

Prescribed voter forms and notices at Police and Crime Commissioner elections

Background

The voter forms and notices prescribed in the [Police and Crime Commissioner Elections Order 2012](#) are available to download from the Electoral Commission website at <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-electoral-administrators/police-and-crime-commissioner-elections/pcc-forms-and-notice-england>. The bilingual forms to be used in Wales have not yet been prescribed but we will make those available on our website once the relevant Welsh Forms Order comes into effect. These will also be available on our Welsh language guidance pages at <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-electoral-administrators/police-and-crime-commissioner-elections/pcc-forms-and-notice-wales> and <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/cymru/canllawiau/adnoddau-i-weinyddwyr-etholiadau/etholiadau-comisiynwyr-yr-heddlu-a-throsedd/Ffurflenni-a-hysbysiadau-CHTh>. Other documents referred to in this note as being on our website will be on the same pages.

The forms available include:

- Postal voting statements in Schedule 2 of the Order
- Poll cards in Schedule 3 of the Order
- Guidance and instructions for voters notices in Schedules 3 and 4 of the Order, plus Electoral Commission examples of how these should look in practice

The Commission has also produced non-statutory quick guides to postal voting that can be used at PCC elections. There are more details below.

Please read the information below before using the prescribed forms and notices. It gives guidance on using the forms and notices, and identifies some inconsistencies that we recommend you address when you reproduce the forms and notices locally.

Inconsistencies and recommended changes

We are aware of a number of inconsistencies between the wording on some of the forms contained in the [Police and Crime Commissioner Elections Order 2012](#) and the corresponding election rules in Schedule 3 to the Order. To avoid voter confusion, we are recommending that minor changes are made to the forms when they are produced. These changes are possible under article 84 of the Order, which states: 'the forms set out in this Order or forms substantially to the like effect may be used with such variations as the circumstances may require.'

We have made these corrections (described below) to the versions of the forms and notices that we have put on our website. Please note, however, that this list is not necessarily exhaustive and there may be other inconsistencies that we have not

identified. You should carefully check the content of your voter materials to ensure that they are accurate.

1. Ballot papers (Schedule 3, forms 8A and 8B and related directions for printing)

Form 8A (ballot paper for use where there are more than two candidates): the directions for printing specify that where two or more candidates have the same surname, their forenames should be printed in small capitals. The form of the ballot paper in the Order shows the forenames in bold type. We have changed these to small capitals in ordinary type on the versions on our website.¹

2. Postal voting statements (Schedule 2, forms 2, 3 & 4)

- Forms 2 and 4 say that postal votes can be returned to any polling station in the police area, and Form 3 that this can be any polling station in the local authority. This wording does not appear to accurately reflect the rules which say that a postal vote can be returned to:
 - any polling station in the **voting area** at a standalone PCC election, or at a combined poll where the PCC postal ballots are issued separately
 - any polling station in the **appropriate area** at a combined PCC poll where there is combined issue of postal ballots

The terms ‘voting area’ and ‘appropriate area’ are not ones that voters are likely to be familiar with or understand. ‘Local authority’ could be ambiguous in two-tier local authority areas. We recommend that actual name of the voting area/appropriate area is inserted to this part of the postal voting statement, and we have changed the versions on our website to indicate this (using text in square brackets).

- In the ‘Getting help’ section the instructions tell voters they can get a replacement postal vote if they make a mistake but they don’t say you can also get a replacement if you lose your postal vote, which is provided for by paragraph 42 of Schedule 2. We recommend that this information is added, and have changed this sentence of the instructions on the versions on our website so it reads: ‘If you make a mistake or lose your postal vote, you can get a replacement’.
- The postal voting statement for combined issue at a PCC and mayoral election (Form 3) refers to ‘ballot paper’ (singular) in the first line of text in the ‘instructions for voting by post’ section. We have changed this to ‘ballot papers’ (plural) on the version on our website.

3. Guidance and instructions for voters notices (Schedule 3, forms 15 & 16; Schedule 4, forms 21 & 22)

¹ For more details please see the ‘Candidate details’ section of ‘Production of ballot papers’ in Chapter 6 of our [Guidance for Police Area Returning Officers](#).

- The ‘How to vote’ (instructions for voters) notices for display in polling booths tell the voter to put a cross in the box ‘in column 1’ and ‘in column two’ at a supplementary vote election. As numerals are used to identify the columns on the ballot paper, they should also be used in any voting instructions. We have changed the notices on our website to say ‘in column 1’ and ‘in column 2’.

4. Instructions for voters notice – combined PCC and mayoral polls (Schedule 4, form 21)

- On the instructions for voters notice for use at combined mayoral and PCC polls (Form 21), instruction 2 refers to ‘ballot paper’ (singular). We have changed this on the version on our website to ‘ballot papers’ (plural).

Using the prescribed forms and notices

1. Poll cards (Schedule 2, forms 11, 12, 13 and 14)

- Where text is inside square brackets marked with #, select the correct text from the options given and exclude the other text. Delete the # marks, the brackets themselves and any corresponding instructions to the LRO.
- Where text is italicised, e.g. *[day/date of poll]* or *(insert name of police area)*, replace it (and any brackets around it) with the relevant information.
- [The Home Office will supply the URL of the candidates’ address website and helpline number (for voters to obtain printed copies of candidates’ addresses) which must be included on the poll card.]
- Note rule 28(2) – issue of official poll cards:

‘An official poll card may be adapted in order to comply with any requirements as to delivery and may also contain such additional information as the local returning officer thinks appropriate.’

2. Postal voting statements (Schedule 2, forms 2, 3 & 4)

- Date of birth and signature boxes: ensure that you **check with your EMS supplier** and use their specification for the size and positioning of these boxes on the postal voting statement.
- Where text is inside square brackets marked with # with a corresponding instruction: # *(Local returning officer to amend as appropriate)*, select the correct text from the options given and exclude the other text. Also delete the # marks, the brackets themselves and the corresponding instructions to the LRO.
- Where text is italicised, e.g. *[day/date of poll]* or *(insert name of police area)*, replace it (and any brackets around it) with the relevant information.

3. Guidance and instruction for voters notices (Schedule 3, forms 15 & 16; Schedule 4, forms 21 & 22)

- The Commission has produced, for reference, examples of what both the supplementary vote and first-past-the-post notices should look like in practice and these are available on our website alongside the prescribed notices.
- Where text is inside square brackets marked with # and the corresponding instruction: # (Local returning officer to amend as appropriate), select the correct text from the options given and exclude the other text. Delete the # marks and the brackets themselves.
- The images contained in the prescribed guidance and instructions for voters notices that show the ballot paper are marked with *, with the corresponding instruction: *(Local returning officer to amend pictures as appropriate). The ballot paper illustrations on the notices need to reflect the voting system being used, and show either two columns of voting boxes (for a supplementary vote election) or one column of voting boxes (for a first-past-the-post election).
- The prescribed notices do not show what the illustrations should look like on a notice for a first-past-the-post election. We have therefore provided a ZIP file that can be downloaded, containing both sets of ballot paper images.
- When you print the notices you should exclude the * marks next to the illustrations and the corresponding instruction to LROs (see our examples).

4. Guidance and instructions notices for combined PCC and mayoral polls (Schedule 4, forms 21 & 22)

- Where text is inside square brackets marked with # and the corresponding instruction: # (Local returning officer to amend as appropriate), select the correct text from the options given and exclude the other text. Delete the # marks and the brackets themselves.

5. Postal voting guidance (non-statutory)

- Ensure that any illustrations of ballot papers used in postal voting guides reflect the voting system being used, either supplementary vote (two columns of voting boxes) or first-past-the-post (one column of voting boxes).
- The Commission has produced postal voting guides for supplementary vote and first-past-the-post elections with the correct ballot paper images, which are available on our website.