

Priority	High
Event specific	Transition to IER
Action required	Yes
Area	Great Britain
Retain	March 2014
Circular reference	EC02(2013)

Direction to report under Section 9B(1) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) – performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers in Great Britain

17 September 2013

Purpose

1. This circular:
 - confirms the publication of a new set of performance standards for Electoral Registration Officer (EROs)
 - is a **direction** to EROs in Great Britain to report on their performance against performance standard 1, of the new performance standards published on 17 September 2013 under Section 9A(1) of PERA

Background

2. The Electoral Commission has the power to set performance standards for EROs, Returning Officers and Counting Officers in relation to specified elections and referendums, and a duty to publish assessments of the level of performance by these officers against the standards.
3. In July 2008 the Commission published performance standards for EROs and has monitored and reported on the performance of EROs against these standards in each year since.
4. [Circular EC01/2013](#) issued on 15 July 2013 asked all EROs to complete and submit a performance standards return by Friday 23 August 2013 in relation to the 2013/14 household canvass. In addition to submitting a monitoring return, we required a sample of EROs to submit supporting evidence as outlined in the

standards. We are currently reviewing the returns and evidence provided to us and will provide feedback to those EROs where the evidence does not appear to demonstrate that the criteria of the standards are being met and where we have recommendations for improvements by not later than Friday 27 September 2013.

New performance standards for EROs

5. Given the significant change to existing processes that the transition will involve, we have developed a new performance standards framework to support EROs in meeting the challenges inherent in effectively delivering the transition to IER.
6. The overall objective of the new performance standards framework is to support EROs in planning for and delivering the transition to IER. The new framework has been developed around the key challenges facing EROs in the transition: we want to focus on what EROs will need to do and know in order to effectively deliver the transition; and what information EROs and the Commission will need in order to determine whether these challenges are being met.
7. We consulted widely with the electoral community to inform the development of the new framework and we are grateful to those who commented and gave feedback. The new performance standards framework has been endorsed by the UK Electoral Advisory Board (EAB) and reflects what we and the UK EAB agree that EROs need to do in order to ensure a successful transition to IER.
8. The new performance standards have now been laid before the UK Parliament and are available on our website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/performance-standards.
9. Alongside the new framework, we have also published a paper which sets out our response to the points raised during the consultation on the proposed new performance standards and shows how we have changed the standards as part of that response. The paper is available on our website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/performance-standards.
10. We have also been working with Cabinet Office to produce a timetable for EROs which covers all monitoring requirements from both the Commission and Cabinet Office so that EROs can be clear about what information and data they will be asked to provide, to whom and when in the period up to the start of the transition to IER in June 2014. We expect to be able to publish this by 30 September 2013.

Direction to report for EROs

Performance standard 1

11. This direction to report is issued by the Electoral Commission under Section 9B(1) of PPERA. It requires you to provide the Electoral Commission with a copy of your public engagement strategy by e-mail, by 5pm on Friday 18

October 2013¹ to demonstrate how the challenges outlined in performance standard 1 are being met.

12. In addition to your public engagement strategy, we will require a minimum sample of 25% of EROs to submit a copy of their implementation plan and risk register so that we can review with them how they plan to deliver the transition as a whole.
13. The sample will be selected on the basis of risk, taking into account factors such as the experience of the ERO and previous issues as well as any other available information including the scale of the challenges facing EROs in their registration area. EROs who are selected to be included in the minimum 25% sample will be notified of that fact by their local Commission team by Friday 4 October 2013. We will, however, keep the sample under review and should issues emerge over the course of the transition we may seek to expand the monitoring to cover additional EROs and to use this to identify and fulfil any additional support needs.
14. EROs who are selected as part of the sample are required to submit a copy of their implementation plan and risk register by e-mail, by 5pm on Friday 18 October 2013.
15. We will review all of the information and provide support to EROs where we identify that it is required to ensure that they have in place effective public engagement strategies and implementation plans appropriate for their local circumstances. This support will principally be provided through staff in our teams across England, Scotland and Wales, working closely with the Cabinet Office Regional Delivery Managers. However, we will also seek to ensure that those EROs who need support can learn from the work undertaken by other EROs who have faced similar challenges, both through the sharing of documentation and through the setting up of direct contact.
16. While we will aim to provide any such support as soon as practicable to enable EROs, where necessary, to make any changes to their strategy and plan as early as possible, in any case we will provide feedback and initial support by no later than 6 December 2013. We will, however, continue to provide support further beyond this date as required.
17. While the emphasis of the new framework is on identifying where support is needed for EROs during the transition, we will make an assessment of performance against standard 1 in March 2014, and will report on this at the same time as we will report on performance against the current performance standards framework in respect of the postponed 2013 canvass.

Performance standard 2

18. We will issue a direction to EROs to report on their performance against performance standard 2 in spring 2014. The direction will require EROs to

¹ For EROs who will not have completed the confirmation dry run or subsequent local data matching activities by this date, please contact your local Commission team to agree a timetable for submitting a copy of your public engagement strategy and where relevant implementation plan and risk register.

report on their performance against performance standard 2 by completing and submitting returns and providing the contextual data as set out in the standard.² In addition, similar to performance standard 1, we will require a risk-based sample of 25% of EROs to demonstrate how the challenges have been met by submitting the supporting evidence as outlined in performance standard 2.

Guidance

19. We published the first part of our guidance to support EROs in planning for the transition in June, alongside a number of supporting tools and templates. Our guidance and supporting resources are available on our website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator/running-electoral-registration.
20. By the end of September 2013 we will have published the remainder of our core guidance on delivering the transition to IER, which will provide EROs and their staff with an end-to-end guide on managing electoral registration services throughout the transition.

Contact

21. For further information please contact your [local Commission team](#).

This circular is for the attention of:

The Electoral Registration Officer

District, metropolitan borough and London borough authorities in England
Unitary authorities in England and Wales
Unitary authorities and joint boards in Scotland

This circular is for the information of:

The Acting Returning Officer

Parliamentary constituencies in England and Wales

The Returning Officer

Parliamentary constituencies in Scotland

The Returning Officer

District, metropolitan borough and London borough authorities in England
Unitary authorities in England, Scotland and Wales

The Chief Electoral Officer

Northern Ireland

This document was approved and issued by Peter Wardle, Chief Executive of the Electoral Commission.

² The different timings for the transition in England and Wales from Scotland will be reflected in the reporting timeframes.