

Part C - Administering the poll

Referendum on the UK's membership
of the European Union: guidance for
Counting Officers

Published January 2016 (last updated May 2016)

This guidance uses 'must' when referring to a specific legal requirement; 'should' is used for items considered to be recommended practice, but which are not legal requirements.

Translations and other formats

All of our guidance and resources for this poll are also available in Welsh.

For information on obtaining this publication in another language or in a large-print or Braille version please contact the Electoral Commission:

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Updates to this document

Updated	Description of change	Paragraph number
May 2016	Updated to reflect the final legislation (including confirmation of the date of the poll) and the confirmed Chief Counting Officer directions, guidance issued in EA bulletins, and to include legislative references	
May 2016	Added reference to the requirement to notify certain absent voters of their automatic entitlement to an absent vote for the referendum	3.8-3.10
	Added reference to the importance of ensuring that polling station registers are complete and correct	4.25

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1 Engaging with campaigners

1.1 Anyone can campaign for a particular outcome in the referendum as long as they do not spend more than £10,000. Anyone spending more than £10,000 must register with the Electoral Commission as a 'permitted participant' (known as 'referendum campaigners')¹. Registered campaigners can also apply to the Commission to be designated lead campaign groups. The Commission can appoint a lead campaign group for each side of the referendum or for one side only. The Commission has decided to designate the two lead campaigners at the EU Referendum – choosing 'The In Campaign Ltd' to be the lead campaigner for the "Remain" outcome, and 'Vote Leave' for the "Leave" outcome. Further information on the designation process and papers relating to the Electoral Commission's decision and copies of the applications made by all applicant organisations are available on [the Commission's website](#)².

1.2 Only the following types of individuals or organisations can register as referendum campaigners:

- an individual who is resident in the UK or registered on a UK electoral register
- an individual registered on the Gibraltar electoral register
- a UK-registered political party or a political party established in Gibraltar
- a UK-registered company which is incorporated in the EU and carries on business in the UK
- a Gibraltar-registered company which is incorporated in the EU and carries on business in Gibraltar
- a UK-registered or Gibraltar-registered trade union
- a UK-registered or Gibraltar-registered building society
- a UK-registered limited liability partnership which carries on business in the UK
- a Gibraltar-registered limited liability partnership which carries on business in Gibraltar
- a UK-registered friendly, industrial or provident society
- a UK-based unincorporated association that carries on the majority of its business or other activities in the UK
- a Gibraltar-based unincorporated association that carries on the majority of its business or other activities in Gibraltar
- a body incorporated by Royal Charter
- a UK charitable incorporated organisation
- a Scottish partnership which carries on business in the UK

1.3 You can access the register of referendum campaigners from the [Commission's website](#).

1.4 Once registered, referendum campaigners are entitled to receive copies of the electoral register, as well as any updates made through any notice of alteration, on making a written request to the ERO³.

1.5 There are strict legal restrictions on the use of the register and it can only be used by referendum campaigners for the purposes of the referendum and the control of donations. As with anyone requesting a copy of the register, if you are also the ERO, you should point out to them the restrictions on the use of the information contained in it, as well as the potential penalties for misuse. Any person found breaching the restrictions on the use of the electoral register could face an unlimited fine in England and Wales or a fine of up to £5,000 in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

1.6 The Commission has developed forms for campaigners to use for requesting copies of the [electoral register](#) and [lists of absent voters](#).

1.7 Referendum campaigners also have the right to appoint a referendum agent for each voting area⁴. Referendum campaigners must register someone as a 'responsible person'. This person may appoint referendum agents, in addition to being responsible for ensuring that the referendum campaigner complies with rules on spending and donations.

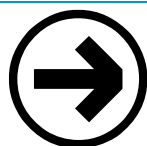
1.8 Once appointed, the referendum agent will be able to attend certain electoral proceedings and appoint other agents to attend the opening of postal votes, the poll and the count. Further information on the appointment of agents and what they can attend is provided in the next chapter.



Guidance for referendum campaigners can be found on the Commission's website at: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/party-or-campaigner/campaigners-in-referendums.

Free use of public rooms

1.9 In England, Scotland and Wales, persons authorised by a designated lead campaigner are entitled to use public rooms and schools for holding public meetings, free of charge, although they must pay for any expenses incurred, such as heating, lighting and cleaning.⁵



For further details on the entitlement of campaigners at the referendum, see [the Commission's guidance for campaigners](#), which covers their roles and responsibilities, spending and reporting requirements and their attendance at key electoral events.

Briefings

1.10 You should offer a briefing session to local referendum campaigners and any referendum agents that have been appointed for your voting area. In such

briefings you can provide information on your local arrangements, such as postal vote issue and openings, polling and the verification and count.

Providing information on the referendum processes

1.11 Working with the RCO as appropriate, you should ensure that campaigners at the referendum have access to information on local arrangements.

1.12 Local arrangements will include information on the dates, times and venues for the key referendum processes, including:

- postal vote issue and openings
- polling
- the verification and count

1.13 Whatever method you use for disseminating the information should ensure that referendum campaigners and their agents can easily access all the information they need in order to be able to participate in the referendum.

Access needs for campaigners

1.14 You should bear in mind that referendum campaigners and their agents may have specific access needs, and so may need any information or guidance produced in a large-print or other format, such as Braille or audio, or in a language other than English (or, in Wales, in a language other than English or Welsh).

2 Agents at the referendum

The referendum agent

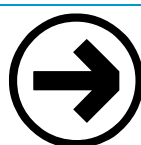
2.1 Each referendum campaigner may appoint one referendum agent for each voting area. The 'responsible person', or a person authorised in writing by them, may appoint a referendum agent for your voting area by delivering a notice of appointment to you by 12 noon on 31 May 2016)⁶.

2.2 The notice must be in writing, setting out the name and home or business address of both the referendum campaigner and the referendum agent. It must be signed by the 'responsible person' or someone authorised in writing by them. A [template notice for the appointment of referendum agents](#) is available on the Commission's website.

2.3 As soon as practicable after receiving the notice of appointment of referendum agent you must give public notice of the name and address of the referendum agent, as well as the name of the registered campaigner⁷.

Other agents

2.4 A referendum agent can appoint agents to observe the opening of postal votes, the poll and the count. In Northern Ireland, a referendum agent can also appoint agents to observe the issue of postal votes. You are responsible for receiving the notifications of appointment of these agents⁸.



For further details on the role of these agents, see [the Commission's guidance for campaigners](#), covering the appointment of agents and their attendance at key electoral events.

2.5 You must ensure that all appointed agents are given a copy of the relevant secrecy requirements for [the opening of postal votes](#), [the poll](#) and [the count](#),⁹ which are available on the Commission's website. Bi-lingual versions in English and Welsh are available for COs in Wales to provide to those agents appointed for [the opening of postal votes](#), [the poll](#) and the [count](#).

The issue of postal votes

2.6 In Northern Ireland only, referendum agents can attend the issue of postal votes and may appoint one or more agents to observe the issue of postal votes. The Counting Officer shall specify the number of agents permitted to attend the issue, and this number shall be the same for each referendum agent. The referendum agent must give notice in writing of the appointment, stating the name and address of the agent(s), before the time fixed for the issue of the postal ballot papers.

The opening of postal votes

2.7 Postal voting agents are permitted by law to observe the opening of the postal voters' ballot box, the opening of returned postal votes and the checking of signatures and dates of birth provided on returned postal voting statements¹⁰. You must be given written notice of the name and address of any postal voting agents before the start of any particular session that the agents are seeking to attend¹¹. A [form for the notification of appointment of a postal voting agent](#) is available on the Commission's website.

2.8 You must give referendum agents at least 48 hours' notice of the time and place of any postal vote opening session and the number of agents that may be appointed to attend each opening¹².

The poll

2.9 Polling agents are entitled by law to access polling stations for the purpose of detecting personation. They can also observe the procedures to be followed inside a polling station¹³.

2.10 You must be notified in writing of any polling agents that have been appointed by not later than 16 June 2016¹⁴. The notice of appointment must be in writing and give the name and address of the person (or persons) appointed. A [form for the notification of appointment of a polling agent](#) is available on the Commission's website.

2.11 A polling agent can be appointed to a particular polling station or stations, or to all polling stations within the voting area.

2.12 The same polling agents may be appointed to attend more than one polling station. However, by law only one polling agent may be admitted at the same time to a polling station on behalf of the same referendum campaigner¹⁵.

The count

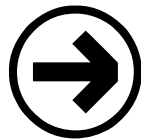
2.13 Counting agents can be appointed by a referendum agent to observe the verification and counting processes¹⁶. You must be notified in writing of the appointment of counting agents by not later than 16 June 2016¹⁷. The notice of appointment must be in writing and give the name and address of the person (or persons) appointed. A [form for the notification of appointment of a counting agent](#) is available on the Commission's website.

2.14 You must give counting agents who have been appointed notice in writing of the time and place at which the verification and count will begin¹⁸.

2.15 You are permitted by law to limit the number of counting agents. The number that may be appointed by each referendum agent must be the same and, unless there are special circumstances, must not be less than the number obtained by dividing the number of counting assistants (i.e. those staff

counting the ballot papers) by the number of referendum agents for the voting area¹⁹.

2.16 When determining the maximum number of counting agents, each referendum agent should, as far as possible, be permitted to appoint sufficient numbers of counting agents to enable full and proper scrutiny of the verification and count process. You should, however, consider any health and safety implications, including fire regulations for the verification and count venue, when deciding on maximum numbers of counting agents.



For details on who can attend the verification and count, see [Part E: Verifying and counting the votes](#).

2.17 Only one of the counting agents for each referendum agent is entitled to be designated to be able to request a recount at the conclusion of a count or further recounts. Such designations must be made at the time that the counting agent appointment is made to you²⁰. The form for the [notification of the appointment of counting agents](#) which is available on the Commission's website makes provision for any such designation to be indicated on the form.

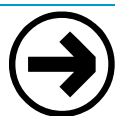
3 Production of notices, poll cards and ballot papers

Production and publication of notices

3.1 You must publish notices by posting them in a conspicuous place within the voting area. This should include local authority offices, noticeboards, libraries and other public buildings. The notices may also be given in such other manner as you think fit.

3.2 In order to ensure that voters can receive the information they need, in an accessible format and within time for them to cast their vote, you should ensure that information on the poll, including the notice of referendum and the notice of poll, is easily accessible to voters, such as through the local authority's website.

3.3 You should ensure that you have robust proof checking processes in place to ensure there are no errors on notices.



See [Part B – Planning and organisation](#) for more general guidance on communicating information to electors.

Translation and formats of notices

3.4 You are required, where you consider it appropriate to do so, to ensure that notices are translated or provided in another format²¹. You may produce them:

- in Braille
- in languages other than English (or in Wales, English and Welsh)
- using graphical representations
- in audio format
- using any other means of making information accessible

3.5 The ballot papers cannot be produced in any other language or format²². However, the enlarged copy of the ballot paper to be displayed in polling stations must have the instructions for voters printed at the top of the paper, and these words may be translated into languages other than English and Welsh²³.

Notice of referendum



Direction

The CCO has directed that the notice of referendum must be published on 17 May 2016.

3.6 The notice must include²⁴:

- the date of the poll
- the date by which applications for absent votes (including emergency proxies in Great Britain) must reach the ERO in order to be effective for the referendum

3.7 The notice of referendum should also include the date by which applications for registration must reach the ERO in order to be effective for the referendum. A [template notice of referendum](#) that COs can use has been made available by the CCO on the Commission's website.

Notification of absent vote to certain electors

3.8 As soon as practicable after the publication of the notice of referendum, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) must send a notification to:²⁵

- Definite or indefinite period proxy voters (although see below for overseas electors) – to advise them that because they vote by proxy at UK parliamentary elections they will also vote by proxy at the EU referendum. The requirement to notify proxy voters does not apply to those who have made an application to vote by proxy at the referendum only
- Overseas peers **with an absent vote for a definite or indefinite period** – to advise them that because they vote by post or by proxy at local government and/or European parliamentary elections, they will also receive a postal vote or will be voting by proxy (as the case may be) at the referendum.

3.9 When putting together your communication to proxy voters, you may find the following wording helpful:

“Notification of proxy vote at the EU referendum

I am writing to let you know that because you vote by proxy at UK parliamentary elections you will also have a proxy vote at the EU referendum on 23 June 2016.

Your appointed proxy is [\[insert proxy details\]](#).

If you wish to appoint somebody else as your proxy or cancel your proxy vote, please contact us now for further information. You can either email [\[insert email\]](#) or call [\[insert number\]](#). By law, cancellations and any changes to who will act as your proxy can only be processed in time for the referendum if received by **5pm on 8 June 2016**.

If you wish to vote by post instead, the deadline for applying to vote by post is also 5pm on 8 June 2016. You can download a postal vote application form from www.aboutmyvote.co.uk.”

3.10 Where you are required to send a notice to an overseas peer, you can use the wording above, adapting it to set out that they will have an absent vote at the referendum because they have an absent vote at local government and/or European Parliamentary elections. The wording should also be adapted to reflect the overseas peer’s particular absent voting arrangements.

Notice of poll

3.11 You are required to publish a [notice of poll for the referendum](#) by no later than 1 June 2016²⁶. The notice of poll must state the day and hours fixed for the poll and the question to appear on the ballot paper.

Notice of situation of polling stations and description of voters

3.12 No later than the time the notice of poll is published, you must also give public notice of²⁷:

- the situation of each polling station
- the description of voters entitled to vote there

3.13 You must give a copy of the notice of situation of polling stations and descriptions of voters entitled to vote there to all referendum agents appointed for your voting area as soon as practicable after giving public notice of this information²⁸. You should also be prepared to make these notices available to any accredited observers on request.

Production of poll cards

3.14 Poll cards must follow the prescribed form and contain all of the elements specified in the referendum rules²⁹. The prescribed forms are contained in [Schedule 4](#) of the European Union Referendum (Conduct) Regulations 2016.

3.15 In the case of an anonymous elector, the name and address of the anonymous elector are to be omitted³⁰.

3.16 You will need to despatch your poll card data to your printers.

3.17 If you are outsourcing the production of poll cards, you should ensure that your software is able to produce a data file that your printers can use to produce the materials to the specification required. At an early stage in discussions with suppliers you should address in what format you will supply the data and in what format they will send you any proofs, and this should be included in your specification and contract.

3.18 You should conduct a test-run by submitting sample data to the printers in advance of 'live' data being submitted. This will also enable pre-proofs to be developed, so that it is clear which part of the data should go where on the poll card.

3.19 You should also liaise with your Royal Mail contact at an early stage to ensure that you have appropriate licences in place and that the poll card meets specific delivery requirements.

3.20 In order to ensure that voters receive the information they need you should have in place a process for proof-checking poll cards, as well as arrangements to check the actual stationery being produced, which will highlight if any of the signed-off proofs have been inadvertently altered. In particular, you should ensure that you have a member of your staff in attendance when poll cards are being printed to check that there are no errors and they are being printed to the required specification. If you have outsourced the printing process, discussions to facilitate these checks and how any further batches of poll cards would be produced should occur at the time the contract is negotiated and reflected in it.

3.21 We have produced a [proof checking factsheet](#) which you can use to help you quality assure the whole process.

3.22 In Great Britain, EROs must publish two interim referendum notices of alteration before publishing the final referendum notice of alteration on 16 June 2016³¹. These notices support the prompt despatch of poll cards to those electors who have applied to register close to the registration deadline.

3.23 The first interim notice of alteration must be published on 25 May 2016. The second interim notice must be published between Thursday 26 May and Wednesday 15 June (inclusive), and EROs are strongly recommended to publish this notice between 2 June and 8 June (inclusive). This recommended window for publication has been agreed with the EU Referendum Delivery Group and is designed to benefit electors while still giving EROs and COs some flexibility to ensure that they – working with their suppliers – can use the notice effectively in practice, particularly to support the issue of poll cards to newly registered electors..



The [rolling registration dates](#) document sets out the application and determination deadlines for both interim notices and the final referendum notice of alteration.

3.24 An update of the registration data resulting from each of the notices of alteration should be sent to your printers as soon as practicable to enable the production of poll cards for new electors.



Further information on interim notices is included in [Part 4 – Maintaining the register throughout the year](#) of the Commission’s guidance for EROs in Great Britain.



Further details on the management of contractors and suppliers can be found in [Part B – Planning and organisation](#).

3.25 Electoral registration data held by contractors should be destroyed as soon as possible after polling day. If not already included in the contract, a written undertaking should be produced for contractors to sign confirming this. It should state that the contractor understands that information from the full electoral register cannot be disclosed at any time, confirming that they will not disclose data to any unauthorised party and that, after the referendum, they will return any discs and paper records provided to them and securely destroy any other electronic or paper copies of the data.

Poll card delivery



Direction

The CCO has directed that COs ensure that poll cards are delivered to electors within a period of five working days starting with the day after the last date for publication of the notice of referendum (i.e. between Wednesday 18 May and Tuesday 24 May).

3.26 Poll cards may be delivered by hand, by post, or by some other method determined by you as the most appropriate.

Delivery by hand

3.27 If you decide to deliver poll cards by hand you should plan for how this will work in practice. You should appoint sufficient staff to ensure that all poll cards can be delivered to electors within the prescribed period. Your instructions to staff delivering poll cards should clearly set out the date by which you require them to have delivered all poll cards.

3.28 You should also have in place a mechanism for monitoring delivery, with a view to ensuring that poll cards have been delivered across the whole of the

voting area and to the required timeframes. This may include requiring delivery staff to fill in log sheets and having supervisors carry out spot-checks.

Delivery by post

3.29 You may use Royal Mail or any other commercial delivery firm for the delivery of poll cards. If you are delivering poll cards by post, you should liaise with your postal services provider to agree timescales for delivery and obtain any proof of postage that the firm provides.

3.30 You should also have in place a mechanism for monitoring the delivery of poll cards, with a view to ensuring that they have been delivered across the whole of the voting area and to the required timeframes. If possible, you should have arrangements in place to track deliveries in order to assist with responding to any enquiries from electors.

3.31 Your contingency planning should address how you would issue any poll cards in the event that Royal Mail or the commercial delivery firm you have contracted are unable to deliver the poll cards, for example, due to industrial action.

3.32 A poll card must be sent to the elector's qualifying address or, in the case of a proxy, to the proxy's address as shown in the list of proxies³². An anonymous elector's poll card must be sent in a covering envelope³³.

Production of ballot papers



Direction

Ballot papers must be produced in the form specified by the CCO.

3.33 The CCO has produced a specimen print-ready ballot paper setting out the front and back of the ballot paper exactly as it must be reproduced by you.



Direction

Ordinary ballot papers must be white; tendered ballot papers must be pink.

The 'official mark'

3.34 An appropriate security mark – the 'official mark' – is required by law to be added to the ballot paper³⁴. The mark should be distinctive and does not have to be a perforation added at the time of issue of the ballot paper, although stamping instruments may still be used to create a perforating official mark. It could be a printed emblem or mark or a special printing device such as a watermark. It should be capable of being seen on the front of the ballot paper so that it can be seen without having to turn the ballot paper over.

3.35 By law, the official mark can be the same for all ballot papers at the referendum or different official marks can be used for different purposes at the referendum,³⁵ for example one for postal votes and another for polling station ballot papers.

3.36 The RCO may provide guidance or direct you in relation to the official mark to be used in your voting area or across the electoral region as a whole, or specify that the official mark contain specific features.

Ballot paper numbers and the unique identifying mark



Direction

Ballot paper numbers must contain a prefix made up of three alpha characters which have been specified for each voting area.

3.37 Ballot paper numbers should run consecutively, but do not have to start at '1'.

3.38 The unique identifying mark can be letters and numbers and could be a repeat of the ballot paper number with the addition of a prefix or a suffix. Also, a unique identifying mark can be, but does not have to be, a barcode. It is not the same as the official mark.

3.39 The unique identifying mark:

- should be unique for each ballot paper
- must be printed on the back of the ballot paper

Printing of ballot papers



Direction

Taking into account the size of the electorate in the voting area, as a minimum, 110% of the total number of ballot papers that may be required in the voting area must be printed.

3.40 You should commence the printing of ballot papers as early as possible. As the referendum rules containing the form of the ballot paper have now been confirmed, you can start printing as soon as the final proofs have been signed off.

3.41 You should have robust proof-checking processes in place, as well as arrangements to check the ballot papers whilst being printed, which will highlight if any of the signed-off proofs have been inadvertently altered.

3.42 When proof-checking ballot papers, you should check that:

- every detail on the ballot paper is spelt correctly
- check the ballot paper against the specimen ballot paper to ensure that all the details have been replicated accurately
- the ballot papers have been cut to the correct size

3.43 Once you have received the printed ballot papers, you should carry out a final check before any ballot papers are issued either at a postal vote issuing session or supplied to a polling station. This should be done by checking at least the first and last ballot paper in every book and by checking that the ballot paper numbers in each book or packet run sequentially.



General guidance on the management of contractors and suppliers and on monitoring their work can be found in [Part B – Planning and organisation](#).

3.44 You should take steps to ensure that additional ballot papers can be printed at short notice if required.

3.45 Guidance on the allocation of ballot papers to polling stations can be found in paragraph **4.21** below.

Ballot paper security

3.46 Once the official mark is printed on your ballot papers, they are effectively 'live'. Regardless of whether you have outsourced your printing or are printing in-house, in order to ensure that voters can have confidence in the process, you should ensure the security of ballot papers during production and storage. Your security arrangements should prevent unauthorised access to or use of the ballot papers during all stages of the production process and storage between printing and the poll.

4 Polling station voting

4.1 The CCO has produced a polling station handbook for [Great Britain](#) and a polling station handbook for [Northern Ireland](#) which cover in detail the voting procedures, who can and cannot vote, and what to expect on polling day.

4.2 The guidance contained in the polling station handbooks has not been reproduced here. Instead, this part of our guidance focuses on the preparations you will need to make in advance of polling day.

Close of poll

4.3 Voters who at 10pm are in the polling station, or in a queue outside the polling station, for the purpose of voting, may apply for a ballot paper³⁶.

4.4 Good planning and flexible staffing should minimise the risk of there being queues at polling stations. As part of your planning you should consider where queues may arise and ensure that you have arrangements in place to be able to respond in the event of queues developing. You should ensure that polling station staff are monitoring turnout throughout the day and providing progress reports to polling station inspectors, and that you are kept informed if there is any intelligence that indicates a risk of there being a queue at close of poll at any polling station. However, you still need to be prepared to deal with any queues should they arise. You should also consider involving your police SPOC in planning arrangements to deal with possible queues at the close of poll, so they can assist you with queue management if necessary.



Further guidance on flexible staffing arrangements at polling stations and relevant training of staff so they can carry out each other's roles in as far as the law permits can be found in [Part B: Planning and organisation](#).

4.5 The polling station handbook will set out in detail the processes to be followed at the close of poll, including how to deal with voters held in a queue at 10pm.

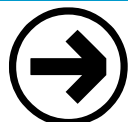
'Selfies' in polling stations

4.6 The law relating to obtaining information in polling stations and disclosing such information is complex. Given the risk that someone taking a photo inside a polling station may be in breach of the law, whether intentionally or not, our advice is that you should not allow photos to be taken inside polling stations.

4.7 You should ensure that all polling station staff are aware of this guidance. You might also want to consider displaying a notice inside polling stations to make clear that photography of any kind (including photos taken on mobile phones) is not permitted. You may also want to consider whether you

will allow the use of mobile phones at polling stations and whether to have signs explicitly prohibiting the use of mobile phones inside polling stations.

Setting up polling stations



Guidance on the identification of suitable polling stations can be found in [Part B – Planning and organisation](#).

4.8 You should take all necessary steps to ensure that polling stations are laid out with the voter in mind. In particular, the needs of voters with a range of disabilities should be taken into account. The positioning of all of the required furniture and equipment, as well as where all of the notices should be displayed, should also be considered, along with the placement of signage within the polling station and external signage.

4.9 You should develop plans for the layout of each of your polling stations which can be used to assist those setting up the polling stations. You should consider voter throughput and flow, including how the voter will move through the voting process from entering to exiting the polling station.

4.10 Whoever is in charge of setting up polling stations should be instructed on how to do so and what the layout should be capable of achieving.

4.11 If polling station staff are not expected to set up polling stations, they should be instructed to check that the polling station has been set up properly, and should have reference to any layout plans you have produced and the polling station set-up checklist in the polling station handbook when doing so. The polling station handbook also covers the positioning of equipment and display of notices, and provides examples of layouts for both a room where there is one polling station and a room where there is more than one polling station.



Further guidance on training polling station staff can be found in [Part B – Planning and organisation](#).

4.12 Polling station inspector visits can be used to check polling station set-up and to ensure that all notices remain properly displayed throughout polling day.



Further details on the role of polling station inspectors can be found in [Part B – Planning and organisation](#).

Polling station equipment and materials

4.13 You must provide polling stations with certain materials³⁷:

- ballot box(es)
- ballot papers (including tendered ballot papers)
- materials to enable voters to mark their ballot papers (in practice, pencils or pens - you may wish to provide a string to attach pencils/pens to the polling booths)
- relevant part of the register
- absent voters lists – postal voters', proxy voters' and postal proxies lists
- form to record the details of electors who have been issued ballot papers after the correction of a clerical error (which may be appended to the polling station register)
- corresponding number list
- large-print version of the ballot paper
- enlarged hand-held sample copy of the ballot paper
- voting device for use by blind or partially sighted voters
- ballot paper accounts
- declaration by companions of voters with disabilities
- list of tendered votes
- list of votes marked by the Presiding Officer
- statement of number of votes marked by the Presiding Officer
- list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions
- guidance for voters notice (to be displayed inside and outside every polling station)
- instructions for voters notice (to be displayed inside the polling booth)
- polling screens
- packets, with seals, in which to place the items to be returned to you, such as postal ballot papers returned to the polling station, and for packaging the referendum documentation at close of poll

4.14 In addition, you should provide:

- a copy of the requirements as to secrecy
- envelopes, with seals, in which to place any ballot papers that have been issued but which the elector has not placed in the ballot box
- form or list to record electors marked as postal voters but who claim not to have applied for one
- notepaper for use by polling station staff
- stationery items as required, e.g. paper clips, drawing pins, adhesive tack, adhesive tape
- plastic sacks for returning stationery and equipment to the verification venue
- envelopes for making up assorted packets



Direction

The Commission's voter information booklet must not be made available in polling stations.

However, the CCO recognises that polling station staff will face questions on what the referendum is about and how to cast their vote. As at any election, it will be essential that polling station staff at the referendum are and are seen to be neutral and not biased in any way. While it will be entirely appropriate for staff to explain to voters how to mark the referendum ballot paper (with a cross), there are aspects relating to the subject matter of the referendum where it would be inappropriate for polling station staff to comment. It will also be important to ensure that the information provided to electors in polling stations on the referendum is consistent across the whole of the UK.

The polling station handbook ([Appendix 10 in Great Britain](#) and [Appendix 9 in Northern Ireland](#)) contains FAQs which set out what polling station staff should and should not say in these circumstances.

4.15 You should check that all polling station equipment is fit for purpose and that you have a sufficient quantity, particularly in the event of a high turnout bearing in mind the particular context of this referendum.

4.16 You should consider whether you may need to provide additional ballot boxes to Presiding Officers as one ballot box may not always be sufficient for the number of ballot papers that could be issued in a particular polling station. All ballot boxes provided for use in polling stations must be sealed by polling station staff at the start of the poll.

4.17 You should have prepared your polling station equipment and materials in good time before polling day, for either delivery to polling stations or collection by Presiding Officers.

4.18 As part of your evaluation of the suitability of your polling stations you will already have considered accessibility issues both inside and outside of each of your polling stations. You should ensure that any additional equipment you have identified as required to make the polling station accessible is delivered and set up in good time for the opening of the poll.

4.19 Where a polling station has an induction loop installed, it should be used wherever possible to support the accessibility of the electoral process to voters with hearing loss. Polling station staff would need to be trained on how to use these at the briefing session.

4.20 You must provide a copy of the relevant [secretary requirements](#) to all polling station staff³⁸.

Allocation of ballot papers



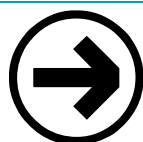
Direction

100% of the total number of ballot papers that may be required in a particular polling station must be allocated to that polling station.

4.21 When allocating ballot papers to polling stations, ensure that the numbers on the ballot papers allocated to each polling station run consecutively in order to avoid any problems with completing the corresponding number list or ballot paper account.

4.22 Tendered ballot papers must also be supplied to Presiding Officers³⁹. Tendered ballot papers should be supplied to polling stations in a sealed envelope with instructions stating that the envelope should be opened and the ballot papers within it issued only in prescribed circumstances, and a brief description of those circumstances should also be provided. This can help to avoid tendered ballot papers being issued in error.

4.23 You should take all necessary steps to ensure that all polling station staff understand that there are limited circumstances in which tendered ballot papers can be issued, and are made aware of what these circumstances are and what processes they will be required to follow for issuing them. The circumstances under which tendered ballot papers can be issued and the processes for doing so are covered in the polling station handbooks for staff in [Great Britain and for staff in Northern Ireland](#).



Further guidance on training polling station staff can be found in [Part B – Planning and organisation](#).

Polling station registers and absent voting lists

4.24 You must provide each Presiding Officer with the appropriate part of the register for their polling station and, in Great Britain, the appropriate absent voting lists⁴⁰. Polling station staff should have been trained on the various franchise markers that will appear on the register.

4.25 Polling station registers can be printed once the final referendum notice of alteration has been published on 16 June 2016. You should undertake checks of the polling station registers to ensure that they are complete and correct for each polling station.

4.26 Procedures should be put in place to deal with any necessary amendments to polling station registers and proxy lists after that time resulting

from alterations as a result of correcting clerical errors or court decisions on registration appeals and, in Great Britain, the granting of emergency proxy applications.

4.27 Whether such determinations are made before polling day or on polling day itself, you should have in place a method for communicating the relevant information to Presiding Officers, which may be done orally or in writing.

4.28 Where a clerical error has been rectified and the relevant elector arrives at the polling station and applies for a ballot paper, the Presiding Officer must issue a ballot paper in the usual manner⁴¹. The Presiding Officer must also make a written record of the elector to whom a ballot paper has been issued following an alteration to the register due to a clerical error⁴². This record should include the elector's name and elector number. To assist Presiding Officers, you should attach an additional sheet to the polling station registers to allow them to record any such amendments.

4.29 In Great Britain, similar processes should also be developed to communicate additions to the proxy voters' list as a result of emergency proxy applications.

4.30 Where a person makes a complaint to polling station staff that suggests that they should be on the electoral register, the Presiding Officer should communicate that representation to the ERO as soon as is practicable. For this to work effectively there will need to be suitable communication systems in place between Presiding Officers and the ERO.

Corresponding number lists

4.31 There are two types of corresponding number list: one list, which is the list to be used at postal vote issuing sessions, contains the number and unique identifying mark of every ballot paper produced, as well as the elector numbers of postal voters; and another list, which is the one to be used in polling stations, contains the ballot paper numbers and a column to add the elector numbers of voters to whom those ballot papers are issued.

4.32 You must prepare and provide a corresponding number list for each polling station⁴³. The corresponding number list is a prescribed document that can be found in the appendix to the referendum rules.

Packets for postal ballot papers delivered to polling stations

4.33 Postal voters in Great Britain can return their postal vote by hand to any polling station in the voting area⁴⁴. In Northern Ireland, postal voters cannot return their postal vote to a polling station.

4.34 Polling station staff in Great Britain should be appropriately briefed to identify which postal votes can be returned to their polling station.



Further details on training of polling station staff can be found in [Part B: Planning and organisation](#).

4.35 You should provide polling stations with packets for received postal votes. The number and style of packets should reflect the potential for a high turnout, which could mean that a high number of people return their postal vote to polling stations. Records of all such packets should be kept so that each one can be accounted for. The packets should be clearly labelled as containing postal votes. The labels should include the name of the polling station and polling station identifier. You should ensure that the packets are capable of being securely sealed. Polling agents are entitled to attach their seal to sealed packets before they are removed from the polling station and must therefore be permitted to do so⁴⁵.

4.36 You should emphasise to Presiding Officers the importance of maintaining the security of postal votes returned to polling stations by instructing them to immediately place any returned postal votes in the packets provided and to ensure that the packets are stored securely throughout the day.

4.37 You should arrange for postal votes to be collected from polling stations throughout the day as this will help to reduce the number that will have to be dealt with after the close of poll. Polling station inspectors can perform this duty. You should ensure that processes are in place to maintain a clear audit trail and to ensure the security of collected postal vote packets while in transit.

Polling station log

4.38 You should prepare a polling station log for polling station staff to use to record any problems or anomalies. In particular, polling station staff should be advised to use this log to record anything that may help to explain any apparent issues with the ballot paper account at the verification – for example, if a voter has been seen leaving the polling station with a ballot paper. You should consider instructing Presiding Officers to keep the log and ballot paper account together when delivering the ballot papers to the count.

Polling station notices

4.39 The 'Guidance for voters' notice is required by law to be displayed inside and outside of the polling station. The 'Instructions for voters' notice is required by law to be displayed in every polling booth⁴⁶.

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- ¹ S117 PPERA 2000
- ² S105(1)(b) PPERA 2000 as amended by Para 2 Schedule 1 European Union Referendum Act 2015
- ³ S105 and 106(4)(c)(ii) PPERA 2000 as amended by Schedule 1 European Union Referendum Act 2015
- ⁴ S105 and 106(4)(c)(ii) PPERA 2000 as amended by Schedule 1 European Union Referendum Act 2015
- ⁵ S110 PPERA 2000
- ⁶ Paras 15(1) and 16(2) Schedule 1 European Union Referendum Act 2015
- ⁷ Para 17 Schedule 1 European Union Referendum Act 2015
- ⁸ Rule 23 European Union Referendum (Conduct) Regulations 2016 (“Conduct Regulations”), Rules 69 and 83 Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 (“2001 (EW) Regs”) as amended by Rules 22 and 39 Schedule 3 Conduct Regulations, Rules 69 and 83 Representation of the People (Scotland) Regulations 2001 (2001 (S) Regs”) as amended by Rules 22 and 39 Schedule 3 Conduct Regulations, rules 73 and 85 Representation of the People (Northern Ireland) Regulations (“2008 (NI) Regs”) as amended by Rules 84 and 97 Schedule 3 Conduct Regulations
- ⁹ Rule 24 Conduct Regulations, Rule 70 2001 (EW) Regs and 2001 (S) Regs as amended by Rule 24 Schedule 3 Conduct Regulations, Rule 74 2008 (NI) Regs as amended by Rule 85 Schedule 3 Conduct Regulations
- ¹⁰ Rules 68, 69 and 83 2001 (EW) Regs and 2001 (S) Regs as amended by Rules 22, 23 and 39 Schedule 3 Conduct Regulations, Rules 73 and 85 2008 (NI) Regs as amended by Rules 84 and 97 Schedule 3 Conduct Regulations
- ¹¹ Rule 69 2001 (EW) Regs and 2001 (S) Regs as amended by Rule 23 Schedule 3 Conduct Regulations, Rule 73 2008 (NI) Regs as amended by Rule 84 Schedule 3 Conduct Regulations
- ¹² Rule 80 2001 (EW) Regs and 2001 (S) Regs as amended by Rule 36 Schedule 2 Conduct Regulations, Rule 82 2008 (NI) Regs amended by Rule 94 Schedule 3 Conduct Regulations
- ¹³ Rule 26 Conduct Regulations
- ¹⁴ Rule 23 Conduct Regulations
- ¹⁵ Rule 26(3) Conduct Regulations
- ¹⁶ Rule 45(4)(d) Conduct Regulations
- ¹⁷ Rule 23 Conduct Regulations
- ¹⁸ Rule 45(2) Conduct Regulations
- ¹⁹ Rule 23(4) Conduct Regulations
- ²⁰ Rule 23(2) Conduct Regulations
- ²¹ S199B RPA 1983 as amended by rule 45 Schedule 1 Conduct Regulations
- ²² Rule 10 Conduct Regulations
- ²³ S199B(6)(b) RPA 1983 as amended by Rule 45 Schedule 1 Conduct Regulations
- ²⁴ Rule 8 Conduct Regulations
- ²⁵ The European Union Conduct Regulations, Regulation 21
- ²⁶ Rule 16 Conduct Regulations
- ²⁷ Rule 16(3) Conduct Regulations
- ²⁸ Rule 16(4) Conduct Regulations
- ²⁹ Rules 20(4) and (5) Conduct Regulations
- ³⁰ See prescribed forms for poll cards
- ³¹ See s13AB, 13B and 13BA RPA 1983 as amended by Rules 4 and 5 Schedule 1 Conduct Regulations
- ³² Rule 20(3) Conduct Regulations
- ³³ Rule 20(5) Conduct Regulations (England, Wales and Scotland). Northern Ireland, Regulation 20(6).
- ³⁴ Rule 12(1) Conduct Regulations
- ³⁵ Rule 12(3) Conduct Regulations
- ³⁶ Rule 34(3) Conduct Regulations

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- ³⁷ See Rules 18, 22, 35, 36, 38 and 42 Conduct Regulations
- ³⁸ Rule 24 Conduct Regulations
- ³⁹ Rules 37, 38 Conduct Regulations
- ⁴⁰ Rule 22(3) Conduct Regulations, Rule 62 2001 (EW) Regs and 2001 (S) Regs as applied by Schedule 3 Conduct Regulations
- ⁴¹ Rule 31 Conduct Regulations
- ⁴² Rule 42 Conduct Regulations
- ⁴³ Rules 11 and 22 Conduct Regulations
- ⁴⁴ Rule 46(3) Conduct Regulations, Rule 79 2001 (EW) Regs and 2001 (S) Regs as amended by Rules 34 and 35 Schedule 3 Conduct Regulations
- ⁴⁵ Rule 44(3)(b) Conduct Regulations
- ⁴⁶ Rule 22(6) and (7) Conduct Regulations