

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission



Issue 196 (Scotland) – 28 February 2018

EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

As highlighted in [Bulletin 191](#) the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will come into force on 25 May 2018, replacing the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998.

Under GDPR each person that processes personal data – including EROs, ROs and local authorities - is under an obligation as a data controller to ensure that they are compliant with the legislation.

In consultation with the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA), Cabinet Office, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), we have developed a resource to support you in meeting your obligations as they relate to your electoral administration responsibilities - [EU General Data Protection Regulation – Resource for Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers](#). The resource can also be found under the Part 1 resources section on our [ERO webpages](#) and under the Part A resources section on the [webpage for ROs](#) for each election type.

In addition, we have shared the resource with the Cabinet Office's Suppliers' Group network to help them prepare to support you in managing the impact of the GDPR.

We are currently updating our core guidance for EROs to reflect the impact of the GDPR and to address the forthcoming changes to the anonymous registration scheme and the specific circumstances of the 2018 canvass.

We will also be updating our suite of registration and absent vote forms to ensure that they are compliant with the GDPR.

We aim to publish our updated core guidance and suite of forms for EROs by the end of March, and will confirm in a future Bulletin when this has been completed.

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Reminder of the forthcoming General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and a link to our factsheet.

2017 annual canvass: results of the project aiming to increase HEF response rates

Information about the results of the partnership work between two local authorities, the Behavioural Insights Team and the Commission on a project aiming to increase response rates to Household Enquiry Forms (HEF).

May 2018 polls: voter ID pilot schemes

Information about the voter ID pilot schemes which are taking place in parts of England on 3 May 2018.

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.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with the Scotland office on infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk or via telephone on 0131 225 0200.

2017 annual canvass: results of the project aiming to increase HEF response rates

In February 2017, through [Bulletin 162](#), we invited EROs to partner with the [Behavioural Insights Team](#) (BIT) and the Electoral Commission on a project which aimed to increase response rates to Household Enquiry Forms (HEF) by making small amendments to the HEF covering letter and envelope.

Hull and Hackney councils were among those who volunteered to participate and we worked with them to test 10 different messages across 225,000 households between 17 July and 1 December 2017.

Of the 10 messages included in the trial, the same three performed best across both local authorities. These were:

- Modified envelope - messaging added to the front of the HEF envelope: *'Do not ignore this envelope. If you live here then legally you need to respond to this letter.'*
- Modified HEF letter - messaging added to the HEF covering letter: *'All local authorities are required by law to send reminder letters and pay visits to households that don't return this form. Last year this cost us over £X. The same amount of money could buy X of X in X. Please return this form so we can devote these resources to local services instead.'*
- Modified HEF letter - messaging added to the HEF covering letter: *'All households are legally required to respond to this letter. If you don't, we are required by law to send you two reminder letters. If we still don't receive a response we are then required to send someone to your address to collect the necessary information.'*

The modified envelope was the most effective, increasing initial response rates by approximately 8.5%. The other messages also increased initial HEF response rates, although to a lesser extent.

The trial results show that different messages on HEF envelopes and covering letters can increase initial response rates which can in turn help to reduce canvass costs. We are now considering what changes we can make to our templates and we will provide more information on what will happen next in a future Bulletin.

If you would like further information, or have any questions, you can contact Jonathan Mitchell, Senior Communications Officer – Voter Materials via telephone on 0131 225 0202, or via [email](#).

May 2018 polls: voter ID pilot schemes

On 3 May 2018 five local authorities in England - Bromley, Gosport, Swindon, Watford and Woking - will be conducting voter ID pilots

which will require voters to show a form of ID when voting in person at a polling station.

A range of acceptable forms of ID will be tested in the different pilot areas, including photographic only, photographic and non-photographic and poll cards. Each local authority taking part in the pilot scheme will publish a complete list of acceptable ID on their website, along with instructions setting out what to do if you don't have an acceptable form of ID.

Each local authority will also be running a campaign to ensure that every eligible voter is made aware that they need to bring an acceptable form of ID with them to be able to vote. Showing an acceptable form of ID at polling stations in these local authority areas is compulsory – if a voter is unable to produce an acceptable form of ID, they will not be able to vote.

The UK Government has initiated the pilots and the Commission will be carrying out an independent, statutory evaluation of them. We will publish our findings in the summer and will update you in a future Bulletin when they are available.

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