

Guidance note: reporting on the administration of scheduled elections in England and Wales on 4 May 2017 - data collection and feedback

Purpose

1. The purpose of this guidance note is to provide information about the Commission's requirements for the return of election data and feedback for the scheduled elections in England and Wales on 4 May 2017. This includes what must be returned, where to find the forms to be returned and where to return completed forms. It also sets out requests for feedback on the experience of administering the elections.
2. We are very grateful for the assistance given to us by Returning Officers, Combined Authority Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their staff and we recognise that this is a very busy time for you. It is important that our report on these elections and any recommendations we make are based on robust information. Consequently, if you are uncertain about any of the data that is being requested here, please do get in touch.

Background

3. The Additional Data form contains fields requesting information on registration figures. Your Electoral Management Software (EMS) may be able to generate all or some of these additional fields.
4. Please ensure that you make arrangements for the data and forms to be returned by the deadlines, particularly if the person responsible for returning them will be away when the returns are due.

Data to be returned

5. Returning Officers should return the following all as **Excel** files:

Welsh Local Government:

For each **WARD**:

- **Declaration of result of poll** - This should include:
 - the full name of each candidate (if applicable)
 - party/description (if any);
 - the number of votes polled for each candidate or party;

- the total electorate;
 - a breakdown of ballot papers rejected at the count by reason for rejection, e.g. want of official mark, etc;
 - the candidate(s) elected.
- **Form K: Statement as to postal ballot papers** – you should use the guidance on completing Form K which is included with the form.

For **EACH UNITARY AUTHORITY**:

- **Additional Data form** - A form for additional electoral data is set out in the same Excel file as the statement as to postal ballot papers. Please complete **ONE** for the **WHOLE unitary authority**.

English Local Government:

For each **WARD/DIVISION**:

- **Declaration of result of poll** – please return a copy of the Declaration of Result of Poll for each **ward / division** (as appropriate) in which elections take place. This should include:
 - the full name of each candidate
 - their party name /description (if applicable)
 - the number of votes polled for each candidate
 - the total electorate for the ward/division
 - and a breakdown of ballot papers rejected at the count by reasons for rejection, e.g. want of official mark, etc.

In the case of any wards/divisions which are uncontested, the total electorate for the ward/division and a copy of the notice of persons elected at an uncontested election should be returned.

- **Form K: Statement as to postal ballot papers** – you should use the guidance on completing Form K which is included with the form.

For each **DISTRICT/UNITARY COUNCIL**:

- **Additional Data form** – A form for additional electoral data is set out in the same Excel file as Form K. Please complete and return **ONE** additional data form for the **WHOLE DISTRICT/UNITARY COUNCIL**.¹

English Mayoral:

For each **LOCAL AUTHORITY**:

¹ For the purposes of county council elections in England, one form should be completed and returned for each district council.

- **Declaration of result of poll** – please return a copy of the Declaration of Result of Poll for the local authority. This should include:
 - the full name of each candidate
 - their party name /description (if applicable)
 - the number of votes polled for each candidate
 - the total electorate for the local authority
 - and a breakdown of ballot papers rejected at the count by reasons for rejection, e.g. want of official mark, etc.
- **Form K: Statement as to postal ballot papers** – you should use the guidance on completing Form K which is included with the form.

English Combined Authority Mayoral:

For each **LOCAL AUTHORITY:**

- **Local declaration of results for the first count:** This should include:
 - the total number of ballot papers used,
 - the total number of rejected ballot papers by reason for rejection,
 - the total number of first preference votes given, and
 - the number of first preference votes given for each candidate;
- **Local declaration of results for any second count:** The statement above must also include the number of second preference votes given to each remaining candidate and the number of rejected votes by reason for rejection
- **Form K: Statement as to postal ballot papers** – You should use the guidance on completing Form K which is included with the form.
- **Additional data form** – A form for additional electoral data is set out in the same Excel file as Form K.

For each **COMBINED AUTHORITY MAYORAL AREA (CAME):**

- **Declaration of result of poll** – For Combined Authority Returning Officer (CARO) only, this should include:
 - the name of the person declared to be elected and the person's authorised description, if any,
 - the total number of first preference votes given for each candidate
 - the number of rejected ballot papers by reasons for rejection
 - (if second preference votes were counted) the total number of second preference votes given for each of the candidates

- remaining in the contest after the count of the first preference votes,
- the number of ballot papers rejected for the purposes of the count of second preference votes on the ground that they were unmarked or void for uncertainty as to the second preference vote.

Changes to instructions for returning data and deadline for return

6. Unlike in previous years, **the Electoral Commission will collect Form K's and Additional Data forms directly**. Please send these by email to: research@electoralcommission.org.uk
7. **Professor Colin Rallings will be collecting declarations of results**. Please send these by e-mail to elections@plymouth.ac.uk.
8. Please return all forms **as soon as you are able**. However, we appreciate you will be busy following the May polls with ongoing preparations for the UK Parliamentary General Election. **The final deadline for the return of data related to the May polls is therefore Friday 23rd June**.
9. Where the return of data is statutory you will have fulfilled your duty by returning it to the Commission.

Links to forms and guidance

10. You can find the relevant data return forms for each poll on our [website](#) under 'Part F: After the declaration of results'

Contact

11. If you have any queries, please contact your [local Commission office](#).

Returning Officer feedback forms

12. We would welcome feedback from Returning Officers, Combined Authority Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and electoral administrators on your experience of administering the 2017 polls. We would also like your views on the Commission's guidance and resources.
13. Shortly after the May polls an online survey will be available on our website. A link to this survey will be circulated in a future bulletin.