

electoral administration bulletin



Issue 182 (Wales) – 27 April 2017

The
Electoral
Commission

Contents

May 2017 polls: a message from the Commission

A message of good luck from the Commission.

June 2017 UKPGE: update on publication of guidance and supporting resources

Information on the guidance and supporting resources which have been published for the UKPGE.

June 2017 UKPGE: polling station handbooks and quick guides

A reminder to complete your orders for polling station handbooks and quick guides by 2 May, information on expected delivery dates and links to the PDF versions.

June 2017 UKPGE: public awareness update

An overview of the Commission's public awareness campaign.

June 2017 UKPGE: update on party names, descriptions and emblems

Information on party names, descriptions and emblems in relation to the UK Parliamentary general election.

Postal vote identifier rejection notices

May 2017 polls: a message from the Commission

You and your staff have all been working extremely hard to prepare for the polls taking place across Wales next week and we wanted to take this opportunity to wish you all good luck for polling day and the count. More details about how you can contact us on polling day will be included in next week's Bulletin.

June 2017 UKPGE: update on publication of guidance and supporting resources

As set out in [Bulletin 181](#), we have already published the election timetable and all of our core guidance for [\(Acting\) Returning Officers](#) and [candidates and agents in Great Britain](#).

We have also now published [a short guidance note](#) to address the challenges of preparing for the 8 June 2017 UK Parliamentary general election, including considerations for (A)ROs in Wales who also have local elections taking place in on 4 May 2017. The guidance note is also available in the resources section underneath Part B on our [\(Acting\) Returning Officer](#) guidance page.

Supporting resources can also be found on our [\(Acting\) Returning Officers](#) website underneath each guidance part.

June 2017 UKPGE: orders for polling station handbooks and quick guides

You should already have received an e-mail with a link to the [online order form](#) for polling station handbooks and quick guides for the UK Parliamentary general election taking place on 8 June.

The deadline for completing the [online order form](#) is Tuesday 2 May.

Delivery will commence on Monday 8 May and should be completed that week; if you have not received your order by Tuesday 16 May,

please contact infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk, or telephone 0333 103 1929.

We appreciate the tight deadline for placing these orders, particularly given that you all have elections in May, but to ensure despatch of the handbooks and quick guides from 8 May, we need to have received orders by this date. Unfortunately we cannot guarantee the delivery window for any orders received after 2 May.

Please note that once you have submitted your order form, you will not be able to amend your order yourself. If you need to make any changes to your order, please contact infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk, or telephone 0333 103 1929.

A PDF of the [handbook](#) and of the [quick guide](#) is available on our website. These resources can also be found under the Part C resources section on [\(Acting\) Returning Officer](#) guidance page.

June 2017 UKPGE: public awareness update

The Commission will run a public awareness campaign ahead of the UK Parliamentary general election, launching on Monday 8 May and running for two weeks until the voter registration deadline on Monday 22 May.

It will focus on electoral registration, and advertising will primarily run across TV, radio, digital and social, leading with a repurposed version of our 'What?' TV ad and 'You Can't Vote' digital creative. We'll be running specific digital advertising for voters living overseas, as well as armed forces personnel based outside of the UK.

We'll also be providing a variety of digital resources for local authorities and partners to share to spread our messages. These will be distributed via our Roll Call newsletter in the week before the campaign launch, and will be available on yourvotematters.co.uk.

More information will be included in the next edition of the Bulletin, and updates on our public awareness campaign will be available via Roll Call. [If you aren't already subscribed, you can do so here.](#)

If you have any questions, please contact partners@electoralcommission.org.uk

June 2017 UKPGE: update on party names, descriptions and emblems

[Part C of our guidance for \(Acting\) Returning Officers](#) sets out what the legislation provides for in relation to changes, deletions and additions of party names, descriptions and emblems.

Because of the short notice until the 8 June poll, we are unlikely to process any new changes, deletions and additions to party names, descriptions and emblems before 9 May. We may however still make some changes where applications are already in progress.

As we did ahead of the May 2017 polls, we will provide through the

Guidance on the issue of notices after the May 2017 elections.

May 2017 polls: post-election data collection

Links to forms and accompanying guidance for the submission of data following the May polls.

EA Bulletins are issued on a regular basis. They are one of our key channels for communicating with Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their staff. Past issues of Bulletins for England, Scotland and Wales are available [here](#).

You can also [subscribe to the EA Bulletins](#).

Please [keep us informed](#) of any staff changes within your team. This will help us to keep our mailing lists up-to-date.

Bulletin a list of changes made to existing party names, descriptions and emblems and will advise of any new parties who are added to the register. We will also include a list of deregistered parties, and of any subsequent successful applications to re-register from deregistered parties.

Postal vote identifier rejection notices

As set out in [Part 5 of the Commission's guidance for Electoral Registration Officers](#), legislation requires that where an absent voter appears on the list of rejected postal ballot papers you must, within three months of the date of the poll, notify the elector or postal proxy that their postal ballot paper was rejected because the Returning Officer was not satisfied that the postal voting statement was duly completed.

If you have sent a rejection on the grounds that the signature provided on the returned postal voting statement does not match the example held on the personal identifiers record (and the person continues to be shown on your records as an absent voter), you may require the absent voter to provide a fresh signature for the personal identifiers record, which could be done at the same time as you send them the rejection notice.

Where you do require the absent voter to provide you with a fresh signature, you must inform them of the date (six weeks from the date of the notice) on which they would cease to be entitled to vote by post in the event of a failure or refusal to provide a fresh signature. If they have not responded to the notice within three weeks from the date on which it was sent, you must send a reminder notice that is a copy of the contents of the original notice.

Sending postal vote identifier rejection notices shortly after a poll helps to ensure that voters whose identifiers failed to match can participate effectively in future polls and not have their postal vote rejected at successive polls because of signature degradation or because they are making inadvertent errors. However, the short gap between the May 2017 polls and the June UK Parliamentary general election (UKPGE) presents particular challenges for EROs that will influence their decision on how to proceed.

May 2017 polls

Building on the guidance issued in advance of the May 2016 polls and the EU Referendum, the Electoral Commission and the AEA have again been considering possible approaches to managing the postal vote identifier rejection notice process to support EROs who decide to send the notices in time to help to ensure that any error which led to rejection in May is not repeated in June.

In identifying the most appropriate window for issuing their notices, it is necessary to take into account the time that will be needed to prepare for the issue of the notices, the legislative requirements around the timing for issuing reminder notices and cancelling postal vote arrangements, and the timing for the delivery of postal votes for the UKPGE. If, for example, postal vote identifier rejection notices for the May 2017 polls, together with any requirement for a fresh signature, are dated and issued in the week commencing 8 May,

this should mean that any reminder notices will not need to be sent until the first issue of postal votes for the UKPGE has been completed. The 6-week deadline by which any requested fresh signature must be provided will also fall after the UKPGE.

Where a new signature is provided, it has immediate effect: the signature does not have to be received by 5pm, eleven working days before the poll to be effective at that poll. However, where a new signature is provided after the postal vote statement for the UKPGE has been determined, that determination cannot be changed. Therefore, if you send out the notices before the UKPGE, you will need to ensure that the list of absent vote identifiers is updated promptly when new signatures are received and that this information is provided in a timely way to the relevant (Acting) Returning Officer. To enable quick identification of new signatures, the return envelopes provided to those electors being required to provide a new signature could be marked so that they can be clearly distinguished from other post. It may also be helpful to print the form that the elector will use on different coloured paper so that they stand out; however, you would need to ensure that the colour of paper you use will not impact on the scanning of the new signature.

Template wording for use on these notices to reflect the specific circumstances of the May 2017 elections and the UKPGE which will encourage early return of new signatures and will also reflect the fact that not everyone whose postal vote is rejected at the May polls will be eligible to vote by post at the UKPGE is available [on our website](#). We will also update our FAQs on postal vote rejection notices to support you and your staff with responding to any queries from electors who have received a notice by 2 May, and we will confirm to you in a future Bulletin when the FAQs have been published.

May 2017 polls: post-election data collection

Post-election data collection

We have now published our data collection form for the May 2017 polls, which includes the statutory statement as to postal ballots as well as requests for additional data.

The data collection form can be found under the resources section of Part F of our guidance for Returning Officers, or can be accessed [here](#).

This [guidance note](#) provides information on what should be returned and to where. Statements as to postal ballots and additional data forms should be sent to research@electoralcommission.org.uk. Local declarations of results should be sent to Colin Rallings at elections@plymouth.ac.uk.

Please return all forms **as soon as you are able**. However, we appreciate you will be busy following the May polls with ongoing preparations for the UK Parliamentary General Election. **The final deadline for the return of data related to the May polls is therefore Friday 23rd June.**

Companies House, Crown Way, Cardiff, CF14 3UZ

Tel: 0333 103 1929

Textphone: 18001 020 7271 0500

infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk

www.electoralcommission.org.uk

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