Publication of the register

Monthly notices of alteration

Updates to the register must be published on the first working day of each month, however you are not required to issue a monthly notice of alteration in the month you are publishing the revised register or in the two months before that day, but may do so if you wish. If the register is published in November this means you are not required to publish a monthly notice of alteration in September, October and November. If it is published in December, you are not required to publish a monthly notice of alteration in October, November and December.

Timing of publication of the revised register

You must publish the revised register by 1 December. The only exception to this rule is if there has been an election during the canvass.

The requirement to publish by 1 December means that you have the discretion to decide to publish the revised version of the register before this date. Dies non do not apply in this instance, so the requirement to publish by 1 December (or 1 February) applies even if the date falls on a weekend or bank holiday. You therefore can publish the register on a Saturday, Sunday or bank holiday if you choose to do so.
### Table 1: Application and determination deadlines that apply to the revised register

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates if the revised register is published on 1 December</th>
<th>Dates if the register is published in November</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last date for receipt of new applications to register</td>
<td>20 November 2020</td>
<td>20 November 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination deadline</td>
<td>30 November 2020</td>
<td>30 October 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous registration application and determination deadline</td>
<td>30 November 2020</td>
<td>30 October 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for amendments to and removal of register entries</td>
<td>30 November 2020</td>
<td>30 October 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication</td>
<td>By 1 December 2020¹</td>
<td>By 1 December 2020²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Publishing in November therefore means that the revised register would not reflect any new electors who had applied to register after 22 October, nor would it reflect

¹ If an election is held where polling day falls between 1 July and 1 December, the publication of the register can be postponed until up to 1 February the following year (Sections 13(1A), 13(2) and 13 A(1), RPA 1983).
any other amendments or deletions which were determined after 30 October. While the registration process continues throughout the year, the publication of the revised register is a key milestone. Publishing on 1 December will help to ensure that the revised register is as accurate and complete as it can be and will maximise opportunities for potential electors to be included.

Whenever you decide to publish, you should be able to explain the reasons for your decision.

Content of the revised register

The ERO must publish:

- the full register of electors for all election types combined as far as possible into one register and containing the appropriate franchise markers
- the edited register which is an exact copy of the full register but with the exclusion of those who have opted out of their details appearing on it
- the list of overseas electors

In Scotland, the local government register will include 16 and 17 year olds as full electors. Additionally, 15 year olds and some 14 year olds are entitled to be included on the local government register as ‘attainers’. For the purposes of the local government register in Scotland, an attainer is someone who turns 16 by the end of the twelve months following the 1 December after the ‘relevant date’ (see Chapter 3 of Part 2: Registration framework for more information on the ‘relevant date’).

The combined register will therefore need to make clear the date on which those included on it that are under 18 years of age will become 18 years old in order to clearly show their eligibility to vote in different elections.

No information on those aged under 16 must be included on any version of the register published or otherwise made available, except in very limited circumstances. For further information, see Chapter 11 of Part 4: Maintaining the register throughout the year.

In Wales, the local government register will include 16 and 17 year olds as full electors. Additionally, 15 year olds and some 14 year olds are entitled to be included on the local government register as ‘attainers’. For the purposes of the local government register in Wales, an attainer is someone who turns 16 by the end of the twelve months following the 1 December after the ‘relevant date’ (see Chapter 3 of Part 2: Registration framework for more information on the ‘relevant date’).

The combined register will therefore need to make clear the date on which those included on it that are under 18 years of age will become 18 years old in order to clearly show their eligibility to vote in different elections.
No information on those aged under 16 must be included on any version of the register published or otherwise made available, except in very limited circumstances. For further information, see Chapter 11 of Part 4: Maintaining the register throughout the year.

**Describing the full and edited registers**

The terms ‘full register’ and ‘edited register’ are the technical terms used in the legislation. The terms ‘electoral register’ and ‘open register’ have to be used to describe the full and edited register to members of the public, to make it easier to understand the purpose of each register and how it is used. In specific instances where we mention the edited register in the guidance in this context, we refer to the edited register as the ‘open register’. Otherwise we use the term ‘edited register’.

**The full register**

The full register of electors lists the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote as an ordinary elector. It also contains the names of those registered as special category electors, except in the case of those registered anonymously, in which case it includes only an entry, without showing the name or address.

In Scotland, no information on those aged under 16 must be included on any version of the register published or otherwise made available, except in limited prescribed circumstances. For further information on these exceptions, see Chapter 12 of Part 4: ‘Maintaining the register throughout the year’.

In Wales, no information on those aged under 16 must be included on any version of the register published or otherwise made available, except in limited prescribed circumstances. For further information on these exceptions, see Chapter 12 of Part 4: ‘Maintaining the register throughout the year’.

Your revised register must incorporate all the additions and amendments to the register which you have determined by the relevant deadline.iii Information provided in response to the canvass cannot be treated as an application to register, nor can a name identified through checking local records be added to the register. Only when an application is made and successfully determined can an individual be added to the register. You should also give effect to any deletions that you have determined since the publication of the last notice of alteration and in time to be reflected in the revised register.
The edited register

You must publish a revised version of the edited register on the first working day of every month. This duty applies all year, including during the canvass period.

You must also publish a revised edited register at the same time as you publish the revised register. The published edited register must be in the same format as the full register and must contain all the information pertaining to an elector who has not opted out as would appear on the full version of the register, such as the markers as outlined below.

In Scotland, a person under 16 years old is automatically opted out of the edited register. The details of any person under 16 years old must not be included in any version of the published register, including the edited register.

In Wales, a person under 16 years old is automatically opted out of the edited register. The details of any person under 16 years old must not be included in any version of the published register, including the edited register.

Chapter 11 of Part 4: ‘Maintaining the register throughout the year’ contains guidance on the process for changing opt-out preferences and the edited register.

Format of the register

The format of the register is not prescribed but it must contain, with the exception of certain special category electors, the name, address and elector number of every eligible elector whose application to register has been determined by the relevant deadline.

You must divide the register into polling districts and give each one a unique set of letters. You must give a number to each elector and as far as is reasonably practicable these numbers should be allocated in such a way that the numbers run sequentially in each part of the register. The polling district letters and the number together are known as the elector number.
We have published guidance on undertaking **reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations** which is available on our website.

The entries in the register showing each ordinary elector must be arranged in street order and may only be arranged in alphabetical order by name or a mix of the two where it is not reasonably practicable to list them in street order.xii

There must be a section after the ordinary electors in any polling district marked ‘other electors’, containing any special category electors who are not listed in the main body of the register listed by surname in alphabetical order and without an address, followed by any anonymously registered electors.xiii

**Chapter 7 of Part 4: Maintaining the register throughout the year** sets out in detail how special category electors should be included on the register.

### Register markers

**Franchise markers**
The names of electors who may only vote in certain types of elections must be prefixed in the register with certain letters:xiv

- **E** indicates that the elector is an overseas elector who is also a peer eligible to vote in the House of Lords and is only entitled to vote at European Parliamentary elections.
- **F** indicates that the elector is an overseas elector who is only entitled to vote at UK Parliamentary and European Parliamentary elections.
- **G** indicates that the elector is a citizen of a member state of the European Union (except a Commonwealth country or the Republic of Ireland) who is only entitled to vote at local government elections.
- **K** indicates that the elector is a citizen of a member state of the European Union (except a Commonwealth country or the Republic of Ireland) who is entitled to vote at European Parliamentary and local government elections.
- **L** indicates that the elector is a peer eligible to vote in the House of Lords who is entitled to vote at European Parliamentary and local government elections.

An additional marker (**U**) is provided for in Scotland to indicate citizens of European Union member states (except a Commonwealth country or the Republic of Ireland) who have specifically indicated their wish to register for European Parliamentary elections but have not applied for registration as a local government elector.xv You should encourage such electors to also register as local government electors, although the U marker would need to be used where the elector does not additionally make a normal application for registration.

Table 2 shows an example of some of the formatting for a register and an accompanying explanation in the right-hand column.

**Table 2: Sample electoral register**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elector number</th>
<th>Franchise marker</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Description (not shown on register)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evans, Gareth</td>
<td>1, The Street</td>
<td>Ordinary elector; can vote at all elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12/06/yyyy</td>
<td>Juba, Charlotte</td>
<td>2, The Street</td>
<td>Attainer; can vote if poll is on or after date shown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Chamberlain, Louise</td>
<td>2, The Street</td>
<td>Local government elector only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Mackenzie, Scott</td>
<td>3, The Street</td>
<td>Local government and European Parliamentary elector only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Pack, Daniel</td>
<td>4, The Street</td>
<td>Peer; eligible to vote in the House of Lords, cannot vote at a UK Parliamentary election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other electors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elector number</td>
<td>Franchise marker</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Description (not shown on register)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Jolly, Simon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Overseas elector; cannot vote at local government elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Watts, Julie</td>
<td></td>
<td>Service elector; can vote at all elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anonymous elector; can vote at all elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anonymous elector; can vote at all elections (same effect as entry 8 above but alternative option)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>GN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anonymous elector who is a citizen of an European Union member state; can vote at local government elections only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>G/N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anonymous elector who is a citizen of an European Union member state; can vote at local government elections only (same effect as entry 10 above but alternative option)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Scotland, the combined register will need to make clear the date on which those included on it that are under 18 years of age will become 18 years old in order to clearly show their eligibility to vote in different elections.

No information on those aged under 16 must be included on any version of the register published or otherwise made available, except in very limited circumstances.
In Wales, the combined register will need to make clear the date on which those included on it that are under 18 years of age will become 18 years old in order to clearly show their eligibility to vote in different elections.

No information on those aged under 16 must be included on any version of the register published or otherwise made available, except in very limited circumstances. For further information, see Chapter 11 of Part 4: Maintaining the register throughout the year.

Communications following the publication of the revised register

The focus on the numbers of those registered and not registered is as high profile as it has ever been and you can therefore expect that the publication of the revised register could prompt enquiries to you, which you should be prepared to respond to.

If you haven’t already done so, you should consult with your local authority press or communications teams to ensure that you are able to react quickly to any local stories that may emerge, particularly if there has already been local coverage on the issue of electoral registration in your area.

You should consider issuing a press release announcing the total number of people registered in your area, highlighting the work you have done to get people registered and outline what additional work you have planned. As part of this, you should point out that there is still an opportunity to register in time for the next scheduled elections, using it as a call for anyone in your area who is not yet registered to do so. Given the potential for a continued media focus on the registration rates of students and attainers, you might find it helpful to highlight the work you are doing with schools, colleges, universities or any relevant voluntary groups to encourage registration.

Your press team can get further advice by contacting the Electoral Commission press office on 020 7271 0704, or by emailing press@electoralcommission.org.uk.

Register to be used for elections taking place after publication of the revised register

The revised register has immediate effect on publication. Unlike a notice of alteration which only has effect at an election if published on or before the fifth working day before the poll, a revised register has immediate effect for all elections.

Once you have published the revised register it will be used for polling purposes for any election with a polling day on or after the date of publication, although you are also required to publish two interim election notices of alteration and a final notice of alteration on the fifth working day before the poll.xvi The nomination of candidates will
Poll cards at a December election

If an election is held in December, the notice of election will be published before the deadline for publishing the revised register. Returning Officers (ROs) must send poll cards to those registered electors entitled to vote at the election as soon as practicable after publication of the notice of election.

If poll cards are sent before the publication of the first interim election notice of alteration (which will be the last day for the delivery of nomination papers), the data used to generate them would not reflect any additions or deletions which have been determined after the deadline for the September monthly update.

Taking into account the particular circumstances of a December election, there is therefore a strong argument that the earliest point at which it would be practicable to issue poll cards would be immediately following the publication of the first interim election notice of alteration. This approach would also help to ensure that the data used to generate the issue of poll cards reflects additions and deletions which have been determined during the canvass period.

If you are not also the RO, you should therefore work with them to put mechanisms in place to ensure that poll cards can be sent to electors as soon as possible after the first interim notice has been published. Further information on the application and determination deadlines that apply to interim notices can be found in Chapter 11 of Part 4: Maintaining the register throughout the year.

Elector numbers

While the elector numbers printed on the poll cards are likely to be different to the numbers allocated when the register is revised, this will not affect a person’s entitlement to vote. ROs will need to make clear to polling station staff at their training session that the elector numbers will be different and explain to them that they should not refer to the elector number printed on the poll card when marking the register and completing the corresponding number list. As always, polling station staff should in all cases ask the elector to confirm their name and address and should only use the number as it appears against the elector’s details in the polling station register for completing the corresponding number list. Polling station staff should also be briefed to ensure they are able to respond to any queries from electors who may question why the number being read out and written on the corresponding number list is different to the one which is printed on their poll card.

Which register is a December election run on?

Where a candidate requires subscribers, they must appear on the register that is in force on the last day for publication of the notice of election. For any election in
December, and assuming the revised register is published on 1 December and there have not been any other elections, this will be the September register. If the revised register is published in November, assuming there have not been any other elections, this will be the August register.

If the revised register is to be published on 1 December, the register as amended by the first interim election notice of alteration should be used for the first issue of poll cards to ensure it is based on the most up-to-date data as possible.

Once the revised register is published, it has immediate effect and will apply to any poll on or after publication.

**Supply to candidates and local political parties**
Where the publication of the revised register falls during the election period, this will impact on a candidate’s and political party’s ability to engage with electors and campaign effectively. It is therefore particularly important that candidates and parties who have requested a copy of the revised register and any updates and election notices of alteration are provided with copies as soon as possible after publication.

**Elections where the final election notice of alteration is published before the revised register**

A final election notice of alteration is published 5 working days before the poll. Where publication of the revised register will be on 1 December, and a poll will take place after publication, the final election notice of alteration will be published before the revised register. The registration application deadline will be the deadline for applications for inclusion on the revised register. This is because the revised register has immediate effect and will apply to any poll on or after publication. Therefore, while the registration application deadline for inclusion on the final election notice of alteration will be twelve working days before the poll, because the revised register is published after the final election notice of alteration and before the poll, it will have effect for that poll. This means that potential new electors can submit a registration application until the deadline for inclusion on the revised register (six working days before the determination deadline). Provided their application is determined by the determination deadline for the revised register (which is the working day before publication) they will be entitled to vote in the poll.

However, the registration application deadline for new electors wishing to vote by post at such an election would effectively be 5pm eleven working days before the poll. This is because the application for a postal vote must state the address in respect of which the applicant is registered or has applied to be registered. Therefore, if a new elector wants to vote by post, they will need to have applied to be registered by the postal vote application deadline, i.e. by 5pm eleven working days before the poll.

The registration application deadline for new electors who wish to vote by proxy will be the same as for those voting in person (i.e. the deadline for applications for inclusion on the 1 December register). This is because the deadline for registration applications to be made in time to be included on the 1 December register will be
before the ordinary proxy application deadline (5pm six working days before the poll).

Elections after the publication of the revised register, but where the final election notice of alteration is published before the revised register will therefore present a number of administrative challenges for EROs and ROs. If you are not also the RO, you will need to liaise with them to:

- Discuss any practical implications, including the timely transfer of data.
- Ensure candidates and agents have access to the relevant electoral registers. Candidates and agents will need access to the register for nomination and campaigning purposes. You should put a mechanism in place to ensure that candidates and agents can be supplied with a copy of the register in a timely way. This includes supplying them with the first interim notice of alteration as soon as possible after its publication, as well as any subsequent updates once they have been published.
- Produce polling station registers. Polling station registers will not be able to be produced until after publication of the revised register, and mechanisms will need to be put in place to enable registers to be printed and collated in a limited time. ROs will need to consider how to manage the preparation of ballot boxes to facilitate this.

The specific challenges and solutions will vary depending on the particular local circumstances. If you would like any further guidance or would like to discuss your particular situation, please contact your local Commission team.

After publication

It is important that you continue to maintain the register after publication to ensure it is as accurate and complete as possible.

Part 4: ‘Maintaining the register throughout the year’ contains guidance on identifying and targeting potential new electors on an on-going basis and on identifying and deleting electors who are no longer eligible to remain registered.

Guidance on reviewing and revising your public engagement strategy and registration plans is contained in Part 1: Planning for the delivery of electoral registration activity. Evaluating the success of your public engagement strategy following the publication of the revised register will inform your plans for on-going work to identify and target potential new electors ahead of the next scheduled polls.

We will continue to collect supporting data following the publication of the revised register as in previous years.
RPF 29

You are required to supply to the Secretary of State a document setting out certain prescribed information relating to the revised register.xvii

In Scotland, this must also be supplied to Scottish Ministers and the Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages for Scotland.xviii

Each year the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and, in Scotland, the National Records of Scotland will issue an RPF29 form to EROs for this purpose. You are required to submit this information as soon as possible after publication of the revised register.xix

Access and supply

Access to the full electoral register is limited to those prescribed in legislation. You have a duty to supply free copies of the register of electors to various organisations and individuals, and legislation imposes restrictions on how this is done. In some cases, registers have to be supplied on publication and in others the register is only supplied on request.

You should maintain records of every person and organisation supplied with the register, whether on publication, by sale, or on request, to demonstrate that you are complying with the principles of processing personal data, ensuring that it is processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner.

You should ensure that every person/organisation receiving the register, whether on publication, by sale, or on request, is aware that:

- they must only use the register for the purpose(s) specified in the Regulations permitting its supply
- once the purpose for which the register has been supplied has expired, they must securely destroy the register
- they understand penalty for misuse of the register

The information suggested above is included in the cover sheets we have made available for the sale and supply on request of the electoral register.

In Scotland, only EROs and their staff will have access to and be able to make use of data relating to those under 16 years of age, and no version of the register or any absent voting lists published or otherwise made available should contain that data. However, the data may be disclosed:xx

- To the individual themselves (including to demonstrate that they are a permissible donor, in which case the data must be disclosed) or to a person they have appointed as proxy to vote for them.
- For the purposes of a criminal investigation or criminal proceedings relating to the registration of electors or the conduct of elections.
- In a pre-printed canvass communication sent to a household for the annual canvass, although the date of birth of any person aged under 16 years old must not be pre-printed.
• To EROs and Returning Officers in connection with the registration of electors or the conduct of elections.

The only other exception is that before a Scottish Parliamentary or local government election, the information on those under 16 years of age who will be eligible to vote at the election (i.e. will attain the age of 16 on or before polling day), can, for the purposes of or in connection with the election, be disclosed in the electoral register, postal voters list, list of proxies and list of postal proxies, that is supplied to:

• Candidates at Scottish Parliamentary and local government elections for electoral purposes or to comply with the rules on political donations.
• The Returning Officer for the purposes of Scottish Parliamentary or local government elections.
• The Electoral Commission. In this case, the Commission is only allowed to use the information in connection with its functions relating to donation controls and publication of information about donors, but the latter does not enable publication of the names and addresses of those under 16 years old.
• A local authority Returning Officer for the purposes of an election to a National Park authority. In this case, the information can only be used for the purposes of a National Park authority election.

The information supplied before an election must not contain dates of birth, or anything else that would identify a voter as under 16 years old.

No other individuals or bodies may be supplied with any information relating to those aged under 16 years old.

In Wales, only EROs and their staff will have access to and be able to make use of data relating to those under 16 years of age, and no version of the register or any absent voting lists published or otherwise made available should contain that data. However, the data may be disclosed:

• To the individual themselves (including to demonstrate that they are a permissible donor, in which case the data must be disclosed) or to a person they have appointed as proxy to vote for them.
• For the purposes of a criminal investigation or criminal proceedings relating to the registration of electors or the conduct of elections.
• In a pre-printed canvass communication sent to a household for the annual canvass, although the date of birth of any person aged under 16 years old must not be pre-printed.
• To EROs and Returning Officers in connection with the registration of electors or the conduct of elections.

The only other exception is that before a Welsh Parliamentary the information on those under 16 years of age who will be eligible to vote at the election (i.e. will attain the age of 16 on or before polling day), can, for the purposes of or in connection with the election, be disclosed in the electoral register, postal voters list, list of proxies and list of postal proxies, that is supplied to:
Candidates at Welsh Parliamentary for electoral purposes or to comply with the rules on political donations.

- The Returning Officer for the purposes of Welsh Parliamentary elections.
- The Electoral Commission. In this case, the Commission is only allowed to use the information in connection with its functions relating to donation controls and publication of information about donors, but the latter does not enable publication of the names and addresses of those under 16 years old.

The information supplied before an election must not contain dates of birth, or anything else that would identify a voter as under 16 years old.

No other individuals or bodies may be supplied with any information relating to those aged under 16 years old.

Detailed guidance on access to and supply of the register is contained in Part 4: ‘Maintaining the register throughout the year’. We have also produced a List of people entitled to be supplied with the electoral register and cover sheets for the sale, supply on request and inspection of the electoral register which set out how it may be used and the penalty for misuse.

The timing of receipt of the register is particularly important to some recipients – for example, political parties need the electoral register to fulfil their statutory obligations in relation to the checking of donations, in addition to using it for campaigning purposes. It is important that the register is supplied promptly and you should, therefore, supply the register to anyone who is entitled to receive it on publication as soon as possible and in any case, within 5 working days.
i Sections 13A(2) and (3) RPA 1983
ii Section 13(1) RPA 1983
iii Section 13(2) RPA 1983
iv Regulation 93(3B) 2001 Regulations, RPR (Scotland) 2001
v Regulation 93(1) 2001 Regulations, RPR (Scotland) 2001
vi Regulation 93(3) 2001 Regulations, RPR (Scotland) 2001
vii Section 9(2) RPA 1983
viii S13(1) Scottish Elections (Reduction of Voting Age) Act 2015
ix S24 Senedd and Elections Wales Act 2020
x Regulations 38 and 39 2001 Regulations, RPR (Scotland) 2001
xi Section 9(3) RPA 1983
xii Regulations 41(1) and (2) 2001 Regulations, RPR (Scotland) 2001
xiii Regulation 41(3) 2001 Regulations, RPR (Scotland) 2001
xiv Regulation 42 2001 Regulations, RPR (Scotland) 2001
xv Regulation 42(4) RPR (Scotland) 2001
xvi Sections 13AB and 13B RPA 1983
xvii Regulation 44 2001 Regulations, RPR (Scotland) 2001
xviii Regulation 44(1) 2001 Regulations, RPR (Scotland) 2001
xix Section 14 Scottish Elections (Reduction of Voting Age) Act 2015
xx Sections 14(3) and (4) Scottish Elections (Reduction of Voting Age) Act 2015
xxi Section 25, Senedd and Elections Wales Act 2020
xxii Sections 14(3) and (4) Scottish Elections (Reduction of Voting Age) Act 2015