

Polling station handbook insert: local authority mayoral election and local elections in England

How to use this document

Where a local election in England is combined with a local authority mayoral election most of the polling station procedures will be the same. However, there are a small number of procedures that will be different from those described in the ['Handbook for polling station staff: Supporting local government elections'](#).

The polling station handbook should therefore be read alongside this document. Any references to 'elections' in the polling station handbook should be taken to include a local authority mayoral election and any references to 'local government election' should be read as also applying to a local authority mayoral election unless otherwise stated in this document.

We have included the changes / additions on individual sheets in this document, so that they can be printed off and inserted into the relevant parts of the handbook for ease of reference.

At Appendix 1 you find the updated prescribed questions to be used at the polls by Presiding Officers. This has been set out in full as a replacement for the prescribed questions contained in the polling station handbook. This should be printed off and provided to Presiding Officers for use when asking the prescribed questions.

Summary of changes

Section headings affected	Replacement or addition	Pages in local government election handbook
Stage five - voting	Addition of one heading	22
The prescribed questions	Replacement	Appendix 5a (pp 51-54)

What if the elector refuses a particular ballot paper before it has been handed over? (additional heading page 22)

If an elector refuses one of the ballot papers before it has been handed over, the Presiding Officer should issue the requested ballot paper and mark the register of electors accordingly, indicating which ballot paper has been issued. The elector's number should then be entered onto the corresponding number lists.

The voter may return to the polling station later on polling day to request the vote previously refused, and so following this procedure is important. If the elector does return to the polling station later in the day, the corresponding number list should be marked but only the ballot paper that was previously refused should be handed over to the voter. The Presiding Officer should mark the register of electors to show that both ballot papers have now been issued to that elector.

The prescribed questions (Replacement; Appendix 5a, pp 51-54)

The required information to be given to a person before asking the prescribed questions in all scenarios

Where the prescribed questions are to be put to a voter, the Presiding Officer must provide some additional information before asking them the questions.

Before asking a person the prescribed questions, the Presiding Officer must first inform them that:

- ballot papers will be refused if the person fails to answer each question satisfactorily, and
- giving false information may be an offence

When asking the questions for the local authority mayoral and the local government elections, the Presiding Officer should be clear which question relates to which contest.

Whenever the Presiding Officer refuses to issue ballot papers because the elector has not answered one of the prescribed questions satisfactorily, polling station staff must check the Ballot Paper Refusal List (BPRL) to see if the elector has already been recorded:

- If they have already been recorded, update the existing entry to record that they have been refused again, writing the number

'3' in the Reason for refusal column.

- If they have not been recorded, make a new entry including the voter's elector number (or the proxy's name and address) and write the number '3' in the Reason for refusal column.

The prescribed questions to be asked of a person applying to vote as an elector

'What is your name?'

If the elector is unable to provide their name, do not issue ballot papers.

If the elector provides their name, then ask:

'What is your address?'

If the elector is unable to provide the address which appears on the polling station register, do not issue ballot papers.

If the elector provides the address which appears on the polling station register, then ask:

For the local election:

'Are you the person registered in the register of local government electors for this election as follows (you must then read out loud the whole entry from the register)?'

AND

For the local authority mayoral election:

‘Are you the person registered in the register of local government electors for this election as follows (you must then read out loud the whole entry from the register)’?

If the answer is ‘no’, do not issue ballot papers.

If the answer is ‘yes’, then ask:

For the local election:

‘Have you already voted, here or elsewhere at this election for this *(district), *(county), *(London borough), *(county borough) (*read out whichever is applicable, adding, in the case of an election for several electoral areas, ‘in this or any other electoral area’) otherwise than as proxy for some other person?’

AND

For the local authority mayoral election:

‘Have you already voted here or elsewhere at this election otherwise than as a proxy for some other person?’

If the answer is ‘yes’ to these questions, do not issue ballot papers.

If the person has answered ‘yes’ to the third and fourth question and ‘no’ to the fifth and sixth question, ordinary or tendered ballot papers must be issued as appropriate.

The prescribed questions to be asked of a person applying to vote as a proxy (but not on behalf of an elector with an anonymous entry)

The prescribed questions for proxies have different wording:

‘What is your name?’

If the proxy is unable to provide their name, do not issue ballot papers.

If the proxy provides their name, then ask:

‘What is your address?’

If the proxy is unable to provide the address which appears on the list of proxies, do not issue ballot papers.

If the proxy provides the address which appears on the list of proxies, then ask:

For the local election:

‘Are you the person whose name appears as (read out the name that appears in the list of proxies) in the list of proxies for this election as entitled to vote as proxy on behalf of (the name of the elector on the register)?’

AND

For the local authority mayoral election:

‘Are you the person whose name appears as (read out the name that appears in the list of proxies) in the list of proxies for this as entitled to vote as proxy on behalf of (read out the name of the elector on the register)?’

If the answer is ‘no’, do not issue ballot papers.

If the answer is ‘yes’, then ask:

For the local election:

‘Have you already voted here or elsewhere at this election for this *(district), *(county), *(London

borough), *(county borough) (*read out whichever is applicable, adding, in the case of an election for several electoral areas, 'in this or any other electoral area'), as proxy on behalf of (read out the name of the elector on the register)?'

AND

For the local authority mayoral election:

'Have you already voted here or elsewhere at this election as proxy on behalf of (read out the name of the elector on the register)?'

If the answer is 'yes' to these questions ballot papers must not be issued.

If the answer is 'no', then ask:

For the local election: '

Disregarding any parliamentary election or police and crime commissioner election, have you already voted as proxy at this election or any other election or referendum for which the day of poll is today, whether here or elsewhere in this electoral area or anywhere else in England, on behalf of four or more electors?'

AND

For the local authority mayoral election:

'Disregarding any parliamentary election or police and crime commissioner election, have you already voted as proxy at this election or any other election or referendum for which the day of poll is today, whether here or elsewhere in this electoral area or anywhere else in England, on behalf of four or more electors?'

If the answer is yes, a ballot paper must not be issued.

If the answer to this question is 'no' then ask:

For the local election:

'Disregarding any parliamentary election or police and crime commissioner election, have you already voted as proxy at this election or any other election or referendum for which the day of poll is today, whether here or elsewhere in this electoral area or anywhere else in England, on behalf of two or more electors?'

AND

For the local authority mayoral election:

'Disregarding any parliamentary election or police and crime commissioner election, have you already voted as proxy at this election or any other election or referendum for which the day of poll is today, whether here or elsewhere in this electoral area or anywhere else in England, on behalf of two or more electors?'

If the answer is no, an ordinary or tendered ballot paper must be issued as appropriate.

If the answer to this question is 'yes' then ask:

For the local election:

'Were two or more of the electors on whose behalf you have voted in this election, or any other election or referendum for which the day of poll is today, registered in a register of electors otherwise than in pursuance of a service declaration?'

AND

For the local authority mayoral election:

‘Were two or more of the electors on whose behalf you have voted in this election, or any other election or referendum for which the day of poll is today, registered in a register of electors otherwise than in pursuance of a service declaration?’

If the answer is no, an ordinary or tendered ballot paper must be issued as appropriate.

If the answer is ‘yes’, then ask:

For the local election:

“Is the elector (or are the electors) for whom you are voting today registered in a register of electors otherwise than in pursuance of a service declaration?”

AND

For the local authority mayoral election:

‘Is the elector (or are the electors) for whom you are voting today registered in a register of electors otherwise than in pursuance of a service declaration?’

If the answer to this question is ‘yes’, do not issue ballot papers.

If the answer is ‘no’ (and the questions above have been answered satisfactorily), ordinary or tendered ballot papers must be issued as appropriate.

The prescribed questions to be asked of a person applying to vote as a proxy for an elector with an anonymous entry

‘What is your name?’

If the proxy is unable to provide their name, do not issue ballot papers.

If the proxy provides their name, then ask:

‘What is your address?’

If the proxy is unable to provide the address which appears on the list of proxies, do not issue ballot papers.

If the proxy provides the address which appears on the list of proxies, then ask:

For the local election:

‘Are you the person entitled to vote as proxy on behalf of the elector whose number on the register of electors is (read out the number from the register)?’

AND

For the local authority mayoral election:

‘Are you the person entitled to vote as proxy on behalf of the elector whose number on the register of electors is (read out the number from the register)?’

If the answer is ‘no’, do not issue ballot papers.

If the answer is ‘yes’, then ask:

For the local election:

‘Have you already voted here or elsewhere as proxy on behalf of the elector whose number on the register of electors is (read out the number of the elector on the register)?’

AND

For the local authority mayoral election:

‘Have you already voted here or elsewhere as proxy on behalf of the

elector whose number on the register of electors is (read out the number of the elector on the register)?

If the answer is 'yes' to this question, ballot papers must not be issued.

If the answer is 'no' you must also ask:

For the local election:
'Disregarding any parliamentary election or police and crime commissioner election, have you already voted as proxy at this election or any other election or referendum for which the day of poll is today, whether here or elsewhere in this electoral area or anywhere else in England, on behalf of four or more electors?'

AND

For the local authority mayoral election:

'Disregarding any parliamentary election or police and crime commissioner election, have you already voted as proxy at this election or any other election or referendum for which the day of poll is today, whether here or elsewhere in this electoral area or anywhere else in England, on behalf of four or more electors?'

If the answer is yes, a ballot paper must not be issued.

If the answer to this question is 'no' then ask:

For the local election:
'Disregarding any parliamentary election or police and crime commissioner election, have you already voted as proxy at this election or any other election or referendum for which the day of poll is today, whether here or elsewhere

in this electoral area or anywhere else in England, on behalf of two or more electors?'

AND

For the local authority mayoral election:

'Disregarding any parliamentary election or police and crime commissioner election, have you already voted as proxy at this election or any other election or referendum for which the day of poll is today, whether here or elsewhere in this electoral area or anywhere else in England, on behalf of two or more electors?'

If the answer is no, an ordinary or tendered ballot paper must be issued as appropriate.

If the answer to this question is 'yes' then ask:

For the local election:
'Were two or more of the electors on whose behalf you have voted in this election, or any other election or referendum for which the day of poll is today, registered in a register of electors otherwise than in pursuance of a service declaration?'

AND

For the local authority mayoral election:

'Were two or more of the electors on whose behalf you have voted in this election, or any other election or referendum for which the day of poll is today, registered in a register of electors otherwise than in pursuance of a service declaration?'

If the answer is no, an ordinary or tendered ballot paper must be issued as appropriate.

If the answer is 'yes', then ask:

For the local election:

'Is the elector (or are the electors) for whom you are voting today registered in a register electors otherwise than in pursuance of a service declaration?'

AND

For the local authority mayoral election:

'Is the elector (or are the electors) for whom you are voting today registered in a register of electors otherwise than in pursuance of a service declaration?'

If the answer is yes, a ballot paper must not be issued.

If the answer to this question is 'no' (and all of the above questions have been answered satisfactorily), ordinary or tendered ballot papers must be issued as appropriate.

The prescribed questions to be asked of a person applying to vote in person when they are shown on the register as a postal voter

The following prescribed questions are for electors shown on the register as postal voters, but who:

- claim either to have not applied to vote by post, or
- present themselves at the polling station after 5pm on polling day and claim to have lost or not received their postal ballot papers

'What is your name?'

If the elector is unable to provide their name, do not issue ballot papers.

If the elector provides their name, then ask:

'What is your address?'

If the elector is unable to provide the address which appears on the polling station register, do not issue ballot papers.

If the elector provides the address which appears on the polling station register, then ask:

'Did you apply to vote by post?' (read out twice – once in respect of each contest)

If the answer is 'no', tendered ballot papers must be issued.

If the answer to this question is 'yes', then ask:

'Why have you not voted by post?' (read out twice – once in respect of each contest)

If the question is answered satisfactorily, the Presiding Officer should record the reason and issue tendered ballot papers.

If, however, the elector says that they have not voted by post because they have lost or not received (all or any part of) their postal ballot pack, tendered ballot papers can only be issued after 5pm.

The prescribed questions to be asked of a person applying to vote as a proxy when they are shown as having been

issued with proxy postal ballot papers

The prescribed questions for proxies named on the proxy postal voters list but who claim either to have not applied to vote by post or who present themselves at the polling station after 5pm on polling day and claim to have lost or not received their postal ballot papers are as follows:

If, however, the proxy says that they have not voted by post because they have lost or not received (all or any part of) their postal ballot pack, tendered ballot papers can only be issued after 5pm.

'What is your name?'

If the proxy is unable to provide their name, do not issue ballot papers.

If the proxy provides their name, then ask:

'What is your address?'

If the proxy is unable to provide the address which appears on the list of proxies, do not issue ballot papers.

If the proxy provides the address which appears on the list of proxies, then ask:

'Did you apply to vote by post as proxy?' (read out twice – once in respect of each contest)

If the answer is 'no', tendered ballot papers must be issued.

If the answer is 'yes', then ask:

'Why have you not voted by post as proxy?' (read out twice – once in respect of each contest)

If the question is answered satisfactorily, the Presiding Officer should record the reason and issue tendered ballot papers.