

# electoral administration bulletin

The  
Electoral  
Commission



Issue 214 (England) – 11 April 2018

## May 2018: security and contingency planning

Ahead of the June 2017 UK general election, we gave guidance on security and contingency planning for the polls, and in advance of the forthcoming polls on 3 May, we wanted to provide you with a reminder of the security advice and guidance that is available to assist you as you prepare for and deliver the polls, and to highlight again some of the practical steps you can take.

It is important that you continue to keep your plans and risk registers under review and liaise with local police, resilience forums and other partners as appropriate to ensure that your arrangements properly reflect your particular local circumstances and risks. It is ultimately for each RO to make decisions on what arrangements are appropriate for their local area.

### Cyber security

The [guidance](#) produced for local authorities by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) has been updated ahead of the elections on 3 May. It contains reminders around good cyber security practices for the systems that support the delivery of UK elections; it does not replace tailored advice and guidance specific to local circumstances.

In addition to the points covered by this guidance, there are a number of further practical steps you should take which will help you mitigate risks to the process:

- You should perform regular (at least daily) back-ups of register databases to ensure you have an accessible and secure electronic copy of the registers you will need for the election
- You should produce hard copies of the polling station registers as early as possible, and ensure that these are checked for accuracy in advance of use on polling day

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### May 2018 polls: security and contingency planning

A reminder of the security guidance and advice available to assist you in preparing for and delivering the polls.

### May 2018 polls: public awareness update

A reminder about our resources and our Facebook group, information about Facebook's voter registration reminder messaging and information about our post-poll evaluation of public awareness activity.

### Electoral registration: updated suite of electoral registration forms

Information about and links to our updated suite of electoral registration forms.

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.

The CPNI have issued advice on how to spot spear phishing – [‘CPNI Don’t Take The Bait’](#). The NCSC has also previously provided specific guidance to political parties on the risks from phishing, but [this guidance](#) is equally helpful for ROs. Also, additional guidance on IT security can be obtained at [www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org).

### **Election and personal security**

We have also previously provided advice produced by the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO), which is designed to assist ROs to develop a security plan, working with local partners, to avoid major disruption to the election process and to assist them with the security of buildings used in the electoral process. If you no longer have access to this advice, please contact your [local Commission Team](#).

The [Commission’s Polling Station Handbook](#) and [Part B](#) of our core guidance for ROs also contain general advice on security arrangements that you should have in place. In reviewing your arrangements for the poll, you should ensure that you have practical arrangements in place which address the following areas:

- Maintaining the security of ballot papers between printing and the poll
- Maintaining the security of ballot papers being provided to polling stations, including where they are provided to Presiding Officers in advance of polling day
- Maintaining the security of ballot papers being delivered to count centres after the close of poll
- Management of the security of count venues, including management of attendees
- Ensuring staff working on the election take care to avoid sharing any details about their role on social media sites and don’t unnecessarily provide details to external parties

If you have any concerns relating to protective security matters please contact your local police single point of contact (SPOC). Should any incident arise that you feel requires an immediate police response, dial 999. To report any suspicious activity which does not require an immediate response, please contact the Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321.

### **Resilience and contingency planning**

As part of your planning, it is important that you determine the level of risk on a local level, and work with relevant local stakeholders to take appropriate measures to mitigate risk accordingly. In addition to working with your local police force, you should – if you haven’t already – make contact with your local resilience forum (LRF). These are the bodies tasked with planning and preparing for localised incidents and catastrophic emergencies, who work to identify potential risks and produce emergency plans to either prevent or mitigate the impact of any incident on their local communities. As well as helping with contingency planning they can also provide helpful early warning of any emerging issues affecting your area.

Contact details for your area can be found here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-resilience-forums-contact-details>.

More general guidance on planning for the elections, including on the development of contingency plans, can be found in [Part B](#) of the core guidance for Returning Officers.

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### May 2018 polls: public awareness update

#### **‘Got 5’ campaign**

With just a few days to go until the voter registration deadline of Tuesday 17 April, our ‘**Got 5**’ campaign is in its final stages.

As set out in previous Bulletins, we have produced resources to help promote voter registration in the run-up to the deadline. In addition we have also produced a suite of voter information resources which aim to provide further information to voters up to and on polling day. All these resources are available on our [resource hub](#).

#### **Delivering Democracy Facebook group**

Further to [Bulletin 208](#), thank you to those who have already joined our private Facebook group, [Delivering Democracy](#).

The group is a forum to share ideas and collaborate on all communications activity, including activity to promote voter registration.

If you haven’t already, we encourage you and your communications teams to [sign up](#). If you have any questions about the group, please [get in touch](#).

#### **Facebook’s voter registration reminder**

Facebook will again be running a registration reminder in the News Feed of users who are 18 or older in England. This will be live in the final days leading up to the registration deadline. Unfortunately there is no way for Facebook to limit the targeting for the reminder and it will run across England, so if you are in an area without elections, please be aware that it may result in some queries on the days it is running. Facebook are mitigating for this issue by using a message that will say people “may” have elections in their area.

#### **Evaluation**

As in previous years, we will be evaluating our voter registration campaign and intend to publish our findings later this summer. We would like to reflect in this examples of innovative activities undertaken by local authorities to promote registration in their area and would be grateful if you could [get in touch](#) to share your work.

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### Electoral registration: updated suite of electoral registration forms

Further to [Bulletin 208](#), we can now confirm that we have updated our suite of voter registration forms to reflect the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which comes into force on 25 May.

The forms have also been updated to reflect the provisions of The Representation of the People (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 which will take effect from 1 July. The forms now contain additional messaging relating to nationality checks and set out that failure to provide the required information (including any previous address within the last 12 months) may delay an application to register.

We are providing the updated forms now to help you prepare for the 2018 annual canvass. **You should, however, continue to use the existing electoral registration forms until 25 May**, and they will remain on our [website](#) until that date.

**From 25 May, you must use the updated forms.** The forms can be accessed at [http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\\_data/assets/file/0003/241653/FORMS-ENGLAND-AND-WALES-1.zip](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/file/0003/241653/FORMS-ENGLAND-AND-WALES-1.zip) and the suite of letters can be accessed at [http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\\_data/assets/file/0008/241658/LETTERS-GDPR-updated.zip](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/file/0008/241658/LETTERS-GDPR-updated.zip), from 25 May these will replace the current forms and letters on our [website](#).

We are in the process of updating our suite of absent voting application forms to reflect the GDPR, and will confirm in a future Bulletin when this has been completed.

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