

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission



Issue 170 (Scotland) – 3 May 2017

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May 2017 Scottish council elections: a message from the Commission

We wanted to take this opportunity to wish you all good luck for the next few days, and to thank you and your staff for all of the hard work you have put in to prepare for these polls.

We appreciate that it has not always been easy – particularly given that at the same time as preparing for and delivering these elections, you have also had to respond to the announcement of a UK Parliamentary election on 8 June.

It's very easy to take our democracy for granted but none of it would be possible without the efforts of all those involved, in whatever way, in ensuring that we can all cast our vote, and that those votes are then counted in a way which delivers results that are accurate and can be trusted.

May 2017 Scottish council elections: guidance and support available throughout election week

In [Bulletin 164](#) we provided you with details of our out-of-hours telephone advice service to deal with urgent electoral administration queries in the run-up to the elections.

We will continue to be available to provide you with any guidance and support you may need throughout election week, and the following is a reminder of how you can contact us on polling day and between 4 and 7 May.

Polling day

Between 6:30am and 8:30am – please call 07917 038 549.
Between 8:30am and 6:30pm – please call 0333 103 1928.
From 6:30pm – please call 07917 038 549. This number will be staffed throughout the night for urgent queries.

Friday 5 May

Between 8:30am and 5:30pm – please call 0333 103 1928.
After 5:30pm – please call 07917 038 549.

Saturday 6 May and Sunday 7 May

Please call 07917 038 549. This number will be staffed throughout the weekend for urgent queries.

May 2017 Scottish council elections: update to guidance - disqualification for local council employees

We have updated [Part 1](#) of our guidance for candidates and agents at Scottish council elections to clarify the legal position in relation to the disqualification for local council employees. Specifically, paragraphs 1.5 and 1.25 have been updated to make clear that holding any paid office or employment or other place of profit in the gift or disposal of the local council does **not** prevent a person from standing for election to that council (unless they hold a politically restricted post). However, if elected, the person must resign their office, employment or other place of profit on the first working day after they have been elected in order to take up the seat.

June 2017 UKPGE: management information survey

As part of our approach to monitoring the UKPGE, we will be asking you for information relating to how you will be managing the poll in your area.

As with previous elections this will take the form of a short survey covering items such as the issuing of poll cards and postal votes, numbers of polling stations and staff, and verification and count timings and venues.

This information will help to build up a clear picture of the arrangements that have been put in place across Great Britain for the delivery of the UKPGE and will also provide key statistics which can be used with the media and other enquirers both reactively and proactively.

You will receive a link to this survey via email from the Commission's Scotland Office on 9 May, with a return date of 15 May. We recognise this is a busy time and we are grateful for your anticipated support with providing this information.

June 2017 UKPGE: issue of postal votes

As you know, at all elections, postal votes must be issued as soon as practicable, which in practice means at any time after the details to be printed on the ballot papers have been confirmed i.e. after the deadline for withdrawals which, at the UK Parliamentary election, is 4pm on Thursday 11 May.

As set out in [Part D of our core guidance for \(A\)ROs](#), you should put arrangements in place to ensure that electors receive their postal ballot papers as soon as possible and prioritise any postal votes that may need to be sent overseas – including to BFPO addresses - in order to maximise the time that postal voters have to receive, complete and return their postal vote.

June 2017 UKPGE: public awareness campaign – voter information resources

An overview of and links to voter information resources for the UKPGE.

May 2017 polls: postal vote identifier rejection notices

Confirmation that the FAQs relating to postal vote identifier rejection notices have now been published.

June 2017 UKPGE: legal references in our guidance relating to ballot papers, forms and other notices

Update to Parts C and D of our guidance manual for (ROs to include reference to amendment rules and regulations for certain prescribed forms and notices.

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.

You will also want to consider the Convener of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland recommendations issued to ROs on 25 April 2017.

To support you with providing the best possible service to voters and managing their expectations around what they can expect to receive and when – particularly given the challenges around managing the production and delivery of postal votes – we have outlined below some key considerations which you will need to take into account in making and implementing decisions on the timing of issuing postal votes ahead of the 8 June poll.

- Communications plan: identify how you will inform absent voters of the likely delivery dates of postal votes to help to manage their expectations. This will be particularly important for new applicants so that they can make a decision on whether postal voting will work for them at the UKPGE or whether proxy voting may be more suitable for their circumstances. For example, you could publicise planned delivery dates via social media, local newsletters, or the council website.
- Issuing postal votes to individual voters who have advised they will be on holiday during your planned despatch window. Identify how you will respond to situations where you become aware that one or more electors are going to be on holiday or away on business by the time of the next scheduled issue of postal votes, including putting in place a mechanism to ensure that you are able to carry out additional unscheduled issues.
- How you will respond to (a potentially high volume of) queries from voters about their postal votes: consider how you will ensure that those managing enquiries are able to provide useful information to electors.

June 2017 UKPGE: public awareness campaign – voter registration resources

Voter registration resources are now available on our yourvotematters.co.uk website. Please share these with your communications teams so they can disseminate them across available channels locally.

As set out in [Bulletin 169](#), our two-week advertising campaign to encourage voter registration will launch on Monday 8 May. So as not to confuse voters, we will not be sharing our resources on social media until after polling day for the May 2017 elections, and encourage you to do the same.

More information on our public awareness campaign will be available via Roll Call. If you aren't already subscribed, you can do so [here](#).

Overseas campaign

Our campaign to encourage UK citizens living overseas to register to vote has now launched. We are targeting people in 98 countries across the world on Facebook. We've also created [resources that](#)

[you can share](#) to raise awareness amongst people living overseas. Our ads targeting armed forces personnel serving overseas will begin alongside our UK-wide campaign on 8 May.

The messaging on our yourvotematters.co.uk website advises overseas electors of the requirement to ensure that they have renewed their registration where they have been asked to do so to ensure that they can vote on 8 June.

May 2017 polls: postal vote identifier rejection notices

In [Bulletin 169](#) we provided guidance on the issue of postal vote identifier rejection notices after the May 2017 elections and also provided a link to [template postal vote rejection notices](#). We can confirm that we have now also made available [FAQs on postal vote rejection notices](#) to support you and your staff with responding to any queries from electors who have received a notice.

May 2017 polls: legal references in our guidance relating to ballot papers, forms and other notices

As you know, our guidance manual for ROs includes legal references. The references in our guidance manual are generally to the original legislation as amended, but we do not specifically quote the amending legislation in each case. However, to assist ROs in producing the correct version of forms and notices, we have now updated our guidance manual to include specific reference to any amending rules or regulations in those instances where a prescribed form or notice - that we don't also provide a template for - has been updated since the passing of the original legislation.

We have updated parts [C](#) and [D](#) of our guidance manual to help ROs and electoral administrators more easily access what they need to be able to produce the following forms and notices:

- Poll cards
- Ballot paper (including the ballot paper reverse)
- Postal voting statement
- Corresponding number list (polling station and postal)
- Guidance for voters notice
- Instructions for voters notice

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