

Providing information on the number of ballot papers issued – FAQs for polling station staff in Great Britain

A referendum agent or polling agent may ask for information on the number of ballot papers issued. Certain campaigners may, for any voting area, appoint an individual to act as a referendum agent. Referendum agents can enter and remain in a polling station and can also appoint polling agents to attend polling stations on their behalf. Page 9 of your polling station handbook contains more information on referendum and polling agents.

What information should be given?

The total number of ballot papers that have been issued in the polling station since the poll opened at 7am. **No other information should be given.**

How do I obtain the total number of ballot papers that have been issued?

You can obtain the total number of ballot papers that have been issued as follows:

| | | | | |
|--|-------|---|-------|--|
| The ballot paper number of the next ballot paper to be issued | minus | the ballot paper number of the first ballot paper issued | minus | the total number of spoiled ballot papers in the envelope for spoiled ballot papers (if any) |
|--|-------|---|-------|--|

You can find the number of the **next** ballot paper to be issued by looking at:

- the back of the next ballot paper to be issued; or
- the corresponding number list (i.e. the list pre-printed with ballot paper numbers against which you record the elector's number when you issue a ballot paper)

You can find the number of the **first** ballot paper issued by looking at:

- the first ballot paper number on the corresponding number list

Spoilt ballot papers must be placed in the envelope provided, counted at the close of poll and the total figure entered on the ballot paper account. You should keep a running tally of spoilt ballot papers to avoid having to count them each time a request is made. Further information on spoilt ballot papers is included on page 15 of the polling station handbook.

How often can requests be made?

We would not expect requests by any particular individual to be dealt with any more frequently than once an hour.

What if the polling station is busy?

Requests should only be dealt with where to do so would not negatively impact on any voters who are in a queue at the polling station and are waiting to be issued with a ballot paper.

Where a request cannot be dealt with without negatively impacting on voters, the agent making the request should be advised to return later when the information will be provided where possible.

What can campaigners do with the information?

There are no restrictions on the use of this statistical information and campaigners may use and publicise this information before the close of poll if they wish.

Can anyone else request the information?

Only someone who is entitled to enter the polling station can make a request for the information. As well as referendum agents and polling agents, requests could therefore be made by accredited observers, Commission representatives and electors. As with referendum agents and polling agents, this information should be provided on request if you have it readily available and if to do so would not negatively impact on any voters who are in a queue at the polling station and are waiting to be issued with a ballot paper.

Tellers are volunteers for referendum campaigners who stand outside polling stations and record the elector numbers of voters who have voted. They have no legal status and are not entitled to enter the polling station, and so cannot make a request for this information.