

electoral administration bulletin



Issue 338 (Scotland) – 21 December 2023

The
Electoral
Commission

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Nomination pack templates – UK Parliament elections

Following the changes to legislation on commonly used names and undue influence, the introduction of the new offence of intimidation, and changes to the home address form, candidate [nomination packs for UK Parliament elections](#) have been updated to reflect the new measures. The changes included apply to elections taking place from 2 May 2024.

Togo and Gabon: updates to ERO guidance

In line with the [British Nationality \(Eswatini, Gabon and Togo\) Order 2023](#), which amends the British Nationality Act and came into force on 15 December, citizens of Togo and Gabon can now register to vote as Commonwealth citizens. We have updated our [guidance](#) and relevant resources to reflect this change.

Commission website: changes to information structure

We're always looking for ways to improve [our website](#), so that it's easier for you to find and understand the information you need.

Our data shows that it's not always easy to find certain information, and we know this can be confusing and sometimes frustrating. We've been working on a project to improve the structure, navigation and menu of our website.

We've now reached the end of this project, and the changes to the website's main navigation was launched on 19 December.

We have moved away from the 'I am a' and 'Who we are and what we do' menu structure to now have seven options to choose from. One of these options is 'Our guidance'. By selecting this option, you can select the guidance you need, as you used to do from the 'I am a' dropdown menu.

The content of the guidance and how you navigate it, has not changed as part of this project. Any links that you might have saved to specific webpages will continue to work.

Elections Act: updates to overseas voter forms and partner resources

Updating our forms

The Elections Act 2022 introduced a number of changes to our electoral system, including removing the 15-year limit on the voting rights of British citizens living overseas.

In line with this forthcoming change we have updated our overseas voter application forms.

The updates to our existing suite of forms are being made in line with our best practice principles for form production, to ensure they are easy for voters to use and understand while capturing the new legislation accurately. During the form production process, we have discussed and consulted with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Elections, Referendums and Registration Working Group to ensure that the views of the wider electoral sector are taken into account.

A sample of the [draft application forms](#) can be viewed now on our website to give you early sight of the form content, prior to the legislation coming into effect on Tuesday January 16, 2024.

The full set of forms will be published on our voter-facing webpage, from 16 January, and we will update you via the Bulletin once this is completed.

Please note that the sample forms are not final and must not be shared with the public or used to submit applications.

Partner resources

People living in the UK can play a crucial role in raising awareness of these changes by telling friends or family members living abroad they can now vote in UK Parliament elections – and we need your help to encourage them to do so. To support you to do this, we have produced the following communications resources:

- A flyer
- Posters
- Social media graphics and template posts
- Web banners
- An email signature
- Web/newsletter copy
- An FAQ
- A press release

[Download these resources](#)

Our campaign will formally launch on 16 January, when these changes come into force. We will publish information on these changes on our website on that date, alongside these resources. We would therefore encourage you to hold off on sharing them publicly until then.

Information on and a link to our Sharing Good Practice resource, which details different approaches to recruiting polling day staff.

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

We are sending you this newsletter as it contains important information about the Electoral Commission's work which is relevant to you. The newsletter forms part of the Electoral Commission's public task which has its basis in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. We will manage your personal information and contact details in line with the General Data Protection Regulation and UK data protection legislation as outlined in our privacy notice (<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/privacy-notice>)

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, you may [unsubscribe](#) at any time.

Elections Act: Updated code of conduct for campaigners - postal vote handling and secrecy

The Elections Act 2022 makes it a criminal offence for political campaigners to handle another person's postal voting documents at a UK Parliament General Election, with exceptions for close family members, spouses, cohabitantes or people they provide care for.

It is also an offence for anyone to try to obtain or communicate any information on a voter's postal ballot paper or who they have voted for. These changes apply in Great Britain at UK Parliament elections, English local and mayoral elections, and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales.

We have updated the [Code of conduct for campaigners for reserved elections](#) to reflect the legal changes.

Although the new offences will apply for the first time at scheduled polls in 2024, the previous Code already recommended that, to avoid perceptions of electoral fraud, parties should not handle completed ballots or take postal ballot packs from voters.

Sharing Good Practice: recruiting temporary staff

We have today published a new [resource](#) designed to share different approaches to recruiting polling day staff.

One of the recurring themes of our engagement with electoral administrators has been about the challenges of recruiting polling staff. Across Great Britain teams have responded in many ways to secure staff.

This resource is designed to share the experiences of a small number of English local authorities, who have developed approaches that have helped them, and which we hope, may help others. The examples outlined highlight some of the practical ways that recruitment challenges have been overcome.

We welcome further examples of different approaches and successes from administrators, on this and other topics, that could be shared. We are working with the Electoral Management Board for Scotland on capacity and resilience materials following on from the joint event in October. Please [contact us](#) to help us share more good practice.

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