



YOUR LONDON. YOUR VOTE

The  
Electoral  
Commission

## Greater London Authority (GLA) election

# Guidance for candidates and agents

## Overview document

This document applies to the May 2016 Greater London Authority election, covering the election of the Mayor of London and elections to the London Assembly. Guidance and resources for other elections in the UK can be accessed from the Commission's website at:

[www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-those-we-regulate/candidates-and-agents/](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-those-we-regulate/candidates-and-agents/).

# Contents

Purpose of this guidance .....	2
How to use the guidance .....	2
The electoral system.....	4
Who does what at a Greater London Authority election and how to contact them?.....	6
Greater London Returning Officer .....	6
Constituency Returning Officers.....	6
Electoral Registration Officers.....	7
London Elects.....	7
The Electoral Commission .....	8
Contacting us.....	9

## Purpose of this guidance


1.1 This guidance, which the Electoral Commission has produced with the Greater London Returning Officer, aims to provide practical advice for candidates and parties who want to stand at the May 2016 Greater London Authority election and anyone who wishes to act as an agent.

1.2 Greater London Authority elections involve three contests and this guidance covers what you need to do as:

- a Mayor of London candidate
- a Constituency Assembly Member candidate or,
- an individual or party list candidate at the London-wide Assembly election

and what parties need to do to submit London-wide party lists.

1.3 It also covers the campaign and election periods, the declaration of the results and election spending. It includes relevant factual material as well as a guide to sources of further information. Standing for election can be complicated, but we hope that our guidance will make it as straightforward as possible.

 This guidance has been developed based on the legislation as it currently stands and makes some assumptions about what further legislation will provide for, and so it may be subject to change. We will update and re-publish the guidance as appropriate once the legislation is clear.

## How to use the guidance

1.4 The guidance is made up of six parts, setting out the different stages which parties, candidates and agents need to go through when standing at the Greater London Authority election in May 2016.

1.5 Each part is accompanied by a number of forms and resources, which can be accessed via links in the individual

parts. Alternatively, relevant guidance, forms and resources will be available on our [dedicated webpage for candidates and agents](#) at the Greater London Authority election and on the [London Elects website](#).

1.6 The following parts make up the full guidance for the Greater London Authority election:

- [Part 1 – Can you stand for election?](#)
- [Part 2a – Standing as a candidate for London Mayor](#)
- [Part 2b – Standing at the Constituency Member election to the London Assembly](#)
- [Part 2c – Standing at the London-wide Member election to the London Assembly](#)
- [Part 3 – Spending and donations](#)
- [Part 4 – The campaign](#)
- [Part 5 – Your right to attend key electoral events](#)
- [Part 6 – After the declaration of results](#)

1.7 Before deciding to stand for election potential candidates need to be confident that they meet all of the requirements. You should therefore first read [Part 1](#) of our guidance, which covers the qualifications and disqualifications.

1.8 Once satisfied that you can stand, you should read [Part 2a](#) of our guidance (if you are a candidate for the Mayor of London), [Part 2b](#) of our guidance (if you are standing as a candidate at the Constituency Member election to the London Assembly) or [Part 2c](#) of our guidance (if you are standing at the London-wide Assembly Member election as an individual candidate or a party list candidate, or if you are the Nominating Officer of a political party wishing to submit a list of candidates to stand on the party's behalf). These parts deal with the nominations process and guide you through which forms you need to submit and by when.

1.9 Candidates and agents at the Greater London Authority election must follow rules about how much they can spend, who they can accept donations from, and what they must report after the election. Failure to follow these rules could lead to you committing an offence and losing your seat, if elected. [Part 3](#) of our guidance explains the rules.

1.10 [Part 4](#) covers the rules on publication and display of campaign literature and what you need to bear in mind when campaigning.

1.11 Candidates and agents also have a right to attend key electoral events, such as the poll; the count and the collation of the Mayor of London and London-wide Assembly Member results. Others can also be appointed to attend these electoral events. Details on your rights and what to expect at these events are provided in [Part 5](#).

1.12 Finally, there are a number of things candidates and agents will need to do once the results have been declared, including submitting their spending returns. This is covered in [Part 6](#).

1.13 To keep the guidance as relevant to the reader as possible, we have split most guidance parts into an 'Essential information' section, which all candidates, agents and political parties should read as it contains information that is relevant to all, and a 'Supplementary information' section, that will be relevant only to some. You will be directed to the 'Supplementary information' section at relevant points throughout the 'Essential information' section.

## The electoral system

1.14 The Greater London Authority election will elect the Mayor of London and 25 London Assembly Members - 14 Constituency Members and 11 London-wide Members.

1.15 Together, the Mayor and the London Assembly form the Greater London Authority. The Mayor is the Authority's executive and the Assembly's primary role is to hold the Mayor to account.

1.16 The Mayor of London is elected under the supplementary vote system. Voters can vote for a first and second choice candidate they want to elect. The ballot paper will list all the candidates and voters will vote for their first choice candidate by marking an 'X' in the first choice column and for their second choice candidate by marking an 'X' in the second choice column. If a candidate obtains more than 50% of the

first choice votes, they will be declared elected. If no candidate obtains more than 50% of the first choice votes, all candidates except for those in first and second place are eliminated. The ballot papers showing a first preference for one of the eliminated candidates are checked for their second preference. Any second preference votes for the remaining two candidates are then added to their first preference votes and the candidate with the most votes is elected.

1.17 Assembly Members are elected under the additional member electoral system. Under this system, voters are given two ballot papers: one for electing a Constituency Assembly Member and another for electing the London-wide Assembly Members. On the Constituency Assembly Member ballot paper, voters are asked to place an 'X' next to the candidate of their choice. On the London-wide Assembly Member ballot paper, voters are asked to place an 'X' next to the party or individual candidate of their choice. Constituency seats will be allocated on a first-past-the-post basis. London-wide Assembly member seats will be allocated by the GLRO using a mathematical formula called 'modified d'Hondt'.

1.18 Further information on the voting systems used at a GLA election can be found on the [London Elects](#) website.

# Who does what at a Greater London Authority election and how to contact them?

## Greater London Returning Officer

1.19 The Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO) has overall responsibility for coordinating the elections across Greater London. The GLRO is a senior officer of the Greater London Authority, independent of the Authority and the Mayor in respect of their electoral functions.

1.20 The GLRO is responsible for the nomination process and calculating and declaring the results at the Mayor of London and London-wide Assembly Member polls. The GLRO will also liaise with and coordinate the work of Constituency Returning Officers and has the power to give directions to them relating to the discharge of their functions at the election.

## Constituency Returning Officers

1.21 London Assembly constituencies are made up of two to four London boroughs. Typically, the Returning Officer of the largest borough (usually the one with the most registered electors) is the Constituency Returning Officer.

1.22 The Constituency Returning Officer is responsible for all aspects of the administration of the Constituency Assembly Member election, including the nomination of Constituency Assembly Member candidates; and the elements of the Mayor of London and London-wide Member elections that fall within their constituency area, including the conduct of the poll and the counting of votes.

1.23 The Constituency Returning Officer will work closely with Returning Officers for the other boroughs within the constituency on operational issues in connection with the election, such as the identification and booking of polling stations, the appointment of staff and the sending out and

opening of postal votes. At a GLA election, the other Returning Officers within the constituency are often referred to as 'Borough Returning Officers'.

### Contacting the GLRO and Constituency Returning Officers

1.24 The Greater London Returning Officer can be contacted through London Elects (see paragraph **1.27 below**).

1.25 The names and contact details of the Constituency Returning Officers are also available on the [London Elects](#) website.

1.26 The GLRO and Constituency Returning Officers will offer briefings ahead of an election and we strongly encourage you to attend, even if you have stood for election or been an agent before.

## Electoral Registration Officers

1.27 The Electoral Registration Officer is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters' lists for their local authority area. In London, the Electoral Registration Officer is normally a senior officer of the local authority and may also be the Borough Returning Officer. You can find the contact details for all Electoral Registration Officers at [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk).

## London Elects

1.28 [London Elects](#) plays a central role in organising Greater London elections. It is made up of expert staff from the Greater London Authority and based at City Hall. The team is accountable directly to the GLRO.

1.29 The team oversees the budget for the election, plans and coordinates the overarching logistics, administers the process through which the Mayor of London and London-wide Assembly Members are nominated, and organises the printing of the ballot papers and the counting of the votes.

1.30 London Elects works closely with London's 32 boroughs and the City of London to deliver the election. It coordinates



training, provides support and helps to ensure consistency across London. The boroughs and the City have electoral services teams that support the Constituency and Borough Returning Officers and they also help staff the three count centres where the votes are counted electronically the day following the poll.

1.31 Another role of London Elects is to make sure the election process is transparent and everyone involved is well informed. That includes educating Londoners about the voting process and the role of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly, helping candidates understand what is required and what is happening, and liaising with the media and communicating the outcome of the election.

## The Electoral Commission

1.32 The Commission is an independent statutory body established in November 2000 by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The Commission is currently headed by nine Commissioners, including a Chair. It reports directly to the UK Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

1.33 The Commission is responsible for registering political parties and non-party campaigners, the monitoring and publication of significant donations to registered political parties and the regulation of party and non-party campaigner spending at certain elections. It also has a role in promoting voter awareness. It is required to report on the administration of certain electoral events, to keep electoral matters under review and, if requested, must review and report on any electoral matter. It also accredits observers to be present at election proceedings.

1.34 The Commission does not run elections but has responsibility for providing advice and assistance on electoral matters to all those involved in elections, including Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, political parties and candidates.

## Contacting us

1.35 If your question is about **spending and donations**, please contact the Electoral Commission at:

Tel: 0333 103 1928

Email: [pef@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:pef@electoralcommission.org.uk)

1.36 For any other queries, **including advice on standing as a candidate**, please contact [London Elects](#) at:

Tel: 020 7983 4444

Email: [info@londonelects.org.uk](mailto:info@londonelects.org.uk)