

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission



Issue 373 (England) – 13 December 2023

Elections Act: changes to overseas elector registration

Publication of updates to overseas elector guidance for EROs

Further to [Bulletin 362](#), we have now published [updated core guidance for EROs](#) to support the Election Act 2022 changes to the overseas elector registration process.

These changes, which we expect to come into force on 16 January 2024, will mean that:

- There will no longer be a 15-year limit on voting rights
- The registration period will change from every year to every three years

This means that British citizens will now be able to vote in UK parliamentary elections, no matter how long they have been away from the UK. They will need to have previously lived, or been registered to vote, in the UK.

The guidance has been developed in close consultation with colleagues from across the electoral community, including the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA), Scottish Assessors Association (SAA), Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace), the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the Elections, Registration and Referendums Working Group (ERRWG).

Until the new provisions come into force, the current rules continue to apply so we have published the updated guidance alongside the existing overseas elector guidance. The titles of the updated guidance pages indicate clearly that they apply post-commencement of the new legislation, to help you distinguish between the two different sets of guidance.

Once the new legislation comes into force, the existing guidance will be removed from the website.

Guidance update

Contents

Elections Act: changes to overseas elector registration

Information about the publication of updated core guidance for EROs.

Guidance update

Information about updated guidance for May 2024 polls and information on how you can order hard copies of polling station handbooks and quick guides, with links to the online order form.

Deadline for completed forms is 19 January 2024.

Details of a new resource for (Acting) Returning Officers to support their planning for the next UKPGE.

Candidate and agent guidance – Confirmation of increase to PCC candidate spending limit

Information about increased spending limits, which are now in force, and a link to our updated guidance.

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](#).

Please [keep us informed](#) of any staff changes within your team.

May 2024

We have now published the verification and count sections of the guidance to support Returning Officers at the Greater London Authority elections. This is in both the [guidance for the GLRO](#), and the [guidance for Constituency/Borough Returning Officers](#).

We have also published the updated [VIDEF form](#) and notes sheet for all May 2024 polls.

Polling station handbooks and quick guides order form

We are now collecting orders for hard copies of polling station handbooks and quick guides for use at the May 2024 elections.

The deadline for completing the [online order form](#) is Friday 19 January 2024. We will be printing to order so it is important that you provide us with your figures by the deadline. Please note that once you have submitted your order form, you will not be able to amend your order yourself. If you need to make any changes to your order, please contact infoengland@electoralcommission.org.uk.

Delivery of the hard copies is expected to be by mid-March 2024, but we will confirm the timing of the delivery in a future Bulletin.

Preparations for a UK Parliamentary general election

As a UK Parliamentary general election must be held before 28 January 2025 we have developed a [supporting resource for \(Acting\) Returning Officers](#) (AROs) to assist with early planning decisions and preparations.

The aim of this resource is to support (A)ROs with their discussions with their elections team to understand key risks and preparedness, and think about what they can do in their role as (A)RO and as a senior member of their Local Authority or Council to help mitigate risks further.

Candidate and agent guidance: confirmation of increase to PCC candidate spending limit

New [candidate spending limits for Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales](#) came into force on 12 December. All the spending limits for the different areas are increasing by approximately 37%.

These changes are part of a series of changes the UK Government is making, including to spending limits for candidates for a wide range of elections. [Bulletin 372](#) covered the changes made on 21 November to candidate spending limits for UK parliamentary elections and local elections.

Future changes are planned for Greater London Authority elections and for mayoral elections. We will update you once those changes have been made.

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This will help us to keep our mailing lists up to date.

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