

# electoral administration bulletin



Issue 287 (England) – 17 August 2020

## 2020 canvass: managing the personal canvass

As set out in the guidance contained in our [key considerations for the 2020 canvass resource](#), and as highlighted in the Cabinet Office canvass chronicle issued on Friday 31 July, EROs are still required to meet their statutory duties regarding the canvass, including conducting household visits where it is safe to do so, and should take the most recent public health guidelines into account in doing so.

If, despite your best efforts, you are unable to meet the legislative requirements for household visits as part of the canvass as a direct result of the pandemic, you should document your process and the reasons for your decision-making.

Restrictions relating to coronavirus continue to evolve and vary locally so you will need to take all local circumstances into account when planning for and managing the personal canvass in your area. To support you with managing this in practice, you may find [this guidance](#) from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on working safely in other people's homes during COVID-19 useful.

Whilst this is not written specifically for electoral administrators, it offers some helpful guidance on how to carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment of your processes and how to reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level. This may assist you in determining the most appropriate way of delivering personal canvass activity locally and how best to work with different types of property.

We have also expanded the guidance in our [2020 canvass considerations resource](#) to include additional specific considerations for the management of door to door canvassing in your area, including steps you should take to help manage interactions to minimise the risk to both canvassers and residents. This additional guidance has been reviewed by Public Health England (PHE) to ensure that it reflects their latest advice.

If you would like to discuss your personal canvassing plans further, please contact [infoengland@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:infoengland@electoralcommission.org.uk).

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EA Bulletins are issued on a regular basis. They are one of our key channels for communicating with Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their staff. Past issues of Bulletins for England, Scotland and Wales are available [here](#). You can also [subscribe to the EA Bulletins](#).

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## Performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers

Further to [Bulletin 284](#) which highlighted the publication of new performance standards for EROs, we have now published additional resources to support EROs with using the standards to help them to understand and improve their performance.

The new resources, which are available through the [performance standards page on our website](#), include:

- [Guidance on setting key performance indicators \(KPIs\)](#), which aims to help EROs and their teams to develop KPIs to measure the impact of their activities and to support them in setting targets and helping them to baseline their performance.
- A resource on [accessing data on population and housing](#), which outlines what data is available and provides links to where it can be accessed.

We are continuing to develop further resources, including a reporting template and a resource on using data, and we will confirm in a future Bulletin when they have been published.

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## May 2021 polls: update

Further to our last update in [Bulletin 278](#), we wanted to provide you with more information on our plans to support you with the delivery of the May 2021 polls.

We are continuing to work with colleagues across the electoral community, including the AEA, SOLACE and Cabinet Office, to consider the potential impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the delivery of the polls in May 2021. Areas of discussion have included the various public health scenarios we could be facing, the potential for legislative change and the deadlines for any such decisions, the funding implications arising from any policy or legislative changes, and what information voters will need to help them participate in the polls.

We are ourselves taking forward work to prepare for and deliver our functions in relation to guidance and public awareness to ensure that electoral administrators, campaigners and voters have what they need to help ensure the polls are delivered safely and effectively.

To help inform our plans, we will shortly be meeting with the Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board (ECAB) to discuss the challenges to the delivery of the polls and how these could be addressed. The input of this group will be vital to help us ensure that we are focussing on the areas that are of most concern to the electoral community and can prioritise our guidance and support accordingly.

We will also be using the Elections, Referendums and Registration Working Group (ERRWG) to discuss the detail of our guidance and support programme, including what additional products are required to support you with the successful delivery of the polls in light of the particular complexity of combination many of you will be facing as well as to help manage the impact of coronavirus. We will also be

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working with public health bodies to ensure our guidance is as useful as possible and reflects the latest public health advice.

We will provide you with a further update after the ECAB meeting in early September, and expect to be able at that stage to give you more information on what we will be providing to you and when.

In the interim, we are currently updating our core guidance for the May 2021 polls. This work will continue over the summer and we aim to publish the full suite by the end of September. We will update you in a future Bulletin once this work has been completed.

We appreciate that this remains a challenging time for everyone; if you have any questions, or if we can provide any further support, please contact your [local Commission team](#).

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### **UK Government consultation on digital imprints**

Last week the UK Government launched a [consultation](#) on digital imprints.

This is a welcome opportunity to deliver real change for voters and provide them with a better understanding of who is trying to reach them online.

The use of digital tools for election and referendum campaigning is extensive, and we know that many voters are increasingly concerned about truth, transparency and the targeting of political advertisements.

We have recommended extending imprint requirements to digital election and referendum material so we look forward to considering the Government's proposals and the opportunity to deliver real benefits for voters, parties and campaigners.

The Cabinet Office is seeking views on the technical scope of the new digital imprints regime that will apply to elections in reserved competence (see page 18 of the document for details).

The consultation closes at 11:45pm on 4 November 2020.

We will publish a copy of our full written response to the consultation in due course.

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### **Job vacancy at the Electoral Commission**

We are currently recruiting for a Regional Manager – Eastern Region to join our Support and Improvement team. The closing date for applications is 23 August 2020.

If you would like an informal discussion about the role, please contact Mel Davidson, Head of Support and Improvement on 020 7271 0552.

For further information or to apply for this post, please visit the [recruitment page](#) of our website.

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