

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission

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Updated core guidance for ROs to reflect postal vote handling measures.

Updated core guidance for ROs and EROs to support the practicalities around the determination of absent vote applications.

Commission website – link to our updated user-guide to help you make the most of our web-based format.

Communicating changes to rules on handling postal votes

Link to online resources to help you communicate the changes that apply to polls taking place on or after 2 May 2024.

Proposed changes to candidate spending limits

Update on new draft regulations affecting spending limits for some election types in England.

May 2024 Local and Parish elections: Candidate and agent webinar – Wednesday 6 March 12:00-13:00

Information on our webinar for candidates, agents and parties involved in the upcoming local and parish polls.

EA Bulletins are issued on a regular basis. They are one of



Issue 379 (England) – 23 February 2024

Guidance Update

Elections act: postal vote handling

Following the changes to legislation on postal vote handling as outlined above, and the publication of the [polling station handbook](#) for the May 2024 polls, we have now updated our core guidance for Returning Officers to reflect the new measures.

The updates focus on the management of postal votes returned to council offices - including the need to ensure a postal vote return form is completed - and are embedded throughout the suite.

Elections act: determination of absent vote applications

To help support you in managing the practicalities of determining absent vote applications in light of the new requirement for verification of an elector's identity, we have made some updates to our core guidance for ROs and EROs.

The updates help to highlight the need for the RO and ERO to liaise so they can establish the latest practicable point for determination of applications to ensure they can produce up to date and accurate polling station registers and absent voting lists close to a poll.

Website user guide

Over the last few months we have transitioned more of our core guidance from PDFs into the web-based format. To ensure that you can make best use of all of the available features of the web-based system, we have updated our [website user guide](#).

The guide provides tips on how to navigate the guidance and make best use of the guidance search functionality. It also provides background information on the accessibility benefits that prompted our move to the new format.

As always, should you have any questions or queries about any aspect of the guidance, [please contact your local Commission team](#).

Communicating changes to rules on handling postal votes

New rules introduced by the Elections Act 2022 about the handling of postal votes apply to polls taking place on or after the 2 May. As you will be aware, these changes mean:

- parties and campaigners will no longer be allowed to handle certain completed postal votes and postal vote envelopes
- individuals will not be allowed to hand in more than five postal ballot packs (in addition to their own)
- all individuals handing in postal votes to local authority offices or polling stations will need to complete a postal vote return form

In England, these changes will apply to:

- UK Parliament elections.
- Local elections; and
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections.

To help you make people aware of these changes, we have produced communications resources including social media graphics and posters.

[Download our postal vote handling resources](#).

Proposed changes to candidate spending limits

The Government has published [draft regulations](#) that propose new candidate spending limits for Greater London Authority elections and Mayoral elections in England. Subject to parliamentary approval, the following new candidate spending limits will apply:

Local Authority Mayoral or Combined Authority Mayoral elections in England

- Mayoral candidate for a Local Authority in England: £3,040 + 8p per elector
- Mayoral candidate for a Combined Authority in England: £3,040 x total number of constituent councils +8p per elector.

Greater London Authority election

- Mayor of London: £760,410
- Constituency Assembly Member: £63,360
- Independent London-wide Assembly Member: £597,460
- Party list London-wide Assembly Member: A total of £597,460 for the whole list

We will update you once these spending limits become law.

[May 2024 Local and Parish elections: Candidate and agent webinar – Wednesday 6 March 12:00-13:00](#)

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.

We are hosting a pre-election webinar for candidates, parties and their agents taking part in the upcoming local and parish elections. We've included a copy of the invitation below, for you to share with those you know want to stand for election in your area, particularly independent candidates.

“The Electoral Commission is hosting a pre-election webinar for candidates, parties and their agents taking part in local and parish elections in England on 02 May.

The webinar will focus on the spending and donation rules, including information on: -

When the spending rules apply?
How much you can spend?
Notional spending rules
Who can you accept donations from?
What you need to report after the election in your spending return?
Guidance on harassment and intimidation at elections and when it goes too far.

There will also be a chance to ask questions.
To register your interest [sign-up using our form.](#)”

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