

EUROPEAN UNION
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The
Electoral
Commission



Handbook for polling station staff

Supporting the referendum on the UK's
membership of the European Union in
Northern Ireland

Translations and other formats

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1 Introduction

This handbook is designed to assist polling station staff in Northern Ireland working at the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union on Thursday 23 June 2016. It describes the procedures to be followed and how to deal with any issues that may arise.

As polling station staff, you play a central role in the referendum. The referendum will be held across the whole of the UK and Gibraltar, and every polling station will play an important part in enabling people to have their say. Your role is vital in ensuring that voters and campaigners have confidence in the referendum process. The Chief Counting Officer, Jenny Watson, the Chair of the Electoral Commission, would like to thank you for choosing to work in a polling station at this referendum.

You will receive training on your role, but you should still read this handbook carefully in advance of polling day to ensure that you are familiar with all the processes described in it. It is essential that all voters receive the same high-quality experience when voting at a polling station, irrespective of where in the UK or Gibraltar they are voting, and we know that you will do everything you can to make this happen.

Graham Shields, the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland, is the Counting Officer for Northern Ireland for the referendum. He has appointed Deputy Counting Officers who will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the referendum.

Polling station staff will work for one of the Deputy Counting Officers. Appendix 14 on page 57 has a list of Deputy Counting Officers, their contact details and the areas they cover.

2 The referendum and the polling station team

Referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union

A referendum asks electors to vote on a question being asked on the ballot paper.

For this referendum the question is:

“Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?”

Voters should show their choice by putting a cross (X) in the ‘Remain a member of the European Union’ box or ‘Leave the European Union’ box on their ballot paper.

Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union	
Vote only once by putting a cross <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in the box next to your choice	
Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?	
Remain a member of the European Union	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leave the European Union	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 9 on page 48 of this handbook provides examples of frequently asked questions which you may be asked during polling day, and sets out what you should say in response to questions about the referendum. As you are involved in running the referendum, it is important that you are neutral and independent at all times.

The polling station

Throughout this handbook, we use ‘polling place’ to refer to an actual building/premises and ‘polling station’ to refer to the area or room within the polling place, set up by the Presiding Officer, containing the polling booths and ballot box. There can be more than one polling station within a polling place.

The polling station team

Each Deputy Counting Officer will appoint one Presiding Officer who will have direct responsibility for the proper conduct of each polling station, and at least one Poll Clerk will be appointed to assist each Presiding Officer.

Additionally, a Polling Station Manager will be appointed to every polling place to manage polling day proceedings, particularly at the close of poll.

The responsibilities of a Polling Station Manager will vary in different areas. Polling Station Managers will be advised of local arrangements by the Deputy Counting Officer.

- In polling places with one or two polling stations the Polling Station Manager will, in most cases, also have direct responsibility as a Presiding Officer for one of the polling stations.
- In polling places with three or more polling stations, a Polling Station Manager will be appointed who will not also be a Presiding Officer.

Each Deputy Counting Officer will also appoint a number of Polling Station Inspectors. Polling Station Inspectors will visit all polling stations throughout the day to carry out checks on behalf of the Deputy Counting Officer. They will also provide advice and guidance and additional stationery where required, and deal with any issues raised by polling station staff.

All polling station staff must bring this handbook and their letter of appointment to present to the Polling Station Manager on arrival at the polling station. The Polling Station Inspector will collect letters of appointment along with staff sign-in sheets on their first visit.

Roles and responsibilities of the polling station team

The role of polling station staff is to ensure that voters are able to cast their vote in secret, free from influence and in a calm atmosphere.

Both the Presiding Officer and Poll Clerks should be able to carry out each other's duties if required. However, Presiding Officers have an overall responsibility for the polling station and carry out an additional supervisory role. Also, in law, there are a number of duties that only Presiding Officers can carry out. These are:

- requesting that a police officer removes someone from a polling station (see Appendix 5 on page 41)
- asking the prescribed questions (see Appendix 4a on page 36)
- limiting the number of accredited observers present at any one time (see Chapter 4)

Duties of the Presiding Officer

Presiding Officers are responsible for the conduct of the ballot in the polling station and they should have a sound knowledge of the voting procedures.

The Presiding Officer's main duties are to:

- comply with any instructions issued by the Counting Officer and Deputy Counting Officer
- if directed to do so by the Deputy Counting Officer, collect the ballot box on the morning of the poll from a designated location and take it to the polling station
- liaise, if required, with the key-holder (caretaker/building supervisor) of the building
- organise the layout of the polling station, including the Presiding Officer, polling agent and sundries tables
- ensure the secrecy and security of the ballot, with reference to the notification of requirements of secrecy

- instruct and supervise the work of Poll Clerks
- if not also appointed as a Polling Station Manager, liaise with the Polling Station Manager as required
- liaise with the Polling Station Inspector as required
- open and close the polling station on time
- maintain order in the polling station
- be polite and professional in dealing with electors, agents, and others entitled to be present in the polling station
- act impartially at all times
- account and be responsible for all the ballot papers, paperwork and ballot box at all times
- check the photographic identification of electors and decide, in any doubtful cases, on the validity of the photographic identification produced
- ask the prescribed questions of voters when necessary, including when asked to do so by referendum agents or polling agents or before the issue of a tendered ballot paper
- ensure that the proper procedure for voting is followed, ensuring that the Poll Clerk marks the corresponding number list correctly
- regularly check that the next ballot paper number and the next available number on the corresponding number list match
- ensure that when a ballot paper is issued, it bears the official mark and is issued correctly to eligible electors
- deal with special voting procedures as required
- manage the attendance of those entitled to be present in the polling station, e.g. referendum agents, polling agents representatives of the Electoral Commission and accredited observers, and ensure that they do not interfere with the voting process
- provide polling agents with a copy of the polling agent instructions, code of conduct and notification of requirements of secrecy and affix the polling agent sign to their table
- keep the polling station neat and tidy

- ensure that all signs and notices are clear, visible and remain in place throughout the day
- complete and display, near to the entrance of the building, at the times specified (12 noon, 5pm and 9pm), the notice of ballot papers issued
- record the number of ballot papers issued on the front cover of the polling station log
- maintain the polling station log throughout the day up to and including the close of poll and record any significant events (for example, the opening of the poll, the attendance of polling agents, polling station inspector visits, etc.)
- ensure that at least hourly checks are made of each polling booth and remove any material that should not be there
- ensure that the marked register never leaves the Presiding Officer's table and that the ballot box and referendum materials are never left unattended
- ensure that close of poll instructions issued by the Deputy Counting Officer are carried out correctly
- carry out any other duties as directed by the Deputy Counting Officer
- on the corresponding number list, write the elector's ward and electoral number against the number of the ballot paper issued
- check to ensure that the unique identifying number is on the back of the ballot paper
- detach the ballot paper, fold it and pass it to the Presiding Officer unfolded, ensuring it bears the official mark
- ensure that voters cast their vote in secret
- maintain the secrecy of the ballot at all times
- ensure that pencils are sharpened and available in each polling booth
- answer voters' questions in a friendly and professional way
- assist with keeping the polling station neat and tidy and assist with the clearing and tidying of the polling station at the close of poll
- assist the Presiding Officer to complete necessary procedures after the close of poll
- assist the Presiding Officer or Polling Station Manager to carry the polling station materials to the transport vehicle
- help with any other polling station duties on the instruction of the Presiding Officer

Duties of the Poll Clerk

Poll Clerks do not have the responsibilities of the Presiding Officer, but they should know all of the procedures for voting and be able to deal with issues that may arise.

The Poll Clerk's main duties are to:

- comply with the instructions in this handbook and those of the Counting Officer, Deputy Counting Officer, Polling Station Manager and Presiding Officer
- assist with the layout of the polling station and prepare for the opening of the poll
- be polite and professional in dealing with voters, referendum agents, polling agents, representatives of the Electoral Commission and accredited observers
- act impartially at all times
- check that the number of the ballot paper being issued matches the next available number on the corresponding number list

Duties of the Polling Station Inspector

Polling Station Inspectors play an important role in the effective management of the polls. They provide an essential communication link between polling station staff and the Deputy Counting Officer. Their duties include visiting each polling place allocated to them, dealing with queries and problems arising at polling stations on polling day, and ensuring the polling station team have support and the necessary materials.

Polling Station Inspectors will be provided with spare equipment, a list of which can be found in Appendix 11 on page 53. Polling Station Inspectors must be contactable at all times during polling day.

The Polling Station Inspector's main duties are to:

- visit each allocated polling station at least twice between the hours of 7am and 10pm

- carry out checks on behalf of the Deputy Counting Officer and take remedial action where required and where possible
- check that the polling station is set up correctly
- note each visit, and any issues, in a Polling Station Inspectors' log
- collect appointment letters and completed staff attendance sheets, ensuring that the building supervisor/caretaker has signed the staff attendance sheet
- carry out any other duties or instructions issued by the Deputy Counting Officer
- keep the Deputy Counting Officer informed of any issues as they arise
- ensure polling station staff understand their roles and arrangements for the close of poll
- ensure that all polling station staff sign the staff attendance sheet
- inform the Deputy Counting Officer immediately of any absentees
- liaise with the Deputy Counting Officer on any issues that may arise with the polling station(s)
- provide advice and assistance to Presiding Officers
- ensure staff are familiar with the register of electors, highlighting that the register of electors may consist of multiple parts, that streets may be split over several pages and that some parts may contain a small number of electors
- be responsible for health and safety within the polling place, including recording full details of any accidents/incidents

Duties of the Polling Station Manager

A Polling Station Manager will be appointed to every polling place. In some cases the Polling Station Manager may also be appointed as a Presiding Officer and as such should also carry out all of the duties of the Presiding Officer listed in this handbook.

The Polling Station Manager's main duties are to:

- collect all ballot boxes for the polling place on polling day from a designated location and deliver to the polling station(s), if directed to do so by the Deputy Counting Officer
- before the opening of the poll, and at least four times during the day, carry out the following checks of the building:
 - check for any health and safety issues
 - check that all access routes are open and unlocked
 - check that directional arrows and notices are fixed firmly in place
 - check that temporary ramps/wedges are stable and remain in place
 - check that the entrance to any car park and to the building are not being obstructed
- liaise with the building supervisor/caretaker as required, obtaining contact details and ensuring that they sign the staff attendance sheet
- record any incidents that occur in the polling station log(s), up to and including the close of poll
- check the 'Notice of Ballot Papers Issued' for all ballot boxes in the polling place are updated and correctly displayed at the specified times of 12 noon, 5pm and 9pm
- provide cover to allow staff to take breaks and remind Presiding Officers to rotate staff to ensure reasonable breaks are taken throughout the day
- ensure that close of poll instructions issued by the Deputy Counting Officer are carried out
- perform a check of completed ballot paper accounts within the polling place for accuracy and ensure that they are placed in the 'documents enclosed' envelope and secured to the top of the ballot box lid
- ensure that the marked register is placed in **Envelope A** and visible through the clear envelope and then placed in the front of the clear polyfile
- ensure that the Presiding Officer has recorded the serial number(s) of the seals placed on the ballot box, both at the opening and close of poll, on the cover of the polling station log
- carry out any other duties requested by the Deputy Counting Officer

Staff assessment

Senior polling station staff are responsible for the assessment of staff performance.

Blank assessment forms will be provided by the Polling Station Inspector and should only be completed for unsatisfactory performance. If a staff member is not satisfactory, the assessor must make the staff member aware of the issue at the time and advise them of the performance standards expected. Where a staff member fails to improve, performance must be marked as unsatisfactory.

- Polling Station Inspectors are responsible for assessing the performance of the Polling Station Manager
- Polling Station Managers are responsible for assessing the performance of both Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks

Forms should be completed and returned to the HR manager using the freepost envelope supplied by Friday 8 July 2016.

3 Before polling day

Training for polling station staff

Polling station staff will need to be fully briefed about the referendum and cannot rely solely on past experience. Neither should polling station staff rely only on this handbook. Deputy Counting Officers will provide training in advance of the referendum which they will expect polling station staff to attend.

Locating the polling station

The Deputy Counting Officers have been appointed to conduct the referendum on behalf of the Counting Officer for Northern Ireland. They decide, in conjunction with the Counting Officer, how many polling stations are needed, where they should be situated and how many Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks are required to staff them.

The Deputy Counting Officer will provide information on the location of the polling station when appointments are made. All members of the polling station team should familiarise themselves with the location of the polling station before polling day.

The key-holder (i.e. the building supervisor/ caretaker) should open the building no later than 6:30am on polling day and will have provided the Deputy Counting Officer with a contact number for use on polling day.

Polling station staff should consider how long it will take to get to the polling station on the morning of the referendum and factor this into their plans for the day. Arriving in good time will enable staff to ensure that the polling station is set up in an appropriate manner before the poll opens at 7am.

Late arrival by any staff member will be treated as unsatisfactory performance.

Polling station staff should ensure that they take sufficient food and drink to last for the whole of polling day, as they will not be able to leave the polling place while the polls are open.

Standards of appearance

The atmosphere in the polling station should be business-like and friendly, and polling station staff should dress accordingly. However, staff will be present at the polling station all day and should also consider their personal comfort.

Remember that polling station staff are representatives of the Counting Officer and should act impartially at all times. Any badges, slogans, or colours that might bring the impartiality of the polling station staff into question must not be worn. Football tops are not permitted.

Staff must wear their staff name badge at all times. Staff name badges will be in the ballot box provided to the polling station.

Delivery or collection of the ballot box

The Deputy Counting Officer will notify Polling Station Managers and Presiding Officers of the arrangements for the collection of the ballot boxes for each polling place. Each ballot box will contain all of the relevant referendum materials. On the morning of polling day, the designated member of staff must collect their assigned ballot box or ballot boxes from the collection point and deliver them directly to the polling place.

At no time should any member of staff leave a ballot box or referendum materials unattended.

The ballot boxes for each polling place will be clearly labelled and the designated member of staff must check that the correct ballot boxes for the polling place have been received.

See Appendix 11 on page 53 and Appendix 12 on page 54 for details on checking of materials.

Polling staff responsible for collecting the ballot boxes are entitled to claim for mileage for the excess miles they have to travel in order to carry out this duty, i.e. distance travelled from home to the designated collection point and the onward journey to the polling place MINUS the actual distance from home to the polling place. The Deputy Counting Officer will provide a travel claim sheet and the restrictions on any claims.

4 Polling day: before the poll opens

The polling station must open at 7am. Do not be late. You must inform the Area Electoral Office immediately if you encounter any problems that may prevent you from opening at 7am.

Arriving at the polling station

Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks must arrive at the polling station by **6.30am**. Make sure sufficient time is allowed to get to the polling station – do not be late.

Polling station staff who are unavoidably detained or unable to attend the polling station must contact the Area Electoral Office immediately. Contact details are available in Appendix 14 on page 57.

Presiding Officers must check that watches and clocks are accurate to ensure that the polling station is open on time.

A list of the staff who have been appointed to work at the polling station will be provided in the ballot box. Polling Station Managers/ Presiding Officers should check the Poll Clerk's appointment letter, ensure the staff attendance sheet is signed and check that the Poll Clerks are aware of the requirements of secrecy. All polling station staff must sign the attendance sheet.

What happens if the key-holder does not attend?

If access cannot be gained, the Polling Station Manager must contact the Area Electoral Office immediately to advise them of the situation and to ask for further instructions.

If necessary, set up a temporary polling station. There may be sufficient space at the entrance to the building, or even outside it. In some cases, Presiding Officers have used the back of a car. Whatever the situation, voters must be able to vote in secret from 7am onwards.

Keep the Deputy Counting Officer and any agents and observers in attendance informed of whatever arrangements you make.

Checking supplies and materials

The designated member of staff will be responsible for the transportation of the ballot box and referendum materials as set out in chapter 3 on page 7. The larger items, such as the polling booths, will already have been delivered to the premises beforehand. The Deputy Counting Officer will advise Presiding Officers of the arrangements.

On the morning of the poll the ballot box will be sealed with 2 or 3 large pull-up transport plastic seals. The number of seals will depend on the type of ballot box received (see images below).



Old style box



New style box

To open the box:

- hold the broad flat number tag with one hand
- pull sharply on the narrow plastic strip attached to the flat tag until the seal breaks
- remove the broken seals and open the box

After opening the box you should empty the contents onto the table. A checklist of the polling station supplies can be found at Appendix 12 on page 54. You must check the materials carefully and if you are missing any items, contact the Area Electoral Office immediately.

The following equipment will have been delivered in advance of polling day and will be made available for you by the building supervisor/caretaker:

- Polling booth (set of 4 compartments). The polling booth must be set up adjacent to the Presiding Officer's table. (A reserve polling booth may also have been delivered to the polling place, but it should only be used if the polling station becomes busy).
- A 'Polling Place Posters' pack (containing 16 posters: 1 x Polling Station, 1 x Alternative Access (wheelchair graphic), 2 x Way in, 2 x Way Out and 10 x A3 directional arrows)
- 2 or 3 tables (space permitting). These should be adult sized tables.
- 6 chairs. These should be adult size chairs.
- A ramp or wedge(s) for access at the entrance (specified locations only).
- Dividers (specified locations only).

If the tables and chairs provided are not adult size, or if anything is missing, please contact the building supervisor/caretaker or the Area Electoral Office immediately.

Take care when lifting the materials or equipment. The polling booth in particular can be heavy, so take extra care if you are erecting or moving one. Appendix 8 on page 46 contains information on health and safety.

The ballot paper number ranges and corresponding number list will have been checked and packed into numerical order prior to dispatch to the polling station. When the ballot box is unpacked, the Presiding Officer should check that the ballot papers are in numerical order and are the correct ones for the polling station. The Presiding Officer should also check the ballot paper number ranges against those recorded on the ballot paper account and the corresponding number list to make sure that there are no obvious errors in the numbering of the papers.

Do not issue ballot papers on which there are errors or where the printing is indistinct or unclear.

Polling station layout

The first job on arrival will be to set up the polling station, unless this has already been done for you. Building supervisors/caretakers should already have arranged the room, as instructed by the Deputy Counting Officer in advance. However, it is possible that polling station staff will need to set up the room or rearrange the furniture.

The layout of the room is important. Poor layout could cause unnecessary confusion and access difficulties. Appendix 10 on page 51 provides a checklist covering polling station set-up and the display of notices.

Even if the polling station has already been set up for you, you should still check that it has been set up properly using the checklist in Appendix 10 on page 51.

Examples of layouts for both a room where there is one polling station and a room where there is more than one polling station are set out on page 12. These are shown as a guide and may have to be adapted to meet local circumstances.

The layout must work for the voter and contribute to the smooth running of the polling station. In particular, the needs of voters with a range of disabilities must be considered.

For example:

- Is the ballot box clearly labeled and accessible for all voters?
- Can a wheelchair user easily get around the polling station and its surrounding areas?
- Are all of the polling booths set up in such a way that it maintains the privacy of voting for all voters?
- Is the low-level polling booth in the most appropriate position for wheelchair access, with sufficient space for a wheelchair to be manoeuvred comfortably?
- Are the notices accessible for all voters?
- Are the polling booths positioned to make best use of the available light?
- Are the polling agents and observers positioned so that they do not interfere with the proceedings, but can still observe proceedings?
- Is the notice 'polling agents' fixed to the front of the polling agents' table so it is clear to voters that they are polling agents?
- Are there chairs available in the polling station for electors who cannot stand for long periods?

In all cases:

- Use the checklist in Appendix 10 on page 51 when setting up the polling station or checking that it has been set up correctly.
- Make sure that the polling booths are not placed so that people outside can see how voters are marking their ballot paper.
- Arrange the ballot box and polling booths to ensure that they are accessible to all voters, yet fully visible to polling station staff.
- Position the issuing table and the ballot box in such a way that prevents any voter from leaving the polling station without passing you and the ballot box.

- Consider what arrangements you would need to make to be able to accommodate and deal with voters during busy periods.
- Have at hand contact details for the Area Electoral Office – the contact number will be on the placemat - and follow any escalation procedures as instructed by the Deputy Counting Officer should any issues arise during polling day.

Remember that in a room where there is more than one polling station, the ballot boxes must be kept separate. Otherwise, voters from one polling station may mistakenly put their ballot paper in the wrong ballot box and the ballot paper accounts for each of the two polling stations will not tally.

Even with the ballot boxes kept separate, staff should remain vigilant as voters may still get confused as to which ballot box they should be using.

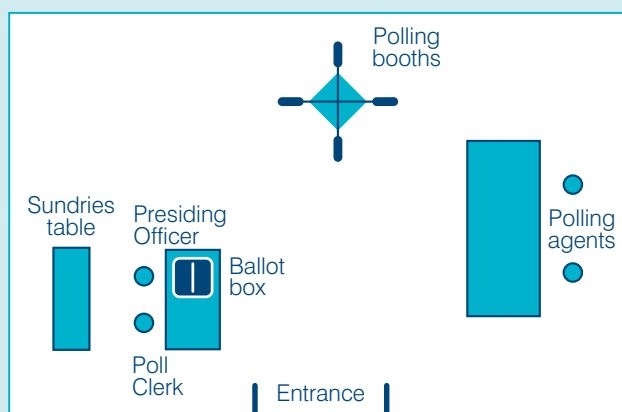
Presiding Officer's table

The only items which should be on the Presiding Officer's table are:

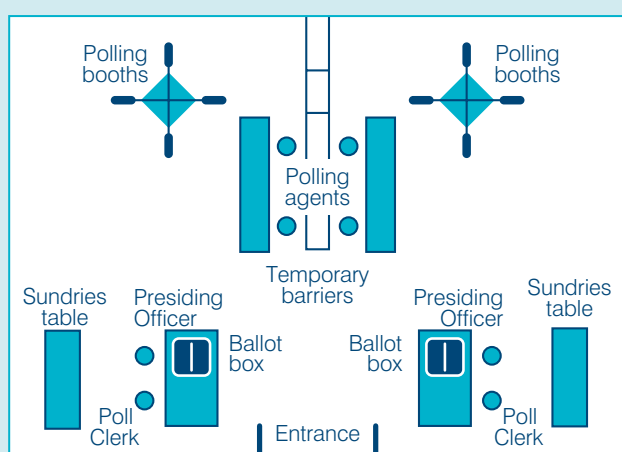
- one book of ballot papers (i.e. the one with the lowest serial numbers)
- the register of electors (remember -it may be in several parts)
- one corresponding number list, placed beside the ballot paper book (note - the numbers on the corresponding number list must correspond with the numbers on the ballot paper book being used)
- the polling station placemat and quick guide
- the enlarged laminated hand-held copy of the ballot paper, marked 'specimen provided only for the guidance of voters'
- the selector device
- pens, rulers, etc.

Setting the ballot box on the Presiding Officer's table will reduce the available space to work from so it may be more practical to set the ballot box on a table adjacent to the Presiding Officer's table or, on a chair next to the Presiding Officer's table.

Example of a single polling station layout



Example of a double polling station layout



Signs and notices

Think about what each sign and notice is for when putting it up. Walk the route the voter is expected to follow, checking all signs and notices. Some signs and notices are directional whilst others provide information for voters. Ensure that they are positioned so that they can be read by all voters, including those in wheelchairs.

The guidance for voters notice, which will have the words **'How to vote at this referendum'** printed at the top, is to be displayed both inside and outside the polling station.

The **acceptable photographic identification** poster is to be displayed where voters can see it before reaching the Presiding Officer's table.

The only notice to be displayed within each polling booth is the one that provides information on how to mark the ballot paper. This will read: **'Put a cross [X] in one box only. Put no other mark on the ballot paper, or your vote may not be counted.'** No other notices are to be displayed in the polling booth.

A **large sample copy of the ballot paper** must also be displayed inside the polling station, ideally in a well-lit location where voters can easily see it before being issued with their ballot paper.

An enlarged hand-held copy of the ballot paper, marked **'Specimen provided only for the guidance of voters'**, will also be supplied by the Deputy Counting Officer. This can be given to voters who are partially sighted to take into the polling booth for reference when marking their ballot paper.

The **notice of ballot papers issued** should be displayed near the entrance to the polling station where it can be clearly seen from 12 noon. This notice should be updated as instructed by the Deputy Counting Officer at 12 noon, 5pm and 9pm, or as soon as practicable thereafter, with the number of ballot papers issued up to each of the specified times. This information can be noted by members of the public. This notice should be displayed until the close of poll when it must then be placed in **Envelope B**.

The large laminated **'Polling Station'** and **'Alternative Access'** signs, along with the way in, way out and directional arrows, are to be displayed as appropriate.

The **A3 list of streets** is to be displayed in a prominent position near the entrance to the polling station.

The **'Need help or information'** poster and **'No mobile phones'** posters are to be displayed near the entrance to the polling station.

The 'Ballot box number' poster is to be displayed outside the door of the room where the polling station is situated. If more than one polling station is in the same room, place it near to the Presiding Officer's table where it can be clearly seen by voters.

The **A3 Code of Conduct** poster should be displayed at the entrance of the polling place.

The **A4 Code of Conduct** poster should be placed along with the 'polling agent' sign on the polling agent's table.

Make sure that there is no material that might be construed as supporting the views of any of the campaigners involved in the referendum displayed in or on the premises. If any such materials are found, they must be removed immediately or covered up

Who may be present in the polling station?

The law specifically provides for certain persons to be present in polling stations (in addition to polling station staff and voters). These are:

- the Counting Officer and their staff
- the Chief Counting Officer
- referendum agents
- polling agents
- police officers on duty at the polling station
- representatives of the Electoral Commission
- accredited observers
- persons under the age of 18 who accompany voters
- companions of disabled voters

The Counting Officer, Deputy Counting Officer and their staff

The Counting Officer, Deputy Counting Officer and their staff may visit during the course of the day. This may be to carry out duties such as delivering additional equipment or carrying out an inspection of the polling station. They will show their photographic identity pass on entry to the polling station.

Referendum agents and polling agents

Certain registered campaigners may appoint an individual to act as a referendum agent.

Referendum agents have the right to enter and to remain in a polling station but they must not disrupt voting or attempt to canvass voters.

All referendum agents may appoint polling agents to work on their behalf on polling day. Polling agents have the right to enter and remain in the polling station and to observe voting. The main purpose of their appointment is to detect personation – that is, people voting illegally in the name of another voter.

Not more than one polling agent may be admitted at the same time to a polling station on behalf of the same referendum agent. A list of appointed referendum agents and polling agents will be supplied in the ballot box.

Polling agents may wish to note on their own copy of the register of electors who has voted, but they cannot take this marked copy of the register out of the polling station until after the close of poll. **Polling agents are not permitted to make other written notes or use electronic devices of any kind. Presiding Officers must ask the polling agent to refrain from doing so and if they do not you may ask them to leave the polling station.**

They must not interfere with the voting process and must not campaign or canvass voters in the polling station. If they do wear a rosette or badge, it should be plain but may display the name of a registered campaigner.

They have the right to observe the preparation and opening of the polling station and its closure and may add their seal to the ballot box at the close of poll (though not at poll opening). During polling hours, polling agents in attendance should be placed at a separate table that is close enough to observe and hear the proceedings but not in a position that would compromise the secrecy of the ballot.

Presiding Officers should check the identity of polling agents, who will have been instructed to carry with them one of the acceptable forms of ID. Presiding Officers should also check that the polling agent's name is included on the list provided by the Deputy Counting Officer.

Presiding Officers must ask polling agents to read the 'polling agent instructions', two copies of which will be provided in each Presiding Officer pack. One copy of the instructions should be placed on the polling agent table.

On entry to the polling station, the Presiding Officer must ask the polling agents to read the notification of requirements of secrecy. Two copies of the notification of the requirements of secrecy will be provided in the Presiding Officer pack.

Presiding Officers should monitor the conduct of polling agents to ensure that they do not use mobile phones or communicate any information that would compromise the secrecy of the ballot. They must not communicate to any person before the polls are closed any information as to:

- the name of any elector, or proxy, who has or has not applied for a ballot paper at the polling station
- the number on the register of electors of any elector, or proxy, who has or has not applied for a ballot paper
- the official mark or other unique identifying mark on a ballot paper

Police officers on duty at the polling station

Police officers on duty may be present in the polling station at any time, although it is the Presiding Officer's duty to maintain order in the polling station (see Appendix 5 on page 41 for information on security at the polling station).

Representatives of the Electoral Commission and accredited observers

Representatives of the Electoral Commission and other individuals accredited through the Commission's official observer scheme are entitled to attend all polling station proceedings. They do not need to give advance notification of where they intend to observe, but every observer must carry photographic identification and should not be allowed to observe proceedings without this (see examples below).

Example of ID issued to Commission representatives (pink)



Example of ID issued to accredited observers (silver)



The status of individuals seeking to gain entry to polling stations as observers can always be checked with the Deputy Counting Officer.

Both Commission representatives and accredited observers agree to abide by a Code of conduct, which includes an agreement that they will not interfere with any proceedings. Presiding Officers may ask observers (but not Commission representatives) to leave the polling station, but only if they are:

- breaching or attempting to breach the secrecy of the ballot
- knowingly obstructing the polling process
- asking voters about their voting preference

If an observer is removed from the polling station, the Presiding Officer must provide a note to the observer stating the reasons why they have been removed.

Presiding Officers should also record any such incidents and notify the Deputy Counting Officer as soon as possible.

Any observer removed in the circumstances above is not entitled to re-enter the polling station for the remainder of the poll.

In the case of overcrowding, Presiding Officers are entitled to limit the number of accredited observers (but not Commission representatives) present inside a polling station for a specified time – such as for 30 or 60 minutes. However, it is important to note that no officer is entitled to bar all observers from the entire process, only to limit the number of observers present at any one time. When such action is taken, this should be recorded in a polling station log.

Presiding Officers should record the details of any accredited observers or Commission representatives who attend at their polling station in the polling station log.

Electoral observation is a legitimate and valuable part of the electoral process, and care should be taken not to hinder or obstruct the conduct of the observation.

Persons under the age of 18 who accompany voters

Persons under the age of 18 may accompany voters into the polling station to observe the voting procedure. Presiding Officers can limit the number of those under 18 allowed in the polling station at any one time if they consider their attendance to be impeding the proceedings in any way.

Companions of voters with disabilities

Although many disabled voters will be able to vote without assistance, some will not, and those who cannot are entitled to bring someone with them to cast their vote. When dealing with disabled voters who need the assistance of a companion, make sure that you directly address and respond to the voter and not only the companion.

See Appendix 1 on page 28 for further details, including what assistance the Presiding Officer may provide.

Sealing the ballot box

The Presiding Officer must close and seal the ballot box a few minutes before 7am, after having shown to all those entitled to be present that it is empty.

Ballot boxes vary in design, as does the method of sealing them. Whatever method is used, make sure that the ballot box is properly secured.

The old style ballot box is sealed as follows:

1. Ensure the ballot box pouch containing the label is correctly attached and clearly visible on the outside of the box before the lid is sealed. The label should be placed over the 3 loops before closing the lid.
2. Close the lid and insert one numbered seal through the centre front loop pulling it tight enough to secure the box. Please avoid over tightening as this may cause delays at the verification.

- Record the serial number of the seal on the front page of the polling station log.
- Insert plain cable ties through each of the two outer loops and close them sufficiently to seal the box. Again, please avoid over tightening as this may cause delays at the verification.



Old style box

The new style ballot box is sealed as follows:

- Ensure the ballot box pouch containing the label is correctly attached and is clearly visible on the outside of the box before the lid is sealed. The Velcro on the back of the pouch must be secured to the Velcro strip inside the box before closing the lid.
- The lid must be secured to the box by inserting one numbered seal and 3 plain cable ties through the double holes positioned at each corner of the lid.
- Pull the seal and cable ties tight enough to secure the lid to the box. Please avoid over tightening as this may cause delays at the verification.
- Record the serial number of the seal on the front page of the polling station log.



New style box

At this stage referendum agents or polling agents must not be allowed to affix their seals to the ballot box: their seals may only be attached at the close of poll.

Some last-minute checks

Just before the polling station is opened, take a few moments to double-check that everything is ready.

Make sure that the ballot papers, corresponding number list, tendered ballot papers and other official documentation are safely out of reach of voters.

Ballot papers will be supplied in books and can be detached as they are issued. Make sure that only the first book of ballot papers (i.e. the book starting with the lowest serial number) and the corresponding number list are on the Presiding Officer table, along with the register of electors.

Check that the ballot papers are in the correct numerical sequence and that the numbers match those pre-printed on the corresponding number list. This will save accounting problems at the close of poll.

Check that the ballot papers bear the unique identifying mark on the back and include the pre-printed official mark.

Check that the pencils are fixed securely to polling booths, and that pencils are sharpened.

All remaining ballot paper books and other official documentation and envelopes should be placed on the sundries table.

The pink tendered ballot book must be kept inside **Envelope E** until needed to ensure that tendered ballot papers are not issued in error.

Information on the circumstances in which tendered ballot papers should be issued can be found in Appendix 4b on page 39.

Check that the polling agents have been provided with the polling agent instructions, code of conduct and notification of requirements of secrecy and that the polling agents sign has been affixed to their table.

5 Polling day: opening and conducting the poll

The hours of the poll are from 7am until 10pm.

Opening the polling station

There may be a number of electors waiting for the polling station to open. Greet them and invite them inside as soon as it is 7am. **Do not issue ballot papers before 7am.**

Summary of the voting procedure

For the majority of voters who come to the polling station, the process for voting will be straightforward. The following procedure should be followed in those circumstances:

Stage one – checking the voter

- Greet electors, ask them to confirm their name and address, and make sure that they are eligible to vote in the referendum.
- Ask for photographic ID – check that it is in an acceptable document and that the voter is the person in the photograph. The polling station placemat should be used for easy reference of acceptable forms of identification.
- Mark the register of electors by drawing a straight line between the elector number and surname. Do not mark through the entry on the register.
- Call out the number and name of the elector.

Stage two – issuing the ballot paper

- Ensure that the ballot paper number matches the number pre-printed on the corresponding number list.
- Write the electoral number (i.e. Ward/ENO - for example 0301/9999) on the corresponding number list next to the number of the ballot paper to be issued.

- Ensure that the ballot paper includes a pre-printed official mark (e.g. a barcode).
- Fold the ballot paper, then hand it to the voter **unfolded**.

Stage three – voting

- The voter marks the ballot paper in the privacy of the polling booth.
- Prior to the voter placing the ballot paper in the ballot box, they should fold the ballot paper and should show the ballot paper number and unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper to the Presiding Officer.
- Say 'goodbye' and thank the voter as they leave the polling station.

The appendices in this handbook show what to do when something out of the ordinary occurs, e.g. establishing entitlement to vote and dealing with proxy voters. Presiding Officers should read these sections prior to polling day in order to be prepared.

Remember to follow all stages of the process carefully or the voter may inadvertently be disenfranchised.

Stage one – checking the voter

In all polling stations, even where there is more than one Poll Clerk, the Presiding Officer is responsible for the register of electors and checking the acceptable form of identification of electors. The Poll Clerk(s) are responsible for detaching the ballot papers from the ballot book and ensuring that the electoral number is entered correctly in the corresponding number list.

The Presiding Officer will greet electors as they approach the table. If there are two polling stations in the room, make sure that electors attend the correct one. There should be signs displayed listing the streets or addresses for each station and polling station staff should be on hand to guide electors.

The Presiding Officer must:

- confirm the elector's name and address and check that they are on the register of electors and eligible to vote in the referendum
- ask for photographic ID and check that it is an acceptable document and that the voter is the person in the photograph
- draw a straight line between the elector number and surname on the register of electors
- read out the elector's name and electoral number (e.g. 0301/9999) from the register of electors (this is a safeguard against impersonation)

Most electors bring their poll card with them to the polling station, even though it is not a requirement. A poll card will have been issued to all electors who are eligible to vote at this referendum. Poll cards provide electors with important information, including where their polling station is and the forms of acceptable identification.

There are four types of poll card and they are printed on different coloured card for ease of recognition:

- Ordinary poll card – white
- Proxy poll card – cream
- Postal poll card – lilac
- Proxy postal poll card - lilac

If an elector brings their poll card with them, offer this poll card back to the elector. If the elector declines the poll card, the Presiding Officer should tear it in half and place it in **Envelope K**.

Whose names are on the register of electors?

The register of electors will contain the names of all electors allocated to a particular polling station. Details include the elector's name, address and electoral number. The ward reference code, e.g. 0101, can be found on the front of each polling station register.

Electors that have no prefixes are eligible to vote at the referendum. Some electors will have a letter or a date preceding their name. These letters indicate their eligibility to vote in certain elections and referendums and the date indicates when they will attain voting age.

A few electors may have registered anonymously and will appear at the end of the register with only their elector number and the letter 'N' (i.e. without reference to their name or address). They will also have the letter 'A' and their entry on the register will be struck through as these electors can only vote only by post and cannot vote in the polling station.

A person can only vote at the referendum if:

- their name appears on the register, on the list of proxies, or has been added following an instruction from the Deputy Counting Officer
- their name is not scored through or marked as having already voted
- the voter has produced an acceptable form of photographic identification (as detailed on the polling station placemat)

And

- the voter is eligible

Appendix 2 on page 31 contains information on dealing with problems on the register of electors.

Who can vote in the polling station at the European Union referendum?

- Electors with no letters or dates before their name.
- Electors who are 18 years of age or over (unless they also have a letter next to their entry indicating they are not eligible) – the figures printed before an elector’s entry indicate the date on which that elector becomes 18 years old.
- Electors with an ‘E’ before their name – these are peers who are registered as overseas electors and who are eligible to vote in this referendum and in European Parliamentary elections.
- Electors with an ‘F’ before their name – these are overseas electors who can vote in this referendum and at UK Parliamentary elections and European Parliamentary elections.
- Electors with an ‘L’ before their name – these are electors who can sit in the House of Lords and who may vote in this referendum and at European Parliamentary elections, local government elections and elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Who cannot vote in the polling station at the referendum on the UK’s membership of the European Union?

The names of electors who are not eligible to vote in the polling station at the referendum will be struck through on the register of electors. These are:

- Electors with a date of birth next to their name which shows that they will not be 18 years old until after polling day.
- Electors with an ‘A’ before their name – these are voters who have chosen to vote by post and are therefore not able to vote in person at the polling station.
- Electors with a ‘G’ before their name – these are citizens of European Union (EU) member states (other than the UK, the Republic of Ireland, Cyprus and Malta) who can vote at local government and Northern Ireland Assembly elections.

- Electors with a ‘K’ before their name – these are citizens of European Union (EU) member states (other than the UK, the Republic of Ireland, Cyprus and Malta) who can vote at European Parliamentary elections, local government and Northern Ireland Assembly elections.
- Electors with an anonymous entry who will have the letter ‘N’ printed instead of their name and a prefix letter ‘A’ to indicate they are a postal voter.

Summary table of who can vote at the polling station for the referendum

Who	Letter	
Ordinary electors	No letters	✓
Electors who will turn 18 years of age on or before polling day (unless they also have an A, G or K next to their name)	Date on or before polling day	✓
Overseas Peers	E	✓
Overseas Electors	F	✓
Peers	L	✓
European Union Citizens	G or K	X
Postal voters	A	X
Elector with a date of birth next to their name after polling day	Date after polling day	X
Anonymously registered voter	N + A	X

Acceptable photographic identification

Electors must bring photographic ID with them in order to vote. The Presiding Officer must check that it is in an acceptable document and that the voter is the person in the photograph.

Only the documents shown on the polling station placemat can be accepted. These are:

- the photographic part of any driving licence (full or provisional) issued in the UK, Ireland or a European Economic Area country
- a UK or Irish passport
- an electoral Identity Card
- a Translink Senior SmartPass

- a Translink 60+ SmartPass
- a Translink Blind person's SmartPass
- a Translink War Disabled SmartPass

The document does not have to be current, as long as you are satisfied that the photograph is of the person seeking to vote.

When examining the document you should ask yourself three questions:

- Is the document on the list of acceptable documents?
- Is it genuine?
- Am I satisfied that the voter is the person shown on the document?

Provided that you are satisfied on all three points and the person is on the register you should issue the ballot paper. It does not matter that the document produced is out-of-date or that any address on it differs from the address on the register. Minor variations in the name may also be ignored provided you are satisfied that the photograph is of the person registered as a voter.

It is the Presiding Officer who is responsible for checking the identification. If the Presiding Officer is not satisfied with the documents produced, they should ask the prescribed questions (see Appendix 4a on page 36).

If the document is acceptable, but you still have doubts - for example, if a woman produces an acceptable identification document on which her surname is not the same name as on the register - you should ask the prescribed questions. If the person answers the questions satisfactorily, a ballot paper must be issued. If the person fails to answer the questions satisfactorily, a ballot paper must not be issued.

Stage two – issuing the ballot paper

Ballot papers are numbered and should match the numbers pre-printed on the corresponding number list. Ballot papers must be issued in strict numerical order commencing with the lowest number in the batch. Otherwise, problems will be experienced at the close of poll when completing the ballot paper account.

If the elector is shown on the register of electors as being eligible to vote at the referendum, has produced an acceptable form of ID, and has, if necessary, answered the prescribed questions satisfactorily (see Appendix 4a on page 36 for the prescribed questions), then the voter must be issued with a ballot paper.

The Poll Clerk with the ballot papers must:

- detach the ballot paper
- write the electoral number (i.e. Ward/ENO - for example, 0301/9999) on the corresponding number list next to the number of the ballot paper to be issued
- ensure that the ballot paper bears the unique identifying mark and official mark
- fold the ballot paper, then hand it to the Presiding Officer who must hand it to the voter **unfolded**.

Always enter the ward/electoral number on the corresponding number list. **Do not write anything on the ballot paper itself.**

What happens if the ballot paper does not bear the unique identifying mark?

All ballot papers must bear a unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper. The Deputy Counting Officer will notify Presiding Officers as to what form the unique identifying mark will take.

If all the ballot papers are missing the unique identifying mark, the Presiding Officer should notify the Area Electoral Office immediately. If only some papers are missing the mark, the Presiding Officer should only issue those ballot papers that contain the unique identifying mark, and should also notify the Deputy Counting Officer of the situation.

What happens if the ballot paper does not contain the official mark?

The official mark will be pre-printed on the ballot papers. The Deputy Counting Officer will indicate what the official mark will be at the training session. Every ballot paper **must** bear an official mark. Any ballot paper lacking the official mark will be rejected at the count.

If the ballot papers do not contain a pre-printed official mark as indicated by the Deputy Counting Officer, the Presiding Officer should contact the Deputy Counting Officer immediately.

Stage three – voting

Voters must mark the ballot paper in the privacy of the polling booth and then re-fold the ballot paper so that no one may see the way they have voted. Voters should show the ballot paper number and the unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper to the Presiding Officer before placing it in the ballot box.

What is the procedure if a voter makes a mistake and spoils the ballot paper?

Do not issue a tendered ballot paper.

Sometimes voters do make mistakes, e.g. by making a mark against the 'wrong' choice on the ballot paper. The Presiding Officer must take the spoilt ballot paper, write 'cancelled' by the elector number for the spoilt ballot paper on the corresponding number list and write 'CANCELLED' on the spoilt ballot paper before placing it in **Envelope F**.

The voter must not place the spoilt ballot paper in the ballot box. Once a spoilt ballot paper has been placed in the ballot box, a replacement ballot paper cannot be issued.

The Poll Clerk must detach the next available ballot paper, fold it, and pass it to the Presiding Officer. The Poll Clerk must write the ward/ electoral number against the new ballot paper number on the corresponding number list. The Poll Clerk must also remember to ensure that the replacement ballot paper bears the official mark. The Presiding Officer must then issue the ballot paper to the voter **unfolded**.

At the close of poll, the Presiding Officer must count and then record the number of spoilt ballot papers (both ordinary and tendered) on the ballot paper account and on the front of **Envelope F**.

At the close of poll **Envelope F** must be sealed and placed inside the grey polythene **Envelope G**.

Providing general assistance to voters

Polling staff have a duty to assist voters in the voting process. Remember, voters are customers: greet them with a smile and take into account any special needs they may have.

Never be off-hand, prejudiced or patronising. Do not become angry or agitated, even when under pressure. Listen carefully if you are asked a question. If you are unable to answer a voter's questions or concerns, refer them to the Polling Station Manager in the first instance.

When giving general assistance, polling station staff must be careful not to lead voters to cast their vote for either answer to the referendum question, or to offer an opinion about the subject matter of the referendum.

There are a number of written instructions available for voters in the polling station. First of all, there are the instructions on the ballot paper itself. There are also the 'How to vote at this referendum' notices and the notice displayed inside each polling booth which explains how to mark the ballot paper. If any voter asks for assistance it may, in some circumstances, be helpful to read out these instructions to them.

The Presiding Officer should be familiar with what resources are available and provide these as and when appropriate.

Some voters may still find the instructions unclear. They may ask, for example, to have their preferred choice pointed out to them, or where they should place their cross on the ballot paper. In these circumstances, the Presiding Officer should read out the referendum question and the answers to the referendum question as they appear on the ballot paper.

Appendix 9 on page 48 of this handbook provides examples of frequently asked questions which you may be asked during polling day, and sets out what you should say in response to questions about the referendum. As you are involved in running the referendum, it is important that you are neutral and independent at all times.

There are special procedures to follow when assisting disabled voters and these are described in Appendix 1 on page 28.

Certificates of employment

Where a person's employment as polling staff will prevent them from voting at their allotted polling station, the Deputy Counting Officer will authorise that person to vote at any polling station within the voting area by issuing a certificate of employment.

The certificate will show the elector name and electoral number (i.e. Ward/ENO) and be signed by the Counting Officer.

Similarly, a police officer may present such a certificate, signed by a Police Officer (Chief Inspector or above) of the Police Service for Northern Ireland.

In all such cases, the voter must produce acceptable identification and the Presiding Officer should issue a ballot paper. The electoral number on the certificate should be written on the corresponding number list against the ballot paper number being issued. The Presiding Officer must mark 'CANCELLED' on the certificate and place it in **Envelope J**.

Maintenance of the polling place

Polling Station Managers and Presiding Officers must check the polling station regularly, including for any build-up of electors waiting to vote, to complete health and safety checks and to ensure that voters have unimpeded access at all times:

- Check signs and notices and replace or repair any that have been defaced or damaged.
- Ensure that the entrance to the polling station, including any ramps, is not blocked.
- Where temporary ramps are being used, ensure that they are firmly in place and check to ensure that they have not become dislodged during the day.

- Instruct anyone who is campaigning in or around the polling station to stop.
- Instruct polling agents they must not use mobile phones or electronic devices, e.g. iPads, in the polling station.
- Remove any campaign literature that may have been left in the polling station.
- Make sure that there is sufficient light for voters in the polling booths.
- Make sure that the pencils are still in the booths and sharpen the pencils if necessary.
- Ensure that nothing has been left in the booths, including ballot papers or information on the referendum campaigns.
- Check the ballot box seals.
- If the box seems to be getting full, use the prodder provided to push the ballot papers down.
- Keep the polling station, including any passageways leading into the polling station, clean, tidy and free from any hazards.
- If you notice any queues forming, take steps as instructed by the Deputy Counting Officer for dealing with them.
- Record routine checks in the polling station log.

Polling station log

Presiding Officers and Polling Station Managers must keep a record of activities and events that occur in the polling station throughout the day in the polling station log. It is vital that this is kept up-to-date.

Entries should be recorded in chronological order and each entry must be signed by the member of staff making it. Polling Station Managers who are not also a Presiding Officer must complete a separate polling station log which will be supplied in the first ballot box and must be placed in **Envelope B** at the close of poll. If it has not been supplied you must request one from the Polling Station Inspector.

A sample polling station log will be provided with your referendum materials.

Complaints

If anyone has a complaint of any kind, the polling station staff should attempt to resolve it informally. If that is not possible, the person should be offered a complaint form (contained in the polling station log).

Detach the form from the polling station log and advise the individual that if they complete and return it, the matter will be considered after the referendum. The form should be returned using the freepost address supplied and the individual should be advised that no stamp is required. Polling station staff should not accept completed complaint forms.

All complaints, including any that are resolved informally, must be recorded in the polling station log.

Use of telephones

Other than where the Polling Station Manager or Presiding Officer needs to make necessary business or emergency calls, no person is permitted to use a mobile phone - whether for calls, texts or photographs - inside the polling station. No other polling station staff are permitted to use phones in any circumstances.

Any other person seen using a mobile phone inside the polling station should be asked to stop immediately and if they persist, you should ask them to leave the polling station. Polling agents must not use phones in the polling station. If they do, they too should be asked to leave the polling station.

If the Presiding Officer needs to contact the Area Electoral Office, the police or any other person in connection with the election they should do so by mobile phone.

The cost of the calls can be re-claimed provided that the details of the person called, the reason for the call and the duration of the call are recorded in the polling station log and evidence is produced of the call. If Pay As You Go phones are used, evidence will be required of the tariff. For contract phones, evidence, in the form of a statement showing the cost of the call will be required.

Only in exceptional circumstances should any use be made of a landline telephone in the building. Details of any call made must be recorded in the polling station log.

The Polling Station Manager and Presiding Officer must keep their mobile phones switched on at all times to enable the Area Electoral Office to make contact with them when required.

6 The close of poll

Polling must close at 10pm, but any eligible electors who at 10pm are in their polling station, or in a queue outside their polling station for the purposes of voting must be allowed to vote.

Procedures

- Check the polling place not just immediately before the close of poll, but regularly in the lead-up to the close of poll and take steps to ensure that as far as possible all waiting electors will be able to be issued with a ballot paper by 10pm. If that is not possible, take steps to ensure that they will all be inside the polling station or in a queue outside the polling station for the purposes of voting by that time. Inform the Deputy Counting Officer immediately in the event of a queue existing or building up in the lead-up to the close of poll.
 - If there is more than one polling station in the building, check that anyone waiting to vote is at the correct polling station for their address.
 - Make sure nobody joins the queue after 10pm.
 - If there is a queue at 10pm and if the polling station can accommodate all the electors in the queue, ask electors to move inside the polling station and close the doors behind the last electors in the queue.
 - If the polling station is too small to accommodate all the electors in the queue, a member of the polling station team should mark the end of the queue by positioning themselves behind the last elector in the queue.
- Explain to anyone who arrives after 10pm and tries to join the queue that the poll has closed and that, by law, they cannot be issued with a ballot paper. There may be circumstances where a person marking the end of the queue or staff inside the polling station are challenged by an elector who wishes to vote even though they arrived after 10pm. Such electors cannot be issued with a ballot paper in any circumstances. General guidance to support you in maintaining security in and around the polling station can be found in Appendix 5 on page 41.
 - Anyone who at 10pm is not waiting to vote either inside the polling station, or in a queue outside the polling station, must not be issued with a ballot paper.
 - Anyone who is issued with a ballot paper must be allowed to vote.

In addition to polling station staff, the following are permitted to be present at the close of poll:

- the Counting Officer and their staff
- the Chief Counting Officer
- referendum agents
- polling agents
- police officers on duty at the polling station
- representatives of the Electoral Commission
- accredited observers

Sealing the ballot box

After the close of poll and once the last person has placed their ballot paper in the box, the Presiding Officer must seal the slot of the ballot box (see images below) with a numbered seal and record the serial number of the seal on the front page of the polling station log. Any referendum agent or polling agent present may also affix their seal at this time if they wish to do so.



Old style box



New style box

The Poll Clerk, in the meantime, should take down all the signs and tidy the room.

Referendum agents and polling agents are also entitled to be present when the paperwork is being completed and when the various packets of documents are sealed as described below.

Close of poll packing

Presiding Officers will have been provided with the following packets:

- Envelopes marked A to K
- Polyfile
- Large clear sack

At the close of poll the Presiding Officer must ensure the correct documentation is placed in the clear polyfile and large clear sack as instructed. The Presiding Officer must pack the official envelopes in alphabetical order in the required packet. See Appendix 13a on page 55 for the list of contents to be placed in each envelope.

All remaining sundries and election materials e.g. selector device, portable lights, polling agent instructions, etc. must be placed in the large clear sack as detailed on the close of poll procedures at Appendix 13b on page 56.

The following posters must be placed flat in the 'Polling Place Poster' pack:

- A2 Polling Station signs
- A2 Alternative Access signs (with wheelchair graphic)
- A2 Way in signs
- A2 Way out signs
- A3 Directional arrows

All other signs and posters must be placed in the large clear sack provided. You must leave the polling booth, 'Polling Place Poster' pack, ramp/wedge(s) and room dividers (if supplied) at the polling place for the building supervisor/caretaker to store until the arranged collection date.

Completing the paperwork

The Presiding Officer must complete all official forms. **Take care when filling in the paperwork. It is far more important to be accurate than fast.**

It is important that all polling staff and persons present in the polling station give the Presiding Officer the time and space required to complete the official paperwork.

Although the poll closes at 10pm, polling station staff must stay until all of the paperwork has been completed and packed, and the polling station has been tidied and cleared.

The law requires that at the close of poll the Presiding Officer must seal the envelopes containing specific documents. **Once sealed, the Presiding Officer must sign across the envelope flap and allow any polling agents present to sign the flap if they so wish.** It is important that this instruction is followed in case the documents are later required in court.

It is quite possible that some of the official forms have not been needed during the day; no tendered ballot papers may have been issued and no ballot papers may have been spoiled. If this is the case, still complete the forms, entering a 'nil' return where necessary.

Checklist of official forms to be completed by the Presiding Officer

- the ballot paper account
- the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions (place in **Envelope C** within the polyfile)
- the list of votes marked by the Presiding Officer
- the statement of the number of voters whose votes were marked by the Presiding Officer
- the pink list of tendered votes (place in **Envelope D**, which must then be inserted into the grey polythene **Envelope G**)
- the list of voters issued with ballot papers as a result of an alteration to the electoral register on polling day

Completion of the paperwork is easier if all the official forms are laid out with their corresponding envelopes. The front of each of the official envelopes lists the contents. Complete as many of the forms and envelopes as possible during the day, well before the close of poll. Remember to complete all of the paperwork even if it seems that there is nothing to report.

There may be occasions when, for example, no tendered ballot papers have been issued or electors have not spoiled any ballot papers. In those cases, the Presiding Officer should still fill in the relevant sections of the ballot paper account.

Checklist of official packets and envelopes and their contents

- the ballot paper account – secure this in the ‘**Document enclosed**’ envelope on the ballot box lid
- the marked copy of the register of electors (including any marked notices as described in Appendix 2 on page 31) and list of proxies - must be placed and sealed in the clear **Envelope A** and into the polyfile
- the polling station log, any unused registration forms, prepaid envelopes and the completed notice of ballot papers issued - must be placed and sealed in **Envelope B** and then into the polyfile

- the special voting procedures booklet, which includes the list of voters with disabilities assisted by a companion, the list of votes marked by the Presiding Officer and the statement of the number of voters whose votes are marked by the Presiding Officer, along with any completed declarations made by the companions of voters with disabilities - must be placed and sealed in **Envelope C** and then placed within the polyfile
- the tendered votes list – must be placed and sealed in **Envelope D** and placed within the grey polythene **Envelope G**
- the unused tendered ballot papers - must be placed and sealed into **Envelope E**, which must then be inserted in the grey polythene **Envelope G**
- spoiled ballot papers (ordinary and tendered) - must be counted, the figure recorded on the ballot paper account and placed and sealed in **Envelope F** then inserted into the grey polythene **Envelope G**
- unused ballot papers (both ordinary and tendered) - must be placed and sealed into the grey polythene **Envelope G**
- used tendered ballot papers (if any) - must be sealed into their manila envelope and placed in **Envelope H**, which must then be placed into the clear sack
- the completed corresponding number list - must be placed and sealed into **Envelope I** and then into the clear sack
- the certificates of employment - must be placed and sealed into **Envelope J** and then into the clear sack
- the list of postal voters, lists of referendum agents / polling agents, list of observers and any poll cards - must be placed and sealed into **Envelope K**, then into the clear sack

Please refer to the checklist at Appendix 13a on page 55.

The ballot paper account

The yellow ballot paper account is the most important of all the paperwork and should be filled in first, with care. The first section of the ballot paper account will have been completed in advance by the Deputy Counting Officer. It is the Presiding Officer's duty to complete the remainder of the form.

The ballot paper account reconciles the number of ballot papers dealt with by the Presiding Officer. Remember to count the number of ballot papers issued according to the corresponding number list and include this on the ballot paper account. The form relies on the serial numbering of the ballot papers and this is why it is so important to issue ballot papers in numerical order as pre-printed on the corresponding number list.

The ballot paper account must be secured to the top of the ballot box lid in the documents enclosed envelope – do not lose it or place it by mistake in another envelope or with other referendum materials as this may cause problems and delays at the count.

The rest of the paperwork

Presiding Officers should then attend to the rest of the paperwork. Complete and sign the other forms on the checklist on page 26. Do not forget to fill in the forms with 'nil' returns if they have not been needed during the day.

Packing materials at the polling station

In order, pack the materials into their official envelopes and packets. The corresponding number list and the unused ballot papers must be placed separately in the appropriate envelopes as set out in checklist in Appendix 13a on page 55 and on the pictorial guide in Appendix 13b on page 56.

Transporting referendum materials to the count centre

The Deputy Counting Officer will have given instructions to the Polling Station Manager / Presiding Officer regarding the transportation of ballot boxes and polling station materials to the count centre. The Polling Station Manager / Presiding Officer will either:

- go directly to the count centre, or,
- meet the courier at the designated collection point

If they have been requested to go directly to the count centre, the instructions will detail the location and entrance to be used.

In either case, the following must be returned from each polling station:

- the ballot box (with yellow signed ballot paper account, securely attached to the ballot box lid)
- the clear polyfile containing **Envelopes A, B and C**
- the clear sack containing the grey polythene **Envelope G** (inside of which will be the unused ballot papers, ballot book stubs and **Envelopes D, E and F**) and **Envelopes H – K** and all other election stationery and materials

Poll Clerks must assist the Presiding Officer in carrying the items to the transport vehicle.

The person responsible for transporting the materials must:

- **Go to the count centre or arranged pick-up point directly and without delay.** Presiding Officers should contact the Deputy Counting Officer immediately if any problems occur that may cause a delay in getting to the count centre.
- **Never leave the ballot box, polyfile or large clear sack containing the official documents and referendum materials unattended at any time and ensure that polling station returns are only handed to staff appointed by the Deputy Counting Officer.**

The Polling Station Manager/Presiding Officer must be contactable for a period of time following the close of poll in case important documents have not been returned to the count centre.

Finally, before leaving the polling station, make sure any waste material is disposed of appropriately and the premises are left tidy. Do not leave the building before the building supervisor/caretaker has arrived.

Appendix 1

Equality issues

Disabled electors and the referendum

The following guidance is designed to help to ensure that there is equal access to voting for all.

Polling station staff must ensure that disabled voters are not offered a lower standard of service than other voters. Reasonable adjustments to practices and procedures must be made so that people with a range of disabilities are not disadvantaged in any way.

The Deputy Counting Officer will make arrangements to ensure that disabled voters have, as far as possible, the same access to the referendum process as anyone else. However, practices adopted by Presiding Officers on polling day can also help to make a difference:

- If car parking spaces are provided for disabled people, make sure that they are available for that purpose throughout the poll.
- In any event, if possible, keep parking spaces close to the polling station entrance free for disabled people.
- Ensure that there is good signage for any alternative disabled access and make sure that this is not obstructed throughout the day.
- Use a purpose-built ramp if available, but make sure that it is suitable. Ensure that ramps remain in place and secure throughout the day.
- Propping double doors open can help to ensure good access for all; however, make sure that these are not fire doors.
- Are doormats level with the floor? If not, can they be removed if potentially dangerous?
- Have a seat available for any elector who may need to rest - ideally there should be a mix of chairs with and without armrests.

Assistance to electors unable to gain access to the polling station

Ideally your polling station will be located in a fully accessible building. Unfortunately, in practice, this may not be the case as in some areas there may not be accessible buildings available for use as polling stations.

If a physically disabled elector is unable to enter the polling station, the Presiding Officer, after informing any agents present, may take the ballot paper to the elector. After the ballot paper has been marked, the Presiding Officer must place the folded paper into the ballot box immediately. It is essential that the secrecy of the vote is maintained in all circumstances. The ballot box must not be left unattended or removed from the polling station at any time.

Disabled voters

Some disabled voters may request the assistance of the Presiding Officer to mark the ballot paper for them. If the voter knows how they wish to vote, they must instruct the Presiding Officer, in the privacy of the polling booth, to mark the ballot paper on their behalf accordingly. Ensure that no other voter can overhear the choice expressed by the disabled voter you are assisting. If possible, choose a part of the polling station where a conversation in normal tones cannot be overheard.

On occasion, the voter may be unsure of which option to vote for. In that case, the Presiding Officer should read out the instructions on the ballot paper, the referendum question and the answers to the referendum question as they appear on the ballot paper.

Once the elector has made a decision, the Presiding Officer must mark the ballot paper accordingly. If referendum agents or polling

agents are present, they should be invited to listen to and to observe the Presiding Officer, so that they can confirm that the ballot paper is marked in accordance with the wishes of the elector.

If the Presiding Officer has to mark a ballot paper for an elector, the name of the voter must be noted on the official form 'List of votes marked by the Presiding Officer'. At the close of poll, the Presiding Officer must also fill out the 'Statement of the number of voters whose votes are marked by the Presiding Officer' (see page 2 in the special voting procedures booklet). At the close of poll the Presiding Officer must complete the total number listed on the official form 'List of votes marked by the Presiding Officer', sign and date the official form 'List of votes marked by the Presiding Officer' before placing the booklet in **Envelope C**.

Alternatively, a disabled voter may be assisted by a companion, with the permission of the Presiding Officer, who must be satisfied that the voter's disabilities would prevent them from voting unaided.

The disabled voter's companion must be either a close relative (father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, civil partner, son or daughter – if they are aged 18 years or over) or a qualified elector. The voter should ask the permission of the Presiding Officer to be assisted by their companion. The companion cannot assist more than two voters at the referendum.

The companion, not the voter, is required by law to complete a simple declaration, 'Declaration to be made by the companion of a voter with disabilities'. It is helpful for the Presiding Officer to fill out the declaration on the companion's behalf and to ask them to check the information and sign the document.

The Presiding Officer must ensure that they explain the process clearly to both the elector and their companion.

The Presiding Officer must record the voter's name and elector number, as well as the companion's name and address, on the form 'List of voters with disabilities assisted by companions' (see special voting procedures booklet). At the close of poll the Presiding

Officer must detach the completed declaration and place it along with the 'Special Voting Procedures Booklet', which contains the 'list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions, into **Envelope C**.

Blind or partially sighted people

A blind or partially sighted elector can vote without assistance using the selector device provided. The selector device provides three features:

- Braille
- embossed numerals
- black numerals on a white background

All polling station staff must know how to use the selector device and be able to explain its use to blind or partially sighted voters. Blind or partially sighted voters should be offered the use of the selector device as an alternative to voting with the aid of the Presiding Officer or companion.

Presiding Officers will have received training on how to use the selector device; be prepared to take the time to demonstrate the device so electors wishing to use it can be confident in doing so.

When using it, make sure that the selector device is securely attached to the ballot paper. The voter should:

- lift the selected window
- mark their preference
- close the window
- separate the selector device from the ballot paper
- fold and place the ballot paper in the ballot box
- return the selector device to the Presiding Officer

Ensure that the large-print version of the ballot paper is displayed in a well-lit area where electors can easily see it before being issued with their ballot paper. The enlarged hand-held copy of the ballot paper, marked 'Specimen provided only for the guidance of voters', should also be made available to voters.

Blind or partially sighted voters may request assistance from the Presiding Officer or qualified companions.

Do:

- give precise instructions to help such voters find their way
- guide the voter on their instruction (most blind or partially sighted people prefer to take the arm of the helper)

Do not:

- assume that help is needed – always ask first
- distract guide dogs by fussing or petting them and do not take hold of the lead
- touch the voter without first asking if they wish to be guided

Deaf-blind people

Red bands on a white cane or a red and white harness on a guide dog indicate that the person has both impaired sight and impaired hearing.

Deaf people

Hearing loss can range from mild to profound. Some people with hearing loss will use spoken English and may rely on lip-reading to communicate. Others may have British or Irish Sign Language as their first language, although they may also use lip-reading. A person with hearing loss may wear hearing aids, although these do not restore their full hearing.

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.

Do:

- get the deaf person's attention before speaking
- tap them gently on the shoulder or wave at them
- face the person being spoken to
- speak clearly, not too slowly, and use normal lip movements – use natural facial expressions and gestures
- remain patient and repeat if necessary

- use plain language
- if someone does not understand what you have said, try saying it in a different way
- maintain eye contact
- be prepared to write something down if the person continues to not understand what you are saying
- find a suitable place to talk, with good lighting, and away from noise and distractions

Do not:

- shout – it distorts your face and voice and it looks aggressive
- place anything in your mouth
- cover your mouth
- speak too fast
- speak too slowly or exaggerate lip patterns
- turn away or look down
- speak with bright light behind – this will shadow your face
- have anything in your hand if gesturing
- give up if the deaf person does not understand immediately

Mental capacity, disability and voting

It is possible that a person who applies for a ballot paper might appear to the Presiding Officer to have some form of mental health condition or to have a learning disability.

A person who is registered as an elector or entered on the list of proxies cannot be refused a ballot paper, or in other words be excluded from voting, on the grounds of mental incapacity.

In all cases, the Presiding Officer should try to ensure that a person is given appropriate assistance in order to be able to cast their vote. For example, the elector may need the voting process explained to them by the Presiding Officer, or the elector may request the assistance of a companion.

Appendix 2

Dealing with problems on the register of electors

Age – entitlement to vote

It is an offence for persons under 18 years of age to vote in this referendum, whether alone or accompanied.

If someone is obviously under 18, they should be warned that they will be guilty of an offence if they vote in the referendum. The Presiding Officer must ask the prescribed questions and the person must answer them unaided (see Appendix 4a on page 36 for the prescribed questions). If the person answers the questions satisfactorily, they must be issued with a ballot paper. No other questioning may be made. A note should be made of the voter's name, address and any other particulars, including the time of the incident and details of any person accompanying the voter. The Deputy Counting Officer should subsequently be informed.

Mis-spelt names and voters who have changed their name

Sometimes an elector's name has been mis-spelt or the name has legally changed since they applied to register, e.g. by marriage.

Ask the elector the prescribed questions (see Appendix 4a on page 36). If the voter answers satisfactorily, they must be allowed to vote, and the Presiding Officer should make a note of the inaccuracy and pass it on to the Deputy Counting Officer.

If the elector is insistent that they wish the error to be amended before they vote, the Presiding Officer should contact the Area Electoral Office for advice.

The Presiding Officer must make a note of the error in the polling station log.

If a woman produces an acceptable ID document on which her surname is not the same as the name on the register, the Presiding Officer must ask her the relevant prescribed questions.

Other electors

At the end of some registers is a heading 'Other electors'. Electors appearing here, which include service and overseas electors, and those who have registered by declaration of local connection, no longer have a residential qualification but are still able to vote (subject to entitlement).

A person who is not on the register of electors

Usually, the register of electors will contain all those entitled to vote at that polling station. If a person's name does not appear in the polling station register this may be because the person has not returned a registration form. However, it is possible that an error has occurred.

There are a number of reasons why an elector may not appear on the register - for example, they may have recently changed address, or they may be registered in a different ward. If an elector's name does not appear on the register of electors, the Presiding Officer should first check that they are at the correct polling station by checking the address of the polling station on the poll card, or by contacting the Area Electoral Office.

If the elector is not registered the Presiding Officer should provide them with a voter registration pack (which will have been provided with the referendum materials).

If it is possible that a clerical error has occurred, you should advise them to contact the Area Electoral Office. Anyone who is not on the register for that polling station must not be allowed to vote unless the Presiding Officer or Polling Station Manager receives instructions from the Deputy Counting Officer to make an alteration to the register in the way described below.

Clerical errors on the register

If the Deputy Counting Officer discovers that a correctly completed application has been received and the person was only omitted from the register as a result of a clerical error, they will correct this error up until 7pm on polling day and make provision for the person to be able to vote up until the close of poll at 10pm. The error may be discovered either before or on polling day or by a voter or a proxy in the polling station.

Clerical errors identified by the Area Electoral Office before polling day

If an error is identified before polling day but after the register has been produced for the polling station, the Area Electoral Office will have provided a separate 'Notice of Alteration', including any additions or amendments, in addition to the normal register. This notice must be marked instead of the register, but all other procedures are the same, including sealing up such a notice with the register at the close of poll in **Envelope A**.

Clerical errors identified by the Presiding Officer on polling day

If someone who presents themselves at the polling station is not on the register (or the notice) and is insistent that they made an application to register, the Presiding Officer should refer this immediately to the Area Electoral Office.

Clerical errors identified by the Deputy Counting Officer on polling day

If it is determined that a correctly completed application was received and the person was only omitted from the register as a result of a clerical error, the error must be corrected and the Deputy Counting Officer will give notice to the Presiding Officer (either in writing or orally, e.g. by telephone).

Procedure to allow a person to vote following the correction of a clerical error on polling day

If the notice is communicated verbally, the Presiding Officer must make a written record of the elector's name and electoral number (as advised by the Deputy Counting Officer) on the last page of the register and mark this record when issuing the ballot paper in the usual manner. Presiding Officers must record these details on a special form titled 'List of voters issued with ballot papers as a result of an alteration to the Electoral Register on the day of the poll' which can be found on page 14 in the Special Voting Procedures Booklet.

If the notice is communicated in writing, either that notice of alteration must be marked in the same way as if it were part of the register, or the Presiding Officer must write and mark the elector's name and number on the special form provided in the special voting procedures booklet as detailed above. Once the elector's name and number have been marked, a ballot paper must be issued in the usual manner.

The Presiding Officer must also record the details in the polling station log. The marked notice or marked written record must be sealed up with the register at the close of poll in **Envelope A**.

Any other person who is not on the register of electors

The register will contain the names of all eligible electors who are entitled to vote at the polling station. Anyone else who is not on the register of electors (or the Notice of Alteration) for that polling station must not be allowed to vote.

There are a number of reasons why an elector may not appear on the register, for example:

- they may have changed address recently
- they may not have correctly completed or returned a registration form
- they may be registered in a different polling district

If the elector's name does not appear on the register of electors, the Presiding Officer should first check that they are at the correct polling station by checking the address of the polling station on the poll card. If the poll card is not available, the Presiding Officer should ask the elector for their address and check if their street is listed on any other registers within the polling place. If the elector is not listed for any polling station within the polling place, refer them to the Area Electoral Office. The Presiding Officer should contact the Area Electoral Office on behalf of the elector when asked to do so.

Where a person is not registered the Presiding Officer should offer them a registration pack. A number of these will be supplied to each polling station.

Under no circumstances should a Presiding Officer allow a member of public who is not on the register to vote without receiving verbal or written confirmation from the Deputy Counting Officer.

Appendix 3

Procedure for postal and proxy voters

Postal voters

Some electors will have applied to vote by post at the referendum. To show that they are postal voters, those who have chosen to vote by post will have the letter 'A' against their names in the register of electors to be used at the polling station and their entry will be scored through with a line. The names and the addresses where the postal ballot papers have been sent will be shown on the list of postal voters, which will be provided with the referendum materials. Such electors are not allowed to vote in person at the polling station, even if they state that they have not received their postal ballot paper.

Postal voters will have been issued a lilac coloured 'postal poll card' and the Presiding Officer must advise such voters that they cannot vote in person at the polling station.

What happens if someone wants to hand their completed postal ballot pack in at a polling station?

Completed postal ballot packs cannot be handed in at a polling station. You should advise the voter to deliver their completed postal ballot pack to the Area Electoral Office before 10pm.

What happens if someone is listed as a postal voter (or postal proxy voter) but claims not to have applied for a postal vote?

There are occasions when an elector or an appointed proxy asks for a ballot paper only to find that they are marked on the register of electors as being a postal voter.

The Presiding Officer should check the entry on the register of electors to confirm that the elector or proxy is marked as a postal voter. The Presiding Officer should explain the circumstances to the elector or proxy and if they

insist that they have not applied for a postal vote then the following procedures should be followed.

If the elector or proxy is in possession of their postal vote, they should be advised to return it to the Area Electoral Office by 10pm.

Electors or proxies marked as having been issued with a postal vote cannot be given an ordinary ballot paper in the polling station. However, an elector or proxy who claims never to have applied for a postal vote but is listed as a postal voter is entitled to receive a tendered ballot paper at the polling station at any time, provided they answer the prescribed questions satisfactorily (see Appendix 4a on page 36).

What happens if a postal voter (or postal proxy) has not received, or has lost their postal ballot paper?

A postal ballot paper cannot be replaced at the polling station under any circumstances.

If a postal voter (or postal proxy) arrives at the polling station on polling day and states that they have lost or not received their postal ballot paper, they can be issued with a tendered ballot paper if they answer the prescribed questions satisfactorily (see Appendix 4a on page 36).

Proxy voters

Some electors will have appointed a proxy to vote on their behalf. Even so, electors may vote in person provided that they do so before the proxy and that the proxy has not applied to vote by post. Check the register of electors to see if the elector has already voted before commencing with the following procedure. Any elector who has applied to vote by proxy will have the letter 'P' against their name on the register of electors. A cream coloured 'proxy poll card' will have been issued to all proxy voters ,

the proxy who is voting on behalf of the elector will also have received a proxy notification letter.

If the proxy is also voting themselves, they should do so before voting as a proxy.

Firstly, ask for the elector's name and address and see if they are included on the list of proxies. The proxy may hand the cream proxy poll card to the Presiding Officer, who should hand it back to the voter. If the proxy refuses the poll card, the Presiding Officer should tear it up and place it in **Envelope K**.

Ask for the proxy's name and address and draw a line on the list of proxies to indicate that the proxy has voted. Ask the proxy for photographic ID – check that it is an acceptable document and that the proxy is the person in the photograph.

The elector's entry in the register must then be marked in the usual manner and the elector's name and number read aloud.

The Poll Clerk responsible for issuing ballot papers must write the elector's electoral number (not the proxy's) on the corresponding number list beside the appropriate ballot paper number to record that the ballot paper has been issued.

Remember that a ballot paper may only be issued to electors who are eligible to vote in the referendum. If the elector's entry in the register of electors is prefixed with a letter that does not entitle them to vote in the referendum, the proxy is unable to cast a vote on their behalf.

Eligibility for voting as a proxy

A person is not entitled to vote as a proxy on behalf of more than two electors who are not close relatives at the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union.

The only circumstances in which a person can act as a proxy for more than two electors is if they are immediate members of their family (i.e. father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, civil partner, son, daughter, grandparent or grandchild). Where a person who has been appointed to act as proxy for more than one elector applies to exercise the electors' votes, the proxy should only be given the ballot paper for one elector at a time.

Proxies may also be challenged in the same way that an ordinary voter may be if they are suspected of personation. If this happens, ask the relevant prescribed questions (see Appendix 4a on page 36).

What if the elector turns up to vote instead of their proxy?

An elector who has appointed a proxy is entitled to receive their ballot paper if they apply for it in person, but only if the request is made before the ballot paper has been issued on their behalf to the proxy. The list of proxies must not be marked if this happens, but the elector's entry on the register of electors must be marked instead. If the proxy then turns up later, they should not be allowed to vote as a proxy for the voter, but, if they insist that the elector has not yet voted and the prescribed questions are answered satisfactorily (see Appendix 4a on page 36), a tendered ballot paper may be issued.

If the proxy has requested to vote by post, the elector cannot be issued a ballot paper. An 'A' marker will appear against the elector's name in the register of electors and the name of the proxy and the address to which the postal vote has been sent will appear on the list of postal proxies.

What happens if someone else appears to have voted as a proxy?

The Presiding Officer should follow the procedure for issuing tendered ballot papers for proxies if a proxy's entry on the list of proxies and the entry of the elector on the register of electors have already been marked (see Appendix 4b on page 39).

The Presiding Officer should only issue a tendered ballot paper after asking the prescribed questions for proxies (see Appendix 4b on page 39).

What happens if a person asks to vote on behalf of someone who has had a medical emergency?

Only issue a ballot paper if the person has been officially appointed as a proxy. If not, explain that proxies cannot be appointed after 5pm on 15 June, and refer them to the Area Electoral Office for more information.

Appendix 4a

The prescribed questions

The prescribed questions can be asked of any elector or proxy. However, the Presiding Officer must put the prescribed questions precisely and calmly in the following circumstances:

- An elector (who has not appointed a proxy) applies for a ballot paper but the register of electors shows that they have already voted. In this circumstance, even if the questions are answered satisfactorily, the elector is only entitled to a tendered ballot paper.
- A proxy voter's entry on the list of proxies has already been marked and the entry of the elector on the register of electors has also been marked. Upon satisfactorily answering the questions, the elector or proxy is only entitled to a tendered ballot paper.
- A proxy voter returns to the polling station after their application to cast a vote as a proxy has been rejected because the register of electors indicates that the voter has voted in person (the list of proxies in this case would not be marked), and insists that the elector has not voted. If they answer the questions satisfactorily, they will be entitled to a tendered ballot paper.
- An elector's (or a proxy's) name appears on the list of postal voters (or list of proxy postal voters) but they state that they did not apply to vote by post. If the elector (or proxy) answers the questions satisfactorily, they must be issued with a tendered ballot paper.
- An elector (or a proxy) whose name appears on the postal voters list (or proxy postal voters list) arrives at the polling station on polling day and claims to have lost or not received their postal ballot paper. If the elector (or proxy) answers the questions satisfactorily, they must be issued with a tendered ballot paper.
- A referendum agent or polling agent requires the questions to be asked. If the prescribed

questions are answered satisfactorily, an ordinary ballot paper must be issued.

The Presiding Officer should also ask the relevant prescribed questions where:

- An elector states that their name is not as shown in the register of electors. If, in response to the prescribed questions, the elector can confirm that the register entry refers to them, an ordinary ballot paper must be issued.
- Polling station staff suspect an elector or a proxy of personation. If, in response to the prescribed questions, the elector can confirm that the register entry refers to them, an ordinary ballot paper must be issued.
- The elector is registered as eligible to vote but is clearly under age. If the prescribed questions are answered satisfactorily, an ordinary ballot paper must be issued.
- An acceptable form of identification is produced but the Presiding Officer still has doubts about the elector's identity. If the prescribed questions are answered satisfactorily and an acceptable form of identification has been produced, an ordinary ballot paper must be issued

No inquiry may be made as to the right of any person to vote, other than the prescribed questions shown below.

The Presiding Officer, regardless of any doubt they may have, must issue an ordinary or tendered ballot paper, as appropriate, to anyone who has answered the questions correctly. If a person refuses to answer the questions, then an ordinary or tendered ballot paper, as appropriate, cannot be issued. If that person returns later, then the Presiding Officer must again ask them the prescribed questions.

The prescribed questions to be asked of a person applying to vote as an elector

‘Are you the person registered in the register of electors as follows (you must then read out loud the whole entry from the register)?’

If the answer is ‘no’, do not issue a ballot paper. If the answer is ‘yes’, then ask:

‘Have you already voted, in the referendum on the United Kingdom’s membership of the European Union, here or elsewhere, otherwise than as proxy for some other person?’

If the answer is ‘yes’ to this question, do not issue a ballot paper. If the person has answered ‘yes’ to the first question and ‘no’ to the second question, then ask,

What is your date of birth?

If the answer matches the date of birth on the voter’s ID, an ordinary or tendered ballot paper must be issued as appropriate. If the answer does not match the date of birth on the voter’s ID, a tendered ballot paper must be issued, provided that the other questions are answered satisfactorily.

The prescribed questions to be asked of a person applying to vote as a proxy

The prescribed questions for proxies have a different wording:

‘Are you the person whose name appears as (read out the name that appears in the list of proxies) in the list of proxies for the referendum on the United Kingdom’s membership of the European Union as entitled to vote as proxy on behalf of (the name of the elector on the register of electors)?’

If the answer is ‘no’, do not issue a ballot paper. If the answer is ‘yes’, then ask:

‘Have you already voted at the referendum on the United Kingdom’s membership of the European Union, here or elsewhere, as proxy on behalf of (the name of the elector on the register)?’

If the answer is ‘yes’ to this question, a ballot paper must not be issued. If the answer is ‘no’, then ask:

‘Are you the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother/sister, child or grandchild of (the name of the elector on the register)?’

If the answer to this question is ‘yes’ (and the questions above have been answered satisfactorily), an ordinary or tendered ballot paper must be issued as appropriate.

If, however, the answer is ‘no’, then ask:

‘Have you already voted in the referendum on the United Kingdom’s membership of the European Union on behalf of two persons of whom you are not the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother/sister, child or grandchild?’

If the answer to this question is ‘yes’, do not issue a ballot paper. If the answer is ‘no’ (and the questions above have been answered satisfactorily), an ordinary or tendered ballot paper must be issued, as appropriate.

The prescribed questions to be asked of a person applying to vote in person when they are shown on the register as a postal voter

The following prescribed questions are for electors shown on the register as postal voters, but who:

- claim either to have not applied to vote by post or
- present themselves at the polling station on polling day and claim to have lost or not received their postal ballot paper

‘Did you apply to vote by post?’

If the answer is ‘no’, a tendered ballot paper must be issued.

If the answer to this question is ‘yes’, then ask:

‘Why have you not voted by post?’

If the question is answered satisfactorily, the Presiding Officer should record the reason and issue a tendered ballot paper.

The prescribed questions to be asked of a person applying to vote as a proxy when they are shown as having been issued with a postal proxy ballot paper

The prescribed questions for proxies named on the proxy postal voters list but who claim either to have not applied to vote by post or who present themselves at the polling station on polling day and claim to have lost, not received their postal ballot paper are as follows:

‘Did you apply to vote by post as proxy?’

If the answer is ‘no’, a tendered ballot paper must be issued.

If the answer is ‘yes’, then ask:

‘Why have you not voted by post as proxy?’

If the question is answered satisfactorily, the Presiding Officer should record the reason and issue a tendered ballot paper.

Appendix 4b

Tendered ballot papers

Circumstances in which to issue tendered ballot papers

Please read these instructions carefully before issuing any tendered ballot paper.

Tendered ballot papers are pink and one book containing 25 tendered ballot papers will be provided in the ballot box in **Envelope E** to each polling station. Before the poll opens, the Presiding Officer should check the serial numbers on the tendered ballot paper book provided against those recorded on the ballot paper account. Presiding Officers should contact the Deputy Counting Officer if the numbers do not match. The tendered ballot papers should be placed back inside **Envelope E** and kept separately until needed.

The Presiding Officer must make sure that tendered ballot papers are only issued in the prescribed circumstances. Tendered ballot papers should only be issued if:

- an elector appears on the register of electors (or notice of alteration) as having already voted
- a proxy's entry on the list of proxies has already been marked and/or the entry of the elector who appointed them as a proxy has been marked
- an elector (or proxy) who appears on the list of postal voters claims not to have applied for a postal vote
- an elector (or proxy) who appears on the list of postal voters claims to have lost or not received their postal vote
- the Presiding Officer has reasonable doubt, based on either the identification document produced, or the age of the elector shown on the register, as to whether the person is in fact the elector or the proxy

- the Presiding Officer has refused to deliver an ordinary ballot paper to the voter because either the identification document produced, or the apparent age of the elector as compared with the date of birth shown on the register, raises reasonable doubt as to whether the person is in fact the elector or the proxy

If tendered ballot papers are issued in error, the Presiding Officer should make a note of the serial numbers of the tendered ballots that have been issued by mistake and inform the Deputy Counting Officer as soon as possible. The Presiding Officer should also note the error on the polling station log and where possible, mark the spoiled tendered ballot paper as 'cancelled' and place it in the spoiled tendered ballot paper **Envelope F**.

Before issuing a tendered ballot paper, the Presiding Officer should explain the circumstances to the elector (or proxy) and must then ask the prescribed questions relevant to their situation (see Appendix 4a on page 36).

If the prescribed questions are answered satisfactorily, then the Presiding Officer must issue a tendered ballot paper. If an elector has been asked their date of birth as part of the prescribed question and the elector answers the date of birth question unsatisfactorily, then the Presiding Officer must issue a tendered ballot paper provided that the other questions are answered satisfactorily. The Presiding Officer should then explain the tendered vote procedure to the elector (or proxy).

Procedure for issue

When issuing a tendered ballot paper the Presiding Officer must:

- Write the elector's name and electoral number (i.e. Ward/ENO - for example 0301/9999) against the number of the tendered ballot paper being issued on the 'List of tendered votes' and inform the voter that they must sign this entry.
- Issue the next tendered ballot paper from the book, ensuring that the tendered ballot paper bears the official mark.
- Fold the tendered ballot paper, then hand it to the voter or proxy **unfolded**.
- Direct the voter to a polling booth so that they can mark the tendered ballot paper in secret.
- When the voter has completed their tendered ballot paper, they should return it to the Presiding Officer.
- **The tendered ballot paper must not be placed in the ballot box.** To make sure this does not happen, the Presiding Officer should stand by the ballot box and cover the slot.

If a tendered ballot paper is issued to an elector because of reasonable doubt as to the elector's age or identity, or where the question relating to date of birth is not answered satisfactorily, the elector must sign the tendered ballot paper. The only exception to this is if they have a disability that would prevent them from doing so.

In all cases, the Presiding Officer must take the folded tendered ballot paper and endorse it with the name of the voter together with their electoral number (including the ward reference).

The Presiding Officer must then place the used tendered ballot paper inside a plain C5 manila envelope (provided with the referendum materials), seal it and place it into **Envelope H**.

If a proxy votes on behalf of an elector, endorse the tendered ballot paper with the proxy's name, but with the elector's electoral number. Enter the elector number, together with the name of the proxy, on the 'List of tendered votes'.

The Presiding Officer must complete the pink 'List of tendered votes' at the close of poll and place it in **Envelope D**.

Reasons for completing a tendered ballot paper

On occasion, voters may ask why they are being offered a tendered ballot paper. Even though tendered ballot papers are not included in the count, a tendered ballot paper provides evidence that a voter was concerned about the conduct of the referendum at the time of voting, rather than after the result was declared. As such, tendered ballot papers are the first step in pursuing a complaint about the electoral process. If a voter does not take this step it could mean that there is no formal record that they tried, but were unable, to cast their vote.

In addition, whenever a tendered ballot paper is issued, the name of the voter and their elector number is entered on the list of tendered votes. This list then enables the Deputy Counting Officer to establish whether there are any patterns of possible personation across their area.

Appendix 5

Security at the polling station

The Presiding Officer is responsible for the security of the polling station. Voters expect polling stations to be run in a calm and orderly manner.

Keeping order

Presiding Officers must maintain order in the polling station. They have the power to order a person's removal from the polling station. Eligible voters must nevertheless be allowed to vote before they are removed. A Presiding Officer who orders the removal of a person should record the details of the incident and pass them on to the Deputy Counting Officer.

A person who has been removed from the polling station and has not voted may only be re-admitted on the authority of the Presiding Officer. If the person returns and conducts themselves in an orderly manner, they must be given the opportunity to vote.

There is no legal definition of the extent of the polling station but, at a minimum, it is the room in which voting takes place.

Serious disturbances or incidents and the adjournment of the poll

The police will have been informed of the location of polling stations. Police officers may be assigned polling station duties and may visit them during the day. If there is disorder at the polling station during the day, contact the Deputy Counting Officer and inform them of the situation. If necessary, call the police to deal with the problem.

In the event of a serious disturbance or incident e.g. bomb scare, fire, flood, etc., the Presiding Officer may be asked to vacate the premises or may decide to do so. If the emergency services

ask for the building to be evacuated, it must be done. Inform the Deputy Counting Officer immediately and seek guidance on further actions that should be taken.

Never put the personal safety of voters or the rest of the polling station team at risk, or risk injury to any person. If it is possible to do so without putting personal safety at risk, then all the sensitive referendum materials (the ballot box, ballot papers, register of electors, etc.) may be removed from the building and kept under the care of the polling station staff. You should keep any agents or observers present informed of your actions.

If forced to leave the premises, establish a temporary polling station at a safe distance from the serious disturbance or incident. Regardless of whether there has been an interruption in polling, the polling station must still close at 10pm. However, a note should be made of the time during which the polling station was unable to operate.

In the most extreme case, the Counting Officer will permit the Presiding Officer to adjourn the poll until the following day. If the poll is adjourned, then the Deputy Counting Officer will arrange for the referendum materials to be collected.

Presiding Officers must not adjourn the poll without the Counting Officer's consent.

Dealing with difficult situations

It is possible that during the course of polling day polling station staff will encounter difficult situations or be faced with confrontational behaviour.

The following steps may assist polling station staff with potentially difficult or challenging situations:

- **Listen** to the voter – it is good practice to look at the person while they speak, demonstrating interest.
- **Understand** – let the person know that every effort is being made to understand the problem from their perspective. This emphasises that an informed decision is being considered.
- **Explore** – ask the person if there is any further relevant information that they can give that might help the process along.
- **Summarise** – give the response and the reason for it. Do not become engaged in an argument.

Appendix 6

Procedure for dealing with personation

What happens if polling station staff suspect a person of personating an elector or proxy?

There may be rare occasions when a member of the polling station team, another elector, a referendum agent or polling agent suspects that the person requesting a ballot paper is not who they claim to be. This is called personation and it is a serious offence.

Remember that a person, other than a proxy, is not guilty of personation if they apply for a ballot paper by a name which is not their own, as long as it is the name under which they have been registered.

Presiding Officers must not interrogate a person if they suspect personation. Only the prescribed questions may be asked. The questions must be put to the person before they are issued with a ballot paper, and not afterwards (see Appendix 4a on page 36).

The prescribed questions determine whether the voter is the person who appears on the register of electors (or the list of proxies if they are voting as a proxy for someone else), and if they have voted before in the referendum (or on behalf of that elector if they are the proxy).

If the person answers the questions satisfactorily, an ordinary ballot paper must be issued. The Presiding Officer should, however, report their suspicions to the Deputy Counting Officer as soon as possible and note the incident in the polling station log.

If there is a confrontation, or a reasonable expectation of confrontation, the Presiding Officer should consider their own safety and the safety of all other people present as a priority. Consideration may be given to other ways of supporting a future investigation, such as

recording registration numbers of vehicles and preserving items touched by a person involved in an incident, if it is safe to do so, until the arrival of a police officer.

If a person has been arrested on the grounds that they are suspected of committing or being about to commit personation, that person must not be prevented from voting as long as they answer the prescribed questions satisfactorily.

What happens if a referendum agent or polling agent challenges a voter?

If a referendum agent or polling agent challenges a voter (through the Presiding Officer), the voter must not be prevented from voting as long as they answer the prescribed questions correctly.

What happens if someone else (apart from a proxy) appears to have voted on behalf of the voter?

There are rare occasions when a person asks for a ballot paper only to find that their name on the register of electors is marked as already having voted. If it appears that someone other than their appointed proxy has voted on behalf of an elector, the tendered ballot process outlined in Appendix 4b on page 39 should be followed.

Appendix 7a

Guidance on campaigners, the media and exit polls

Campaigners

Polling agents have the right to enter and remain in a polling station to observe voting but they must not disrupt or interfere with the voting process or attempt to campaign or canvass voters. Further information on polling agents can be found on page 13 of this handbook.

A 'Code of Conduct' which sets out principles relating to canvassing in the vicinity of polling stations can be found in Appendix 7b on page 45. Copies of the code of conduct (A4 size and A3 size) will also have been supplied in the Presiding Officer's pack.

If polling station staff have any issues regarding canvassing within the vicinity of the polling place, they should make reference to the code.

The media

Representatives of the media have no right to enter a polling station except as voters or accredited observers. They must not be allowed to film or interview voters in the polling station. If a film crew is filming or interviews are taking place outside the polling station, make sure that voters are not hindered or harassed on their way to vote, that the cameras are not positioned in a way that may compromise the secrecy of the ballot and that the entrance to the polling station is not obstructed.

Exit polls

Public opinion poll companies may be commissioned to organise an exit poll for the referendum. Presiding Officers may have been informed by the Deputy Counting Officer if a polling company intends to conduct an exit poll outside the polling station. If that is the case, make sure that the interviewers neither enter nor block the access to the polling station.

Appendix 7b

Code of conduct



CODE OF CONDUCT

CANVASSING IN THE VICINITY OF POLLING PLACES

The following principles are intended to guide the conduct of canvassers in the vicinity of polling places:

- Canvassers shall be polite and courteous at all times when speaking to members of the public. They should be careful to avoid any behaviour which may leave them open to complaints of harassment or intimidation.
- Canvassers will not engage in canvassing activities inside the grounds of a polling place.
- Canvassers should not stop, or in any way impede, the free flow of vehicular traffic entering or leaving the grounds of a polling place.
- Canvassers should not restrict or in any way impede pedestrian access to any entrance of a polling place.
- Canvassers shall not attach flags, emblems, banners, posters or any other item used in connection with canvassing to a polling place or to any part of its perimeter wall or fence.

This Code of Conduct has been agreed.

NB: The term 'polling place' is referred to in Section 18B of the Representation of the People Act 1983 but the actual meaning of the term is not defined in law. For the purposes of the Electoral Petition Hearing in September 2010 it was described as 'The building inside which one or more polling stations are located.'

Appendix 8

Health and safety

Health and safety of polling station staff and electors

Polling station staff must be aware of any potential risks to safety throughout polling day. This requires an inspection of the premises as a whole and of the immediate area outside. If hazards are encountered, some remedy needs to be considered. Liaise with the caretaker/building supervisor first, if appropriate and where possible.

If an accident occurs to any person at the polling station, a record must be made of the incident and the following information recorded:

- full name and address of person involved
- time of accident or incident
- location of accident or incident
- brief details of accident or incident
- evidence of injury or damage and any treatment given
- name and address of any witnesses
- conditions prevailing at the time
- action taken by polling station staff
- name of doctor or paramedic called
- details of any hospital admission
- anything else considered relevant to the accident or injury

Any accident or incident involving injury to any person or damage to property must be reported to the Polling Station Manager immediately, recorded on the accident report form provided in the polling station log and recorded on the polling station log. If there is an incident that requires medical attention, the emergency services should be contacted and the Deputy Counting Officer informed immediately.

If polling station staff have a mobile phone with a camera, please photograph the accident scene or damage to property and send it to the Deputy Counting Officer as soon as practicable. If the photograph is for an accident, permission should be sought by victim before sending the photograph.

An accident report form must be completed in full to inform any subsequent enquiry. It may also be required to refute or substantiate any allegations of negligence against the owner of the polling place or the Electoral Office.

All damage to property must be recorded in the polling station log. The only exception is where the damage has an estimated value of less than £5. The following details are to be recorded:

- The description of the item damaged and the damage to it.
- An explanation of how the damage appears to have occurred.
- The time it appears to have occurred.
- The name and address of the person or persons responsible or present when the damage occurred.
- Anything said at the time by any of them.
- Conditions at the time (e.g. lighting, wet surface, etc.).
- When and by whom the damage was reported.
- Any action taken by polling station staff.
- Anything else considered relevant.

Lifting heavy objects

Listed below are some points that, if observed, may help to reduce the risk of injury to those who are involved with manual handling operations:

- Before attempting to lift or move any object, test the weight by tilting to determine how heavy the load is and the position of its centre of gravity.
- Before commencing the lifting or moving of objects, ensure that the area in which you are working is clear and free from obstructions.
- Ensure that you have a firm, comfortable grip before lifting.
- Ensure that you have a firm footing before lifting.
- When lifting, keep your head up, your back straight, your feet slightly apart and, wherever possible, lift from the knees using your leg muscles.
- Keep the object you are lifting as close to your body as possible.
- Do not pile objects so high that you or your load might overbalance.
- Do not pile objects so high that you cannot see where you are going.
- If you cannot lift or move the load on your own, ask for assistance.
- Help others to lift or move a load if you are asked.

Appendix 9

Frequently asked questions for polling station staff on polling day

Q. What is the referendum about?

A. This referendum is about the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union.

Q. What are my options?

A. A referendum asks you to vote on a question on the ballot paper.

For this referendum the question is:

“Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?”

At this referendum you have the option of two choices on the ballot paper. You should show your choice by putting a cross (X) in the ‘Remain a member of the European Union’ box or ‘Leave the European Union’ box on your ballot paper.

Q. What happens if more people vote to remain than leave, OR what happens if more people vote leave than remain?

A. I'm afraid I'm not able to answer that question for you – I can only help with how to mark your ballot paper. As I'm involved in running the referendum, I have to be neutral and independent. Therefore, just like at an election, I can't answer questions about the issues you are voting on. *If this question is asked before the voter has been issued a ballot paper; provide the Electoral Commission contact details: www.aboutmyvote.co.uk or 0333 103 1928.*

Q. How can I find out the referendum result?

A. The referendum ballot papers will be counted overnight following the close of poll at 10pm on Thursday 23 June. The final result will be available on the Commission's website at <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/elections-and-referendums/upcoming-elections-and-referendums/eu-referendum>

Q. I voted in the elections in May so why can't I vote at the referendum?

A. The franchise at this referendum is set out in law and was approved by the UK Parliament. The franchise at the referendum is different to that for the May elections.

You can only vote at the referendum if you are registered to vote, aged 18 or over on 23 June 2016 and are:

- a British or Irish citizen living in the UK,
- a Commonwealth citizen living in the UK who has leave to remain in the UK or who does not require leave to remain in the UK, or
- a British citizen living overseas who has been registered to vote in the UK in the last 15 years

Q. Why do you need to write my elector number beside my ballot paper number? Does this mean my vote is not secret?

A. The requirement that the elector number is recorded on this list against the number of the ballot paper issued to you is included in the referendum rules. This system is essentially an updated version of a system that dates from the Ballot Act 1872, which was introduced to avoid the possibility of counterfeit ballot papers being used and to assist with the detection of alleged fraud.

Clearly, if the ballot papers are numbered, it is far more difficult for an unscrupulous person to introduce copies of official ballot papers into the ballot box. If a fraudulent act has occurred, it would be possible to detect the offence by reference to the corresponding number list.

There is a safeguard to prevent the ballot paper numbers on the corresponding number list being linked with the marked ballot papers. At the close of poll, the corresponding number list is placed in a sealed envelope by the Presiding Officer at the polling station. The sealed envelope is then taken to the Counting Officer. After the count has taken place, the used ballot papers are also sealed. The only occasion when the sealed packets can be opened is on the order of a judge or in furtherance of an investigation into an alleged referendum offence. Even then, it is very rare for the documents to be examined except in cases where fraud or personation (i.e. someone voting illegally on someone else's behalf) are being investigated.

Because of the above safeguards, it is virtually impossible for any person to be in a position to marry up the voter to a particular ballot paper.

For that reason, voters can be confident that the ballot remains secret. Voters have no grounds to fear that the way in which they voted could be detected, except under the very special circumstances outlined above.

Q. I've forgotten to post my postal vote. Can I vote in person here at the polling station?

A. We can't give you an ordinary ballot paper here at the polling station. However, you don't need to post your postal vote in order to vote: you can take your postal vote, or get someone else to do this for you, to the Deputy Counting Officer at the Area Electoral Office. You must make sure it gets there by 10pm.

Q. My postal vote hasn't arrived yet – what can I do?

A. You are entitled to receive a tendered ballot paper. If you are on the register for this polling station and you answer the prescribed questions satisfactorily, we will be able to issue you with a tendered ballot paper.

Q. My postal vote has arrived, but now I've lost my ballot paper. What can I do?

A. You are entitled to receive a tendered ballot paper. If you are on the register of electors for this polling station and you answer the prescribed questions satisfactorily, we will be able to issue you with a tendered ballot paper.

Q. I've received my postal vote but now I've changed my mind and want to vote in person at the polling station. Can I cancel my postal vote?

A. No – if you want to vote at this referendum, you will need to use your postal vote; you cannot be issued with a ballot paper at the polling station. However, you can deliver your completed postal vote, sealed and in the envelopes provided, by hand to the Area Electoral Office by 10pm. If you want to cancel your postal vote for future elections and referendums, please contact the Area Electoral Office.

Q. What do you mean I'm not registered – I thought that everyone could vote?

A. You need to be on the electoral register to vote. In order to be included on the register and to be able to vote at future elections and referendums, you will need to apply to the Area Electoral Office.

If you are sure you applied to register, please contact the Area Electoral Office.

Q. My husband has had an accident at work and has been rushed to hospital. He's desperate to vote – is there anything that can be done?

A. Unfortunately it is too late now for an application for a proxy to be made for this referendum. This means that no one else is able to vote on his behalf at this referendum.

Q. Why won't you accept blue badges/student cards as an acceptable form of ID?

A. The acceptable forms of photographic identification are set out in law and we are unable to change them.

Appendix 10

Polling station set-up checklist

This checklist should be used prior to the poll opening to ensure that the polling station is set up correctly.

Outside the polling station

Checked

Entrance, exit and approaches

Is the approach signage clear and are electors able to easily identify where the polling station is?

Are there parking spaces reserved for disabled people?

Check there are no hazards between the car parking spaces and the entrance to the polling station.

Signage

Have you ensured good signage for any alternative disabled access, and can it be read by someone in a wheelchair?

Is the notice with the words 'How to vote at this referendum' printed at the top displayed outside the polling station and accessible to all voters?

Level access

Is there a suitable ramp clear of obstructions?

Is the ramp/wedge stable? If not and it cannot be safely adjusted, contact the Area Electoral Office.

Are doormats flush with the floor? If not, remove them.

Entrances

Have double doors been checked to ensure good access for all?

Is the door for any separate disabled access properly signed?

Inside the polling station

Is the polling station set up to make best use of space?

Walk through the route the voter will be expected to follow, and check that the layout will work for voters, taking into account how they will move through the voting process from entering to exiting the polling station.

Would the layout work if there was a build-up of electors waiting to cast their ballots?

Is best use being made of the lights and natural light available?

Is there a seat available if an elector needs to sit down?

Official notices

Is the notice with the words 'How to vote at this referendum' printed at the top displayed inside the polling station and accessible to all voters?

Is the notice that provides information on how to mark the ballot paper posted inside all polling booths?

As you walk through the route that the voter will be expected to follow, are the posters and notices clearly visible, including for wheelchair users?

Have you ensured that the notices/posters are not displayed among other posters where electors would find it difficult to see them?

Polling booths/ballot box

Is the ballot box placed immediately adjacent to the Presiding Officer?

Is the ballot box correctly sealed?

Can a wheelchair user gain easy access to the ballot box?

Can a wheelchair user gain easy access to the polling booth?

Are polling booths correctly erected and in such a position so as to make best use of the lights and natural light?

Have you ensured that polling booths are positioned so that people outside cannot see how voters are marking their ballot papers?

Can the Presiding Officer and Poll Clerk observe them clearly?

Are the pencils sharpened and available in each booth?

Is the string attached to the pencils long enough for the size of ballot paper and able to accommodate both left-handed and right-handed voters?

Are all staff aware of where the portable polling booth light will be kept during polling hours and how to affix it properly?

Large-print and hand-held sample ballot paper

Is the large-print ballot paper clearly visible to all voters?

Is the hand-held sample available and visible to voters?

Selector device

Is the selector device available and in full view?

Do all staff know how to use it?

Ballot papers

Are the ballot papers the correct ones for the polling station and are they numbered correctly and stacked in order?

Corresponding number list

Are the ballot paper numbers on the corresponding number list printed in numerical order?

Do the ballot paper numbers printed on the corresponding number list match those on the ballot papers?

Register

Do you have the correct register for your polling station?

Appendix 11

Equipment checklist for Polling Station Inspectors

Polling Station Inspectors will be provided with the following equipment on polling day:

Equipment	Checked
Ring binder	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clip board	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pens	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polling Station Inspectors log	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mileage sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polling station scheme (for your area)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polling station handbook	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polling station quick guide	<input type="checkbox"/>
List of staff for each venue	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presiding Officer pack	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spare Envelope E (for unused tendered ballot papers)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spare grey polythene Envelope G for unused ballot papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff assessment sheets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complaint forms	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registration forms (and envelopes for return)	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Polling place posters' pack	<input type="checkbox"/>
Large 'Polling Station' sign	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spare poll staff badges	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spare selector device	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stationery wallet (with cable ties, numbered seals, pencils, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polling station ID placemats	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polling booth lights (and batteries)	<input type="checkbox"/>
A3 close of poll packing instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Close of poll pictorial guide	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 12

Ballot box contents checklist

Ballot box contents checklist	Checked
Register of electors (printed on yellow paper)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notice of alteration (if supplied)	<input type="checkbox"/>
List of postal/postal proxy voters (printed on white paper)	<input type="checkbox"/>
List of proxy voters (printed on white paper)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ballot papers (banded together in order with lowest serial number first)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corresponding number list (with numbers that match with numbers on ballot papers)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pink tendered ballot papers (enclosed in Envelope E (1 book of 25 papers))	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enlarged sample copy of the ballot paper (x2) plus additional copy for premises with more than one polling station	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enlarged hand-held copy of the ballot paper for Presiding Officer table	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ballot paper account (printed on yellow paper)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presiding Officer pack (a list of contents will be included in the pack)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polling station log for Polling Station Manager who is not also a Presiding Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 additional copies of the notice 'Put a cross [X] ..' for each polling compartment if extra polling booths are to be used	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guidance for voters notices (with the words 'How to vote at this referendum' printed at the top)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-labelled large grey polythene Envelope G for unused ballot papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
List of referendum agents	<input type="checkbox"/>
List of polling agents	<input type="checkbox"/>
List of observers (if supplied)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff attendance sheet (1 per building)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff badges (and lanyards)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tabards (if supplied)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Certificates of employment (for polling staff eligible to vote)	<input type="checkbox"/>
A3 list of streets allocated to the polling station (x2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polling station ID placemat	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ballot box number poster (rolled up with placemat)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ballot box number poster (rolled up with placemat)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notice of ballot papers issued (plus a spare)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registration packs (x 10)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selector device – 1 per ballot box	<input type="checkbox"/>
Portable light for polling compartment (fitted with batteries, 1 in the first box only)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zip wallet containing ballot pencils, pens, rubber bands, clear sack, blu tac, seals, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prodder (ballot box compactor) and security tape (if supplied)	<input type="checkbox"/>

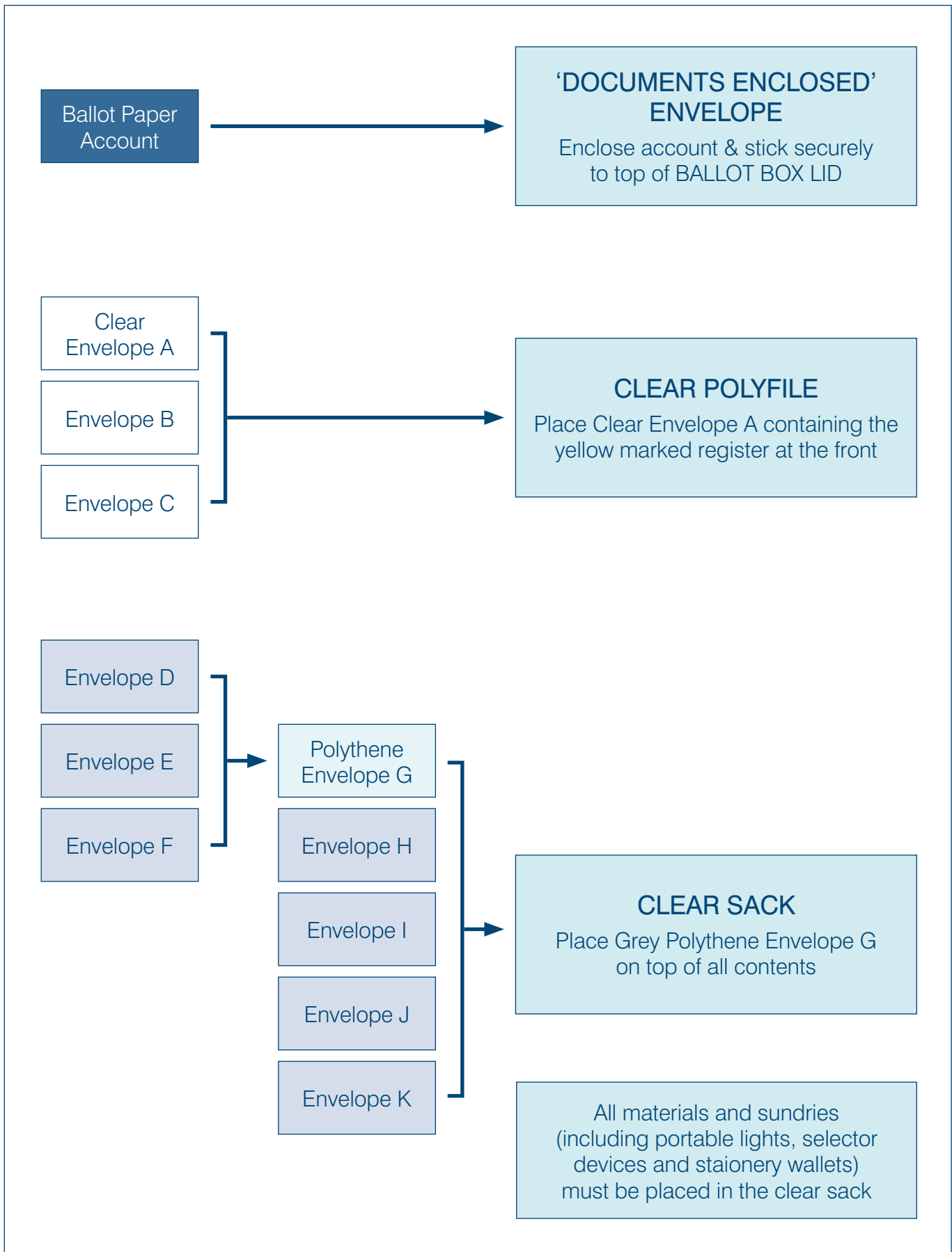
Appendix 13a

Close of poll packing instructions

CLOSE OF POLL PACKING INSTRUCTIONS					
<p>IMPORTANT: Please place the completed Ballot Paper Account in the ‘Documents Enclosed’ envelope, remove the paper backing and stick it securely to the top of the ballot box lid.</p>					
<p>CLEAR POLYFILE (one per ballot box) Place envelopes in alphabetical order with Envelope A clearly visible at the front.</p>			<p>CLEAR SACK (one per ballot box) Place envelopes in alphabetical order with the grey polythene Envelope G clearly visible on top.</p>		
ENVELOPE	REQUIRED CONTENTS	Tick Box ✓	ENVELOPE	REQUIRED CONTENTS	Tick Box ✓
Clear Envelope A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marked register and marked list of proxies Marked notice(s) of alteration to the register (if any) 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Grey Polythene Envelope G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unused ordinary ballot papers (any stubs) Envelope D – Tendered votes list Envelope E – Unused tendered ballot papers Envelope F – Spoilt ballot papers (ordinary & tendered) 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Envelope B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Polling station log Unused registration forms and prepaid envelopes Completed notice of ballot papers issued (12 noon, 5pm and 9pm) 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Envelope H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used tendered ballot papers (sealed in manilla C5 size envelopes) 	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Envelope I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corresponding number list(s) (used and unused) 	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Envelope J	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificates of employment 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Envelope C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special voting procedures booklet Completed declarations for companions of voters with disabilities (if any) 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Envelope K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lists of postal voters List of Referendum agents Lists of polling agents List of observers (if any) Used poll cards 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>ADDITIONAL NOTES: The large A2 laminated posters and A3 laminated directional arrows are to be taken down and all adhesive materials e.g. blu-tack must be removed from the back of the posters. They must then be placed in the pack labelled ‘Polling Place Posters’ and left at the polling place along with the polling booths and any ramp/wedge(s), if provided. Building Supervisor/ Caretaker to store until collected by EONI courier. All food wrappers, drinks cans etc. and all other rubbish must be placed in the bin provided.</p>			Additional Stationery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selector device (1 per ballot box) Portable light (1 per ballot box) Zip wallet containing general stationery Staff badges/lanyards Prodders Placemat Laminated ballot box number All remaining election materials (e.g. polling agent instructions) 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 13b

Close of poll pictorial guide



Appendix 14

List of Deputy Counting Officers and their contact details

Deputy Counting Officer	Contact Details	Electoral areas
Rae Kirk	<p>Ballymena Area Electoral Office 1st Floor, 122 Broughshane Street Ballymena BT43 6EE</p> <p>Tel: 028 9044 6600 Email: rae.kirk@eoni.org.uk</p>	<p>Mid Ulster</p> <p>North Antrim</p>
Majella Morgan	<p>Banbridge Area Electoral Office 52 Bridge Street Banbridge BT32 3JU</p> <p>Tel: 028 9044 6610 Email: majella.morgan@eoni.org.uk</p>	<p>Lagan Valley</p> <p>South Down</p> <p>Newry & Armagh</p> <p>Upper Bann</p>
Marie Louise Lappin	<p>Belfast Area Electoral Office 1st Floor, St Anne's House 15 Church Street Belfast BT1 1ER</p> <p>Tel: 028 9044 6680 Email: marielouise.lappin@eoni.org.uk</p>	<p>Belfast South</p> <p>Belfast West</p>
Patricia Murphy	<p>Derry/Londonderry Area Electoral Office 20A Queen Street Derry/Londonderry BT48 7EQ</p> <p>Tel: 028 9044 6620 Email: patricia.murphy@eoni.org.uk</p>	<p>East Londonderry</p> <p>Foyle</p>
Janet Goodall	<p>Newtownabbey Area Electoral Office 1-3 Portland Avenue Newtownabbey BT36 5EY</p> <p>Tel: 028 9044 6630 Email: janet.goodall@eoni.org.uk</p>	<p>Belfast North</p> <p>East Antrim</p> <p>South Antrim</p>
Jeanette Murray	<p>Newtownards Area Electoral Office 1st floor, 2B Regent Street Newtownards BT23 4LH</p> <p>Tel: 028 9044 6640 Email: jeanette.murray@eoni.org.uk</p>	<p>Belfast East</p> <p>North Down</p> <p>Strangford</p>
Martin Fox	<p>Omagh Area Electoral Office 21 Kevlin Avenue Omagh BT78 1ER</p> <p>Tel: 028 9044 6650 Email: m.fox@eoni.org.uk</p>	<p>Fermanagh & South Tyrone</p> <p>West Tyrone</p>

The Electoral Commission

4 Cromac Place

The Gasworks

Belfast

BT7 2JB

Tel 02890 894 020

Fax 028 9031 4827

Email infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk

The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

St Anne's House

15 Church Street

Belfast

BT1 1ER

Tel 0800 432 0712 (Freephone) or 0289 044 6688

Email eoni@eoni.org.uk

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