Questions and answers about our web based guidance – Scotland and Wales

Contents:

- Why has the format of the guidance changed from PDF?
- How do I access the guidance?
- How do I navigate through the guidance?
- Where are the accompanying resources?
- Where are the legal references?
- How do I search the guidance?
- Can I print the guidance?
- Can I share links to the guidance?
- How will I know when the guidance has been updated?
- What do I do if I need help?

Why has the format of the guidance changed from PDF?

It is important that our guidance can be accessed by everyone. We have a legal requirement to ensure that our website is accessible, under The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018. The government's Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO) ensures these regulations are adhered to, and provides guidance to understand the requirements.

Our website is WCAG 2.2 AA compliant, which means those with access needs (such as those with visual impairments) can utilise inbuilt functionality or assistive technology to access information they need. Our Accessibility Statement includes further information on this.

To ensure our compliance with the accesibility standards we have moved away from the PDF format and are working towards presenting all guidance in a web-based format, in line with modern practice and evolving technology.

As well as helping us to maintain our compliance with the accessibility standards, this approach aims to make the guidance easier to navigate and use.

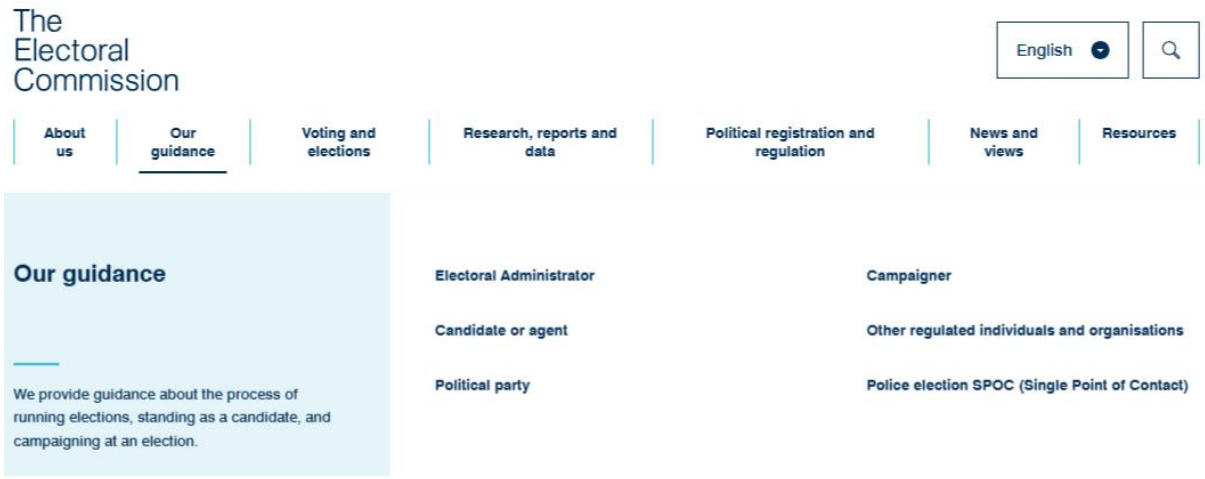
Key benefits of presenting guidance in a web-based format

- By reading the guidance on the website rather than saving or printing PDFs you can ensure you are always aware of the most up to date and accurate guidance and legislative requirements.
- You can email links to specific sections of the guidance when people have questions.
- The search functionality within the guidance section of the website can be used to help pinpoint answers to specific questions.
- Our content can be less repetitive as we can use links to relevant sections instead of repeating text in multiple locations, which results in smaller volumes of guidance to read and navigate.

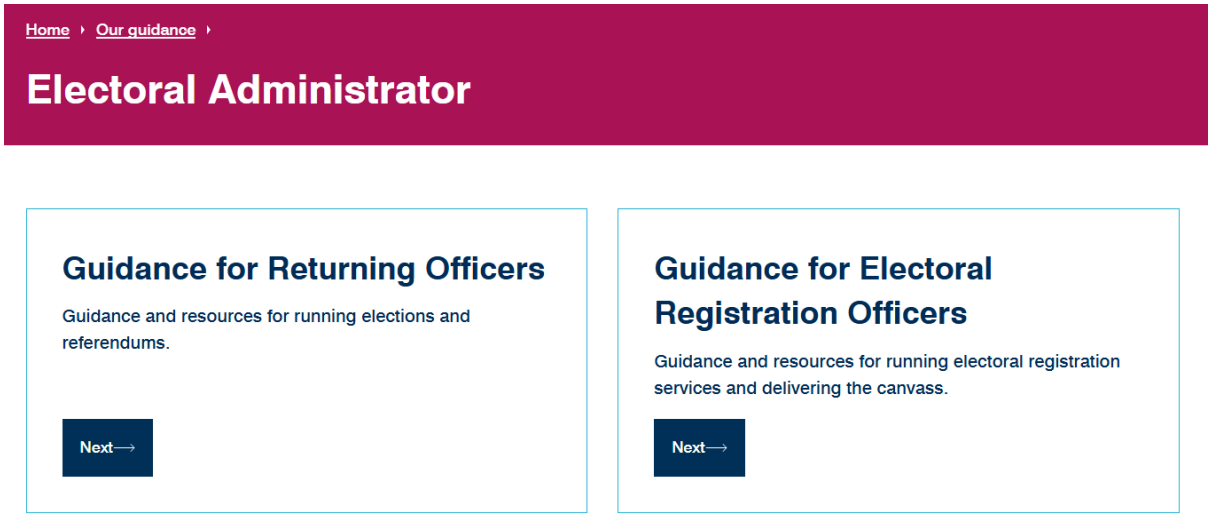
- The Commission will be able to update all versions of the guidance (i.e. for different election types) more quickly and efficiently when a change is required, meaning that the guidance is up to date to support by elections of any type rather than just being updated for scheduled polls.
- The guidance can be filtered by location, meaning you can read content relevant only to your area which again results in smaller volumes of guidance to read and navigate.

How do I access the guidance?

Our guidance landing page allows you to select the type of guidance you want to access:



If you select 'Electoral Administrator', from here you will then be able to choose the core guidance you require:



Once you have accessed the core guidance you require, you can use the filters to access the specific guidance you need.

Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) guidance

There are separate versions of the guidance for Electoral Registration Officers in England, Scotland and Wales to reflect the differences in franchise.

Returning Officer (RO) guidance

There are separate versions of the guidance for Returning Officers to reflect each of the election types to be administered (including combination guidance where combined polls are scheduled.)

Other guidance for electoral administrators

We have also produced guidance on a range of other key subjects in this format including assistance with voting for disabled voters, polling district reviews and data protection.

Candidates and agents guidance

There are separate versions of the guidance for candidates and agents to reflect each of the election types.

We are still working on moving all our existing guidance into the web based format and will update users via an EA Bulletin when this process has been completed. In the meantime, the rest of the guidance for ROs and candidates and agents can be accessed further down each of those respective landing pagesin the current PDF format.

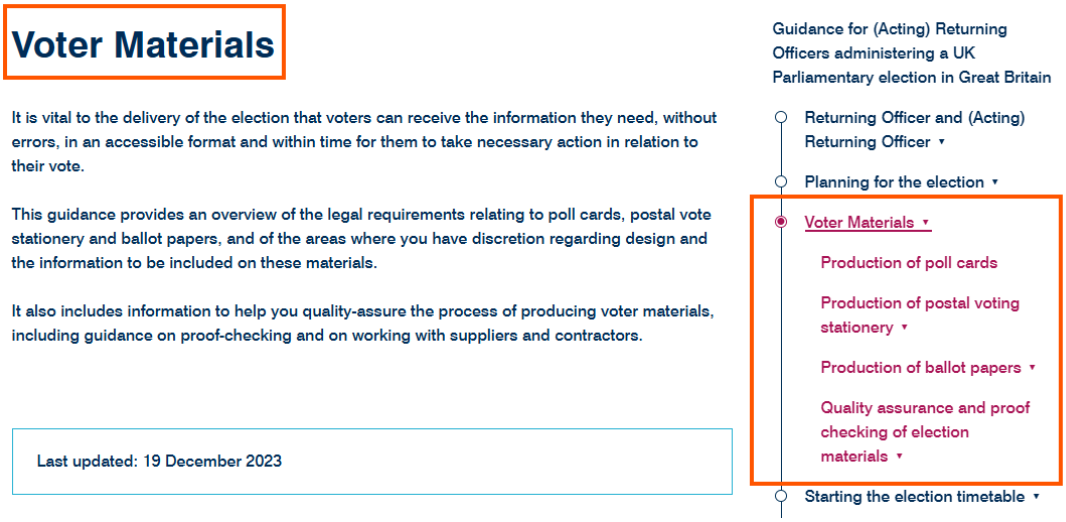
How do I navigate through the guidance?

Once you are in the guidance book that you have selected, the navigation tree on the right-hand side of the page shows the main sections within that guidance, similar to the parts that previously existed in the PDF format.

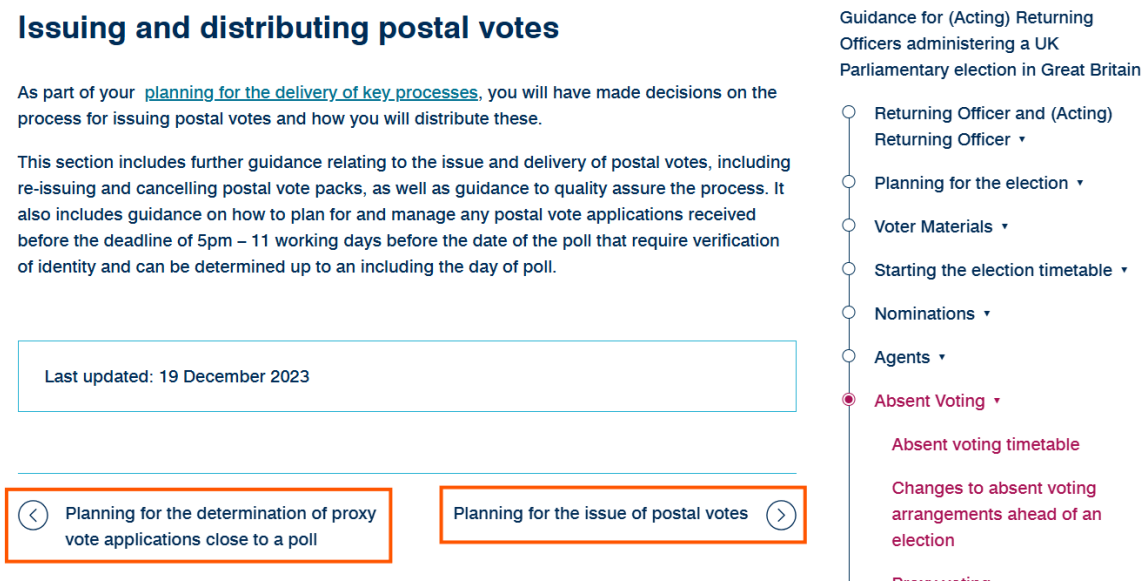
To access a particular section of the guidance, simply click on the heading in the navigation tree.

When you click on each heading, the text will appear underlined, showing you where you are in the guidance. In the example below, you are in the Voter Materials section. You can see that the heading in the navigation tree is underlined and the text in the centre of the webpage reflects that heading.

For this section guidance is split into each of the tasks associated with it. Each task has its own heading and these headings are indented and nested underneath the main section heading of the guidance they relate to as you can see in the example below.

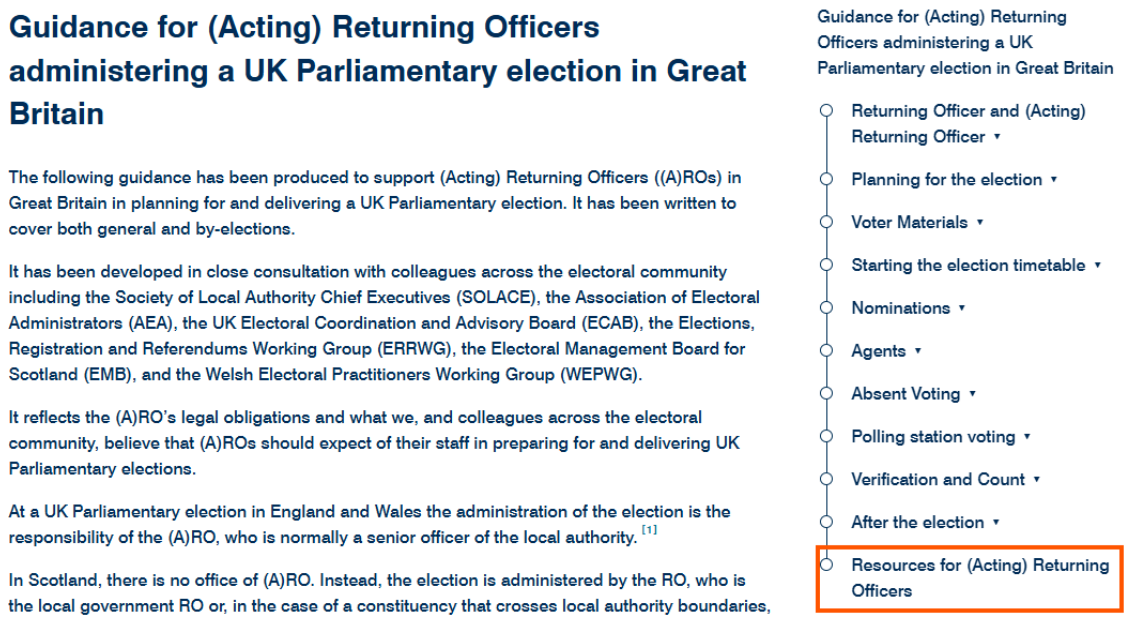


You can navigate through the guidance by either clicking each of the section headings and related task headings sitting beneath them in turn, or by scrolling to the bottom of the page and clicking on the left or right arrow to take you to the next or previous page in the guidance, as shown in the example below.



Where are the accompanying resources?

Links to resources will be made available on a separate resources page which will appear at the end of the navigation tree.



Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain

The following guidance has been produced to support (Acting) Returning Officers ((A)ROs) in Great Britain in planning for and delivering a UK Parliamentary election. It has been written to cover both general and by-elections.

It has been developed in close consultation with colleagues across the electoral community including the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA), the UK Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board (ECAB), the Elections, Registration and Referendums Working Group (ERRWG), the Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB), and the Welsh Electoral Practitioners Working Group (WEPWG).

It reflects the (A)RO's legal obligations and what we, and colleagues across the electoral community, believe that (A)ROs should expect of their staff in preparing for and delivering UK Parliamentary elections.

At a UK Parliamentary election in England and Wales the administration of the election is the responsibility of the (A)RO, who is normally a senior officer of the local authority. [1]

In Scotland, there is no office of (A)RO. Instead, the election is administered by the RO, who is the local government RO or, in the case of a constituency that crosses local authority boundaries,

The resources will be listed on the resources page depending on which section of the guidance they are relevant to. Under each heading they will be listed in alphabetical order. For example, you will find nomination packs under the Nominations heading on the resources page.

Nominations

- Emblem_UK-V2
- Nomination checklist for UK Parliamentary elections (DOCX)
- Nomination pack - UK Parliamentary General Election (DOCX)
- Notice of poll UKPE (DOCX)
- Quality Assurance Guidance for ROs (Generic) (PDF)
- Withdrawal form UKPE (DOCX)

Agents

- Counting agent appointment form (DOCX)
- Nomination pack - UK Parliamentary General Election (DOCX)
- Polling agent appointment form (DOCX)
- Postal voting agent appointment form (DOCX)
- Secrecy requirements - postal voting (DOCX)

Where a resource is referenced in the guidance, a link will be provided to the resources page and will confirm under which section heading you will find the relevant resource.

Where are the legal references?

Where guidance is based on legislative requirements, this is indicated by an endnote reference number appearing next to the text as per the example below.

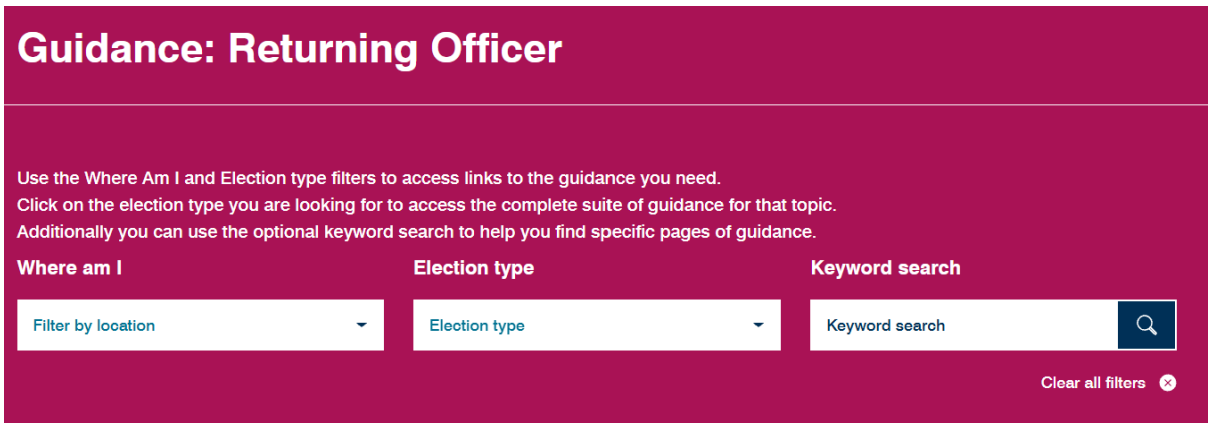
The legal references then appear as endnotes at the bottom of each section of guidance**.** If you click on the reference number within the text it will automatically take you to the relevant legal reference at the bottom of the page.

1. Schedule 1 Rule 7 Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983)
2. Schedule 1 Rule 12 RPA 1983
3. Schedule 1 Rule 7 RPA 1983

How do I search the guidance?

We strongly recommend using only the guidance search functionality within the guidance section of the website, rather than using other search engines or the Commission website's wider search functionality – there is an ongoing project looking at the wider website search functionality currently taking place.

The guidance search tool allows you to locate information on a specific topic within the guidance through use of the Keyword search option.



For best results, you should also apply the 'Where am I' and 'Guidance type' filters then type a common word or phrase and click the magnifying glass icon.

Your search will display a list of clickable results, prioritised by the most relevant content.

The number of options returned will depend on the nature of your search and how precise or narrow your search term is.

If required, you can still create and search a PDF version of the guidance. To do this use the print full guidance option and choose the option to save as PDF rather than print. This allows you to save guidance as a PDF in the location of your choice, allowing you to search the PDF using the previous method if you choose.

Can I print the guidance?

Yes. By clicking the ‘Print full guidance’ link you are able to print all of the guidance in full. You can also choose to just print a particular page by clicking ‘Print this page’.



Please always remember to also check the web version of guidance when referring to printed copies to ensure you are accessing the most up to date version of the guidance at all times.

Can I share links to the guidance?

Yes. Each page of the guidance is separate, so you can share a link to any page you choose by copying the page’s address.

How will I know when the guidance has been updated?

When significant changes are made to the guidance we will announce this in our EA Bulletin. These updates will also be summarised in a change log which can be found on the landing page for each suite of guidance. Additionally, there is a box at the bottom of each page which indicates when that page was last updated, so you will be able to tell if the guidance has been updated since you last looked at it.



What do I do if I need help?

If you have any queries or concerns, or require any further support, please contact:

- **In Scotland** infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk
- **In Wales** infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk