electoral Registration Officers, Returning Officers and registered political parties. The Commission cannot, however, give a definitive legal view on any subject as this is ultimately a matter for a court to decide in any particular case.

²⁰ Sections 9A to 9C, PPERA, as inserted by Section 67, EAA.

²¹ Section 6B, PPERA, as inserted by Section 29, EAA.

²² Section 13, PPERA.

²³ Section 10, PPERA.

²⁴ Section 7, PPERA.

Devolved and regional offices

5.5 The first point of contact for any queries should be either the Commission's devolved office in Scotland or Wales, or one of the Commission's English regional offices, as appropriate.

Devolved offices

Scotland

David Freeland
Telephone: 0131 225 0208
Email: dfreeland@electoralcommission.org.uk

Wales

Joanne Nelson
Telephone: 029 2034 6803
E-mail: jnelson@electoralcommission.org.uk

English regional offices

Eastern and South East Office

John Pollard
Telephone: 020 7271 0660
Email: jpollard@electoralcommission.org.uk

James Steele
Telephone: 020 7271 0600
Email: jsteele@electoralcommission.org.uk

London Office

Peter Dawson
Telephone: 0207 271 0689
Email: pdawson@electoralcommission.org.uk

Midlands Office

East Midlands and West Midlands
Gail Emmerson
Telephone: 02476 820 086
Email: gemmerson@electoralcommission.org.uk

North of England Office

North East and Yorkshire and the Humber
Sarah Hopson
Telephone: 01904 567 994
Email: shopson@electoralcommission.org.uk

North West
Sandra Hardy
Telephone: 01904 567 993
Email: shardy@electoralcommission.org.uk

South West Office

South West

Elizabeth Gorst

Telephone: 01392 314 616

Email: egorst@electoralcommission.org.uk

5.6 Electoral Administration staff in the Commission's head office are no longer responsible for dealing with frontline enquiries, but they continue to provide advice on dealing with malpractice, fraud and related integrity issues.

Richard Jordan

Senior Practice Adviser – Integrity

Tel: 020 7271 0562

Tom Hawthorn

Head of Electoral Policy

Tel: 020 7271 0712



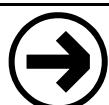
More information on the Electoral Commission can be found at www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

Ministry of Justice

5.7 The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is the central government department with responsibility for the legislative framework for UK and European Parliamentary elections and national referendums, including franchise, conduct and funding, and also for the appointment of Regional Returning Officers at European Parliamentary elections.

5.8 Additionally, the MoJ has responsibility for policy on the conduct of local government elections and mayoral and local government referendums in England and Wales, and has responsibility for all issues covered by PPERA. These include generic issues associated with national and regional referendums, the registration of political parties, rules on donations to political parties and third-party donations.

5.9 The Electoral Policy Division is the part of the MoJ with responsibility for issues concerning franchise, registration and the conduct of elections. The division currently has five branches: the Franchise, Boundaries and Conduct branch; the Electoral Registration and Implementation branch; the Electoral Modernisation branch; the Political Parties and Referendums branch; and the Democratic Engagement branch.



More information on the MoJ can be found at www.justice.gov.uk.

Office of the Secretary of State for Wales

5.10 The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales has responsibility for legislation governing the conduct of elections to the National Assembly for Wales. This includes responsibility for legislation relating to absent voting at these elections.



More information on the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales can be found at www.walesoffice.gov.uk.

Scotland Office

5.11 The Scotland Office has responsibility for legislation governing the conduct of elections to the Scottish Parliament. This includes responsibility for legislation relating to absent voting at these elections.



More information on the Scotland Office can be found at www.scotlandoffice.gov.uk.

Scottish Government

5.12 While councils themselves are responsible for organising and conducting local government elections in Scotland, Scottish Ministers are responsible for policy on local government elections and the legislation relating to their conduct. This includes legislation relating to absent voting at these elections.



More information on the Scottish Government can be found at www.scotland.gov.uk.

6 Resources

Contact details for ordering Electoral Commission forms and leaflets



Throughout this guidance we refer to forms and leaflets produced by the Commission and available from our distributor:

Tel: 0845 8500 501

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