

## **Caitlin Lindenberg**

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**From:** FOI  
**Sent:** 25 May 2016 16:05  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FOI 41/16 - Disabled people legal rights

Dear [REDACTED],

### **Our Ref: FOI 41/16**

Thank you for your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 dated 26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

The Commission aims to respond to requests for information promptly and has done so within the statutory timeframe of twenty working days. Some of your questions fall outside of the Freedom of Information Act, as they are not asking about information or documents which we hold (they are questions relating to our views or advice on specific areas of policy or legislation). We will deal with those questions in separate correspondence. We will respond to the remainder of these queries by Friday 10 June.

In relation to your questions where we hold information or documents in relation to your request, we have responded under the Freedom of Information Act below.

We have split the requests we are responding to under the Freedom of Information Act into two parts and these are in bold below, followed by our responses.

You have requested:

### **Part 1 – Electoral Commission guidance and legislation governing election materials**

**1. Please provide the rules, legislation or guidelines, given to local Council Electoral Officers by the Electoral Commission and/or by the UK Government / Parliament for the following electoral materials:**

- **Voting Registration Letters,**
- **Postal Voting Forms,**
- **Voting Cards**
- **Voting Ballot Forms**
- **Election Leaflets**
- **Election Information Poster's at Polling Station and Council Offices etc.**
- **Political Party & Candidates Leaflets, given out to the public or displayed publicly**
- **Political Party & Candidates Poster's, given out to the public or displayed publicly**

**For all of the above specified materials please give the following details:**

- a. **Over the Size of the Paper they should be printed on?**
- b. **Which Size of Text Print should to be used?**
- c. **Which Font Type should be Used?**
- d. **Which Colour should be used for the Printed Text?**
- e. **Also what Colour of Paper should it be printed on too**

2. For each specified materials please specify if it can be provided in All Approved and Commercially Available Disabled Alternative Accessible Format's (D2AF's), YES or No?.
  - a. If No, why?.
  - b. If Yes, which Approved and Commercially Available Disabled Alternative Accessible Format's (D2AF's), can be used?
3. Are the following all covered by Disability & Equality Laws over Accessible Information
  - a. Political Manifesto's,
  - b. Political Press Handout's,
  - c. Political Meeting's and/or Press Conferences,
  - d. Political Conferences,
  - e. Political Adverts in newspapers and magazines, or on public radio, television and/or internet,
  - f. Political Websites,
  - g. If they are not, why are they not?
4. Do come under the Electoral Commission and Election Laws, YES or NO?.
  - a. If No, why?

## **Part 2 – Equalities legislation and disability equality impact assessments**

5. Who is responsible for enforcing Disability & equality Laws with regards Elections, if Disabled People are discriminated at these Elections, also who do Disabled People report acts of Disabled Discrimination at Election for investigation and to Address properly?
6. What improvement has the Electoral Commission made with regards Accessible Elections for All Types of Disabilities and All Disabled People in the last 21 years since the 1995 Disabled Discrimination Act, could you give examples of any?
7. Provide copies of Disability Equality Impact Assessment's (D-EIA's) Review Reports, current ones (no older than 2 years), for every polling station in Blackpool?
8. Please provide the Disability Equality Impact Assessment's for the following polling stations:
  - a. Polling Station in Rt Hon David Cameron (Con) MP Constituency of Witney,
  - b. Polling Station in Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn (Lab) MP Constituency of Islington North.
  - c. Polling Station in Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh (SNP) MP Constituency of Ochil and South Perthshire,
  - d. Polling Station in Tim Farron (LD) MP Constituency of Westmorland and Lonsdale.
  - e. Polling Station in Mr Gregory Campbell (DUP) MP Constituency of East Londonderry,
  - f. Polling Station in Mr Douglas Carswell (UKIP) MP Constituency of Clacton,
  - g. Polling Station in Simon Danczuk (Ind) MP Constituency of Rochdale,
  - h. Polling Station in Tom Elliott (UUP) MP Constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone.
  - i. Polling Station in Mark Durkan (SDLP) MP Constituency of Foyle,

- j. Polling Station in Jonathan Edwards (PC) MP Constituency of Carmarthen East and Dinefwr,
- k. Polling Station in Lady Hermon (Ind) MP of Constituency North Down,
- l. Polling Station in Natalie McGarry (Ind) MP of Constituency Glasgow East
- m. Polling Station in Michelle Thomson (Ind) MP of Constituency Edinburgh West too?.

**Please confirm if Electoral Commission holds current D-EIA’s Review Reports for every Polling Station in the UK**

**Part 1 – Electoral Commission guidance and legislation governing election materials**

The majority of the guidance the Commission provides on the above can be found in our voter materials guidance document [Making Your Mark](#). The guidance sets out how voter materials used at elections and referendums across the UK should be designed within the constraints of existing legislation. It applies to the design of materials, or parts of materials, over which Returning Officers have discretion, or materials which are not prescribed in law. We have also produced [‘Making your Mark’ recommendations](#) for government policy-makers.

In response to your specific questions under 1 and 2 above, we have put together tables providing answers to each of your questions as they apply to each of the specific election documents mentioned in your request.

<b>Voting registration letters</b>	
<p>Please provide the rules, legislation or guidelines given to local Council Electoral Officers by the Electoral Commission and/or by the UK Government/Parliament</p>	<p>Broadly speaking, the voter registration form is an A3 sheet folded to make an A4 booklet. The first page is a letter, and the remaining pages constitute the actual form. We have interpreted your reference to ‘Voting registration letters’ as referring to both the letter and the form.</p> <p>There are different forms and letters for different types of electors.</p> <p>By law, (i.e. the Representation of the People Regulations 2001 (as amended)), Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) are required to use the registration application forms and the invitation to register letter that has to be issued with the application form, as designed by the Electoral Commission and approved by the Minister.</p> <p>There are a number of other registration-related forms and letters which are not prescribed, but which we have made available for EROs to use or adapt locally.</p> <p>The forms and letters we have designed have been developed by experts in public information design. They have also been through a thorough process of consultation and testing, which has involved EROs, electoral administrators, software suppliers and printers, the general public, RNIB and other best practice and accessibility</p>

	<p>experts.</p> <p>We provide guidance on use of the forms throughout our <a href="#">core guidance to EROs</a>.</p> <p>We also provide specific guidance on electoral registration forms and letters for administrators on our website. The current guidance can be found at the links below. Although, please note that this will shortly be updated to reflect legislative changes to take effect for the 2016 canvass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Guidance on electoral registration form designs and letters - part1 (England and Wales) )</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Guidance on electoral registration form designs and letters - part1 (Scotland)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Guidance on electoral registration form designs and letters - part 2</a></li> </ul> <p>To support EROs with meeting their equality obligations, we have also made available <a href="#">large-print</a>, <a href="#">easy-read</a>, and translations of the voter registration form into <a href="#">various languages</a>.</p> <p>All of our forms and letters for local authorities can be found on our website at the following link:  <a href="http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator/running-electoral-registration">http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator/running-electoral-registration</a> (open the 'Forms' and 'Letters' ZIP file for the various forms and template letters)</p>
Over the size of the paper they should be printed on?	The forms we provide for electoral administration staff to use are in A4 format (to be printed on folded A3).
Which size of text print should be used?	<p>The minimum text font size used in our letters is font type Arial, 12 point size.</p> <p>Our forms comply with the RNIB See It Right standard. The standard specifies 2mm high for lower case letters, which in the case of Arial, corresponds to 10.5pt. We have rounded this down to 10pt to enable the use of Microsoft Word. Headings remain Arial 12pt minimum.</p>
Which font type should be used?	Arial is used in our forms and letters. Where EROs may adapt the letter templates we have produced, we recommend that Arial font type is used.
Which colour should be used for the printed text?	All of our forms and template letters use black text.
What colour of paper should it be printed on?	<p>The assumption is that these will be printed on standard office stationery white paper, but we do not give specific guidance to electoral administrators as to what colour paper letters should be printed on.</p> <p>However, Sections 3 and 6 of our voter materials guidance, <a href="#">Making Your Mark</a>, state that generally dark coloured text on a pale background should be used for voter materials. Our guidance states that having the right contrast of colour</p>

	and brightness is key to making text legible, particularly for people with sight problems.
<p>Can this be provided in All Approved and Commercially Available Disabled Alternative Accessible Formats (D2AFs)? Yes/No</p> <p><i>If No, why?</i> <i>If Yes, which D2AF can be used?</i></p>	<p>To support EROs in making the information contained in registration form accessible to persons who might not otherwise have reasonable access to information, we have also made available <a href="#">large-print</a>, <a href="#">easy-read</a>, and translations of the voter registration form into <a href="#">various languages</a>.</p> <p>It is also important to remember that letters and forms are only one way to register to vote. The forms and letters all prominently highlight that <a href="http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote">www.gov.uk/register-to-vote</a> is a quicker way to register to vote, and this online system, provided by the Cabinet Office, is fully compliant with screen assistive technology.</p> <p>In addition, applications to register can also be made in person and by telephone where allowed by EROs.</p> <p>We also provide guidance to EROs on the electoral registration process for people who, for reasons of physical or mental incapacity, may need assistance in order to register: version for <a href="#">England and Wales</a>; version for <a href="#">Scotland</a>.</p>

### Postal voting forms\*

\* We have interpreted your reference to 'postal voting forms' as meaning forms to apply to vote by post, and also the postal voting statement (PVS), which is a form a postal voter is required to complete when completing their postal vote.

<p>Please provide the rules, legislation or guidelines given to local Council Electoral Officers by the Electoral Commission and/or by the UK Government/Parliament</p>	<p>The content of a postal vote application is set out in Part IV of the Representation of the People Regulations 2001 (as amended). Some of the content is prescribed, but there is no prescribed form that must be used by Electoral Registration Officers or electors.</p> <p>While we do make available forms that Electoral Registration Officers and the public, can use, there is no requirement to use the forms that we have produced. Therefore, we can only comment on the forms that have been produced by us.</p> <p>In terms of the postal voting statement, we do not provide templates for Returning Officers to use. This is because the postal voting statement is prescribed and its content is set out in the relevant election rules. For example, the postal voting statement that must be used at UK Parliamentary elections is set out in Schedule 3 of the Representation of the People Regulations 2001 (as amended). The prescribed form includes reference to contacting the Returning Officer if a copy of the statement is required in Braille or languages other than English (or Welsh in Wales). The legislation also allows the Returning</p>
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	<p>Officer to add pictorial guidance to assist the voter as appropriate. It is a matter for each respective Returning Officer what they provide in this regard.</p> <p>Also, if a person is unable to provide a signature or a consistent signature due to a disability or inability to read or write, the Electoral Registration Officer can waive the requirement for a signature to be provided on the postal voting statement.</p> <p>We provide the following guidance in relation to postal voting forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sections 4E and 6 of our voter materials guidance, <a href="#">Making Your Mark</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">General guidance on absent voting forms is included in Part 5 – Absent voting of our guidance for Electoral Registration Officers</a>.</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Our postal vote application form is available at:</a>  <a href="http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/how-do-i-vote/voting-by-post">http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/how-do-i-vote/voting-by-post</a></p>
<p>Over the size of the paper they should be printed on?</p>	<p>The Commission’s postal vote application form is intended for A4 paper, but could be printed on larger paper sizes as required.</p> <p>The size of the postal voting statement is not prescribed, but will often be determined by the design and contents of the postal ballot pack produced by the Returning Officer. Section 4E of our voter materials guidance, <a href="#">Making Your Mark</a>, states that it should be printed in A4 size. A4 size allows for text to be in a large enough font size to be easily read, with enough space to lay out the information clearly, and enough room for the sections that have to be filled in.</p>
<p>Which size of text print should be used?</p>	<p>Legislation does not specify a font size in either case. Our postal vote application form is in Arial size 12.</p> <p>For materials the voter has to complete, or read close-up, section 3A of our voter materials guidance, <a href="#">Making Your Mark</a>, states that a 14 point font size should be used if possible. If size restrictions mean this is not possible, a minimum of 12 point should be used. All of our point size recommendations refer to fonts with a similar size to Arial. Some fonts are smaller than Arial in the same point sizes, so we state that font size equivalent to those given for Arial should be used (i.e. if using a different font, it may need a larger font size to make it equivalent to the specified size in Arial).</p> <p>Section 3 states that the font should be clear and readable. Anything that will be read close-up needs to be written in a large enough font so that it can be read easily. We also state in our guidance that election staff should take account of the fact that many people have sight or cognitive difficulties and find small text difficult to</p>

	<p>distinguish and read.</p> <p>If necessary, we recommend producing a larger document size rather than reducing the size of the text.</p> <p>Section 6A recommends using different font sizes to help add structure to a document, or to create a 'hierarchy' of information, e.g. by having headings in a larger size than the body text (to help the reader navigate through the document). Three or four different sizes should be adequate to distinguish between title, headings and the main body text.</p> <p>Section 6 also includes links to further guidance from the Plain English Campaign and Royal National Institute for the Blind. The Plain English Campaign recommends aiming for a font size of 12 point (but to not go below 10 point). The Royal National Institute for the Blind recommends a minimum font size of 14 point for readers who are likely to be blind or partially sighted. For headings, use a font size at least two points bigger than the body text.</p>
<p>Which font type should be used?</p>	<p>Legislation does not specify a font type in either case. Our postal vote application form is in Arial size 12.</p> <p>In section 3 of our voter materials guidance, <a href="#">Making Your Mark</a>, we make some general recommendations regarding font type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the same font type throughout all voter materials for consistency</li> <li>• Use a sans-serif font, as these are plainer and more accessible for the reader</li> <li>• Avoid decorative fonts</li> </ul> <p>Guidance states that election staff should aim for maximum clarity and legibility, both for documents that are read close-up, and for notices that need to attract attention and be readable at a distance.</p>
<p>Which colour should be used for the printed text?</p>	<p>Text on our postal vote application form is navy blue.</p> <p>Sections 3A and 6D of our voter materials guidance, <a href="#">Making Your Mark</a> state that generally dark coloured text on a pale background should be used.</p> <p>Section 6 also recommends using colour to highlight or mark out blocks of text, which can be achieved by using coloured text (or by using a coloured background – see below).</p> <p>Our guidance states that having the right contrast of colour and brightness is key to making text legible, particularly for people with sight problems.</p>
<p>What colour of paper should it be printed on?</p>	<p>Our postal vote application is designed to be printed on white paper. Legislation does not prescribe the colour of</p>

	<p>paper the postal voting statement should be printed on.</p> <p>As above, Section 6D of our voter materials guidance, <a href="#">Making Your Mark</a> states that generally dark coloured text on a pale background works best. Vivid background colours should be avoided.</p> <p>Section 6 also recommends using colour to highlight or mark out blocks of text, either by using a coloured background or coloured text. It further recommends that the Returning Officer/CO asks their organisation's communication team for advice on choosing colours, or their printer or designer.</p> <p>As above, our guidance states that having the right contrast of colour and brightness is key to making text legible, particularly for people with sight problems.</p>
<p>Can this be provided in All Approved and Commercially Available Disabled Alternative Accessible Formats (D2AFs)? Yes/No</p> <p><i>If No, why?</i> <i>If Yes, which D2AF can be used?</i></p>	<p>Section 199B of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) give the Returning Officer power to produce certain documents in other formats, including Braille, languages other than English, graphical representations of the information contained, and other means of making the information contained in the document accessible to persons who might not otherwise have reasonable access to information. Subsection (3) states that the person must also, as he thinks appropriate, make that information available in such audible form as he thinks appropriate.</p> <p>The prescribed form for postal voting statements includes reference to contacting the Returning Officer if a copy of the statement is required in Braille or languages other than English (or Welsh in Wales). The legislation also allows the Returning Officer to add pictorial guidance to assist the voter as appropriate. It is a matter for each respective Returning Officer to ensure that in discharging their functions, they meet their equalities obligations.</p>

### Voting Cards\*

*\* also referred to as poll cards*

<p>Please provide the rules, legislation or guidelines given to local Council Electoral Officers by the Electoral Commission and/or by the UK Government/Parliament</p>	<p>Poll cards are prescribed in the relevant election rules for each electoral event. Rule 28 in Schedule 1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) sets out this requirement in respect of a UK Parliamentary election, but similar provisions apply to all electoral events.</p> <p>Under section 199B of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) the Returning Officer has a power to provide certain election documents in alternative formats.</p> <p>For each electoral event, the Electoral Commission produces advice and guidance for Returning Officers, all of which can be accessed from the web link below:</p>
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	<p><a href="http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator">http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator</a></p> <p>Throughout this guidance the Commission makes it clear that Returning Officers are required to provide materials in alternative formats. As an example, see paragraph 5.4 in <a href="#">Part C, Administering the poll at a UK Parliamentary election</a>.</p>
Over the size of the paper they should be printed on?	<p>Legislation does not specify a font size to be used on a poll card, nor the size of card to use when printing poll cards.</p> <p>The Commission does provide <a href="#">guidance on the design of forms and notices</a>, and whilst the content of poll cards is prescribed, principles set out in this guidance can be adopted by Returning Officers.</p>
Which size of text print should be used?	<p>We recommend that poll cards use Arial 12 point (or equivalent), unless unavoidable. Our guidance states that electoral administrators must ensure all key information is minimum 12 point.</p> <p>See Sections 3A and 9B of our voter materials guidance, <a href="#">Making Your Mark</a>.</p>
Which font type should be used?	<p>As set out above, the form of poll cards is prescribed by the election rules. However, the typeface (font) is not prescribed.</p> <p>Our guidance does not recommend a specific font type to use, but does make some general recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the same font type throughout all voter materials for consistency</li> <li>• Use a sans-serif font, as these are plainer and more accessible for the reader</li> <li>• Avoid decorative fonts</li> </ul> <p>Election staff should aim for maximum clarity and legibility, both for documents that are read close-up, and for notices that need to attract attention and be readable at a distance.</p>
Which colour should be used for the printed text?	<p>Sections 3A and 6D both state that generally dark coloured text on a pale background should be used.</p> <p>Section 6 also recommends using colour to highlight or mark out blocks of text, which can be achieved by using coloured text (or by using a coloured background – see below).</p> <p>Our guidance states that having the right contrast of colour and brightness is key to making text legible, particularly for people with sight problems.</p>
What colour of paper should it be printed on?	<p>The colour of card used for poll cards is not prescribed in legislation.</p>

	<p>Section 6D of our voter materials guidance, <a href="#">Making Your Mark</a> states that generally dark coloured text on a pale background works best. Vivid background colours should be avoided.</p>
<p>Can this be provided in All Approved and Commercially Available Disabled Alternative Accessible Formats (D2AFs)? Yes/No</p> <p><i>If No, why?</i> <i>If Yes, which D2AF can be used?</i></p>	<p>Section 199B of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) give the Returning Officer power to produce certain documents in other formats, including Braille, languages other than English, graphical representations of the information contained, and other means of making the information contained in the document accessible to persons who might not otherwise have reasonable access to information. Subsection (3) states that the person must also, as he thinks appropriate, make that information available in such audible form as he thinks appropriate.</p> <p>Throughout the Commission’s guidance for Returning Officers, it is made clear that Returning Officers must have regard to their equality obligations. As an example, see paragraph 5.4 <a href="#">in Part C, Administering the poll at a UK Parliamentary election</a>.</p>

Voting ballot forms	
<p>Please provide the rules, legislation or guidelines given to local Council Electoral Officers by the Electoral Commission and/or by the UK Government/Parliament</p>	<p>Voting ballot forms (ballot papers) for each electoral event are strictly prescribed in law. An example of this can be seen in <a href="#">Schedule 1 of the Representation of the People (Ballot Paper) Regulations 2015</a>.</p> <p>For each electoral event, the Electoral Commission produces general advice and guidance for Returning Officers, all of which can be accessed from the web link below:</p> <p><a href="http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator">http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator</a></p>
<p>Over the size of the paper they should be printed on?</p>	<p>The size of the ballot paper is influenced by the directions for printing which are set out in law, and the number of candidates that are validly nominated at an election and therefore have to be printed on the ballot paper. <a href="#">The Representation of the People (Ballot Paper) Regulations 2015</a> include the directions for printing UK Parliamentary ballot papers.</p>
<p>Which size of text print should be used?</p>	<p>The Commission’s <a href="#">Making your Mark</a> guidance, along with the <a href="#">relevant Part C of the guidance for Returning Officers</a> sets out that in all cases the maximum possible sizes of font should be used and, to ensure consistency, the same font size should be used for each candidate or party appearing on the ballot paper.</p>

<p>Which font type should be used?</p>	<p>As set out above, the form of the ballot paper is prescribed by the election rules. However, the typeface (font) is not prescribed.</p> <p>Our guidance does not recommend a specific font type to use, but does make some general recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the same font type throughout all voter materials for consistency</li> <li>• Use a sans-serif font, as these are plainer and more accessible for the reader</li> <li>• Avoid decorative fonts</li> </ul>
<p>Which colour should be used for the printed text?</p>	<p>Sections 3A and 6D of the <a href="#">Making your Mark guidance</a> both state that generally dark coloured text on a pale background should be used.</p>
<p>What colour of paper should it be printed on?</p>	<p>The colour of the ballot paper is not prescribed in law. The Returning Officer is responsible for determining the colour of the ballot paper used.</p> <p>Where elections are combined, i.e. there is more than one election taking place on the same day, legislation requires each ballot paper colour to be different.</p> <p>Section 6D of our voter materials guidance, <a href="#">Making Your Mark</a> states that generally dark coloured text on a pale background works best. Vivid background colours should be avoided.</p>
<p>Can this be provided in All Approved and Commercially Available Disabled Alternative Accessible Formats (D2AFs)? Yes/No</p> <p><i>If No, why?</i> <i>If Yes, which D2AF can be used?</i></p>	<p>Section 199B of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) specifically excludes ballot papers from those documents that can be produced in any other language or format. This is so that the secrecy of the ballot is not compromised.</p> <p>There are, however, a number of options available to voters to help them cast their vote.</p> <p>In order to assist voters, Returning Officers must display enlarged copies of the ballot papers at polling stations and must produce an enlarged hand-held copy of the ballot paper marked sample to assist voters when marking their ballot paper.</p> <p>Voters in polling stations can seek the assistance of the presiding officer, who can, at their request, mark the ballot paper for them. Voters can also bring someone with them to help them vote.</p> <p>Polling stations must also be equipped with a template to assist voters with visual impairments so that they can mark</p>

their ballot paper unaided. This is normally referred to as a tactile voting device. The Presiding Officer would explain to the voter how it is used and read out the instructions printed at the top of the ballot paper. The voter would then mark their ballot paper unaided and return the template to the Presiding Officer.

If someone votes by post, then the voter can also contact the elections office to ask for assistance when completing their postal vote.

## Election leaflets\*

***\*We have interpreted this as meaning voter information leaflets produced by the Commission***

Please provide the rules, legislation or guidelines given to local Council Electoral Officers by the Electoral Commission and/or by the UK Government/Parliament

The Electoral Commission, where appropriate, produces voter information leaflets as part of its remit to raise public awareness of specific electoral events.

Where we determine there is a need to produce a voter information leaflet we also consider what formats to produce these in which will generally include easy read, large print, Braille and audio versions.

When producing alternative formats for voter information leaflets, we take advice from external suppliers. Our suppliers are members of the UK Association of Accessible Formats (UKAAF), follow the guidelines set out in the Equality Act 2010 and keep up to date with guidelines set by the Royal National Institute of Blind people (RNIB). We also consult [government guidance](#) to check the work of our external suppliers.

When we produce voter information leaflets, including alternative format versions, we encourage electoral services and communications staff at local authorities to use what we produce and to make these available to people in their local areas.

Over the size of the paper they should be printed on?

We don't prescribe a page size for voter information leaflets. We take advice from our suppliers about the best presentation of our leaflets for our audiences. In general our suppliers advise us that easy-read and large print documents should be at least A4.

Which size of text print should be used?

We don't prescribe the point size of text. As a standard, we ensure that text in our voter information leaflets isn't smaller than 12pt. This differs for easy read and large print documents, based on the input and recommendations of design specialists and insights we get from members of the public where we test our voter information leaflets before producing them. Our suppliers advise us that the standard for large print must be no smaller than 16pt, though they

	will often use their own internal standard of 18pt on our products.
Which font type should be used?	We usually use sans serif fonts (like Arial or Swis721) in voter information leaflets for clarity and legibility. The specific fonts may vary as designs for voter information leaflets change for each electoral event. This also varies for easy read products as required for legibility and audience preferences in instances where we test our voter information leaflets with members of the public. Easy read documents are sometimes produced in FS Me, which was created by Mencap, and is easier for people with learning disabilities to read.
Which colour should be used for the printed text?	As a standard we will make sure there is a legible contrast between the text and background colour. We take advice from our suppliers where easy-read or versions for people with visual impairments need enhancing for legibility.
What colour of paper should it be printed on?	Ordinarily, body copy in a voter information leaflet will be on a light background for legibility. We do not prescribe a specific colour, and this will vary across different designs of booklets, and versions for audiences with vision impairments.
Can this be provided in All Approved and Commercially Available Disabled Alternative Accessible Formats (D2AFs)? Yes/No  <i>If No, why?</i> <i>If Yes, which D2AF can be used?</i>	Our voter information booklets are usually provided in easy-read, large print, braille and audio versions. Our suppliers can create materials in all D2AFs.

### Election information posters at polling station and council offices etc

Please provide the rules, legislation or guidelines given to local Council Electoral Officers by the Electoral Commission and/or by the UK Government/Parliament	<p>Generally, the format of notices that are displayed at council offices is not prescribed. This is not the case for polling station notices.</p> <p>The 'Guidance for voters notice', which is a notice that is displayed inside the polling station providing information on the voting process, can be found in the Appendix of forms for each election or contest. There are also notices that must be displayed in each polling booth, the content of which is also prescribed.</p> <p>Under section 199B of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) the Returning Officer has a power to provide certain election documents in alternative formats.</p> <p>For each electoral event, the Electoral Commission produces general advice and guidance for Returning Officers, all of which can be accessed from the web link</p>
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	<p>below:</p> <p><a href="http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator">http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator</a></p> <p>Part C of the guidance for each election deals with provision of polling station notices and materials.</p> <p>Returning Officers are also asked to refer to sections 4B, 4C and 6 of the Commission's <a href="#">Making Your Mark guidance</a></p>
<p>Over the size of the paper they should be printed on?</p>	<p>For polling station notices, Section 4B of our Making your Mark guidance states to print in A2 size. If this is not possible, it recommends for use a minimum size of A3.</p> <p>Polling station notices need to attract attention and need to be easily read at a distance. A2 size allows for text to be in a large enough font size to be easily read.</p> <p>For polling booth notices, the guidance recommends to print in a minimum of A3 size. This allows for text to be in a large enough font size to be easily read, and space for pictures.</p>
<p>Which size of text print should be used?</p>	<p>Anything that will be displayed at a distance needs to be large enough to be read at a distance. As we state in Section 3 of our <a href="#">Making Your Mark guidance</a>, we recommend using a minimum of 26 point for notices or anything displayed in a poster format.</p> <p>Section 6A recommends using different font sizes to help add structure to a document, or to create a 'hierarchy' of information, e.g. by having headings in a larger size than the body text (to help the reader navigate through the document). Different font sizes can also make the document more visually appealing (instead of a dense 'block' of information in a single font size). Three or four different sizes should be adequate to distinguish between title, headings and the main body text.</p> <p>Section 6B states that large documents (e.g. posters and notices) need larger fonts. It recommends the Returning Officer/CO gets professional advice from their printer or communication team on which fonts are suitable for printing in a large size, e.g. for a notice or poster.</p> <p>Fonts vary in size, even in the same point size. Font point sizes used in the guidance refer to the size of Arial in that point size. If electoral administrators are using a different font, they may need to use a larger font size to make it equivalent to the specified size in Arial.</p>
<p>Which font type should be used?</p>	<p>Our guidance does not recommend a specific font type to use, but section 3 of our guidance does make some general recommendations:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the same font type throughout all voter materials for consistency</li> <li>• Use a sans-serif font, as these are plainer and more accessible for the reader</li> <li>• Avoid decorative fonts</li> </ul> <p>Guidance states that election staff should aim for maximum clarity and legibility, both for documents that are read close-up, and for notices that need to attract attention and be readable at a distance.</p>
<p>Which colour should be used for the printed text?</p>	<p>Sections 3A and 6D of the <a href="#">Making Your Mark guidance</a> both state that generally dark coloured text on a pale background should be used.</p> <p>Section 6 also recommends using colour to highlight or mark out blocks of text, which can be achieved by using coloured text (or by using a coloured background – see below).</p> <p>Our guidance states that having the right contrast of colour and brightness is key to making text legible, particularly for people with sight problems.</p> <p>Colour makes notices visually appealing, professional and less austere than just monochrome (black and white). Colour blocking helps to distinguish separate sections of information.</p>
<p>What colour of paper should it be printed on?</p>	<p>As above, Section 6D states that generally dark coloured text on a pale background works best. Vivid background colours should be avoided.</p> <p>Section 6 also recommends using colour to highlight or mark out blocks of text, either by using a coloured background or coloured text. It further recommends that the Returning Officer asks their organisation's communication team for advice on choosing colours, or their printer or designer.</p> <p>As above, our guidance states that having the right contrast of colour and brightness is key to making text legible, particularly for people with sight problems.</p>
<p>Can this be provided in All Approved and Commercially Available Disabled Alternative Accessible Formats (D2AFs)? Yes/No</p> <p><i>If No, why?</i> <i>If Yes, which D2AF can be used?</i></p>	<p>Section 199B of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) gives the Returning Officer power to produce certain documents in other formats, including Braille, languages other than English, graphical representations of the information contained, and other means of making the information contained in the document accessible to persons who might not otherwise have reasonable access to information. Subsection (3) states that the person must also, as he thinks appropriate, make that information available in such audible form as he thinks appropriate.</p>

The Commission has no powers to regulate the content of political party and candidate materials. Party and candidate election or campaign materials are a matter for the party or candidate. We do, however, provide guidance for candidates and agents and in it, we recommend that parties and candidates “consider how to make your campaign accessible to people who are visually impaired, have learning difficulties or low literacy skills, or whose first language isn't English or, in Wales, Welsh. You may want to make contact with disability groups in your local area for advice.” See, for example, p.10 of our guidance for candidates and agents at the 2015 UK Parliamentary general election: [www.electoralcommission.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0013/173020/UKPGE-Part-4-The-campaign.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0013/173020/UKPGE-Part-4-The-campaign.pdf).

Questions about the content of specific materials will need to be put to the relevant political party or candidate.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is Great Britain's national equality body and they have published guidance for political parties and candidates about how equality and human rights law affects election campaigning. A copy of their guidance can be found here: [www.equalityhumanrights.com/electoral-guidance](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/electoral-guidance)

For further information you will need to contact the Equality and Human Rights Commission:

Equality and Human Rights Commission  
Fleetbank House  
2-6 Salisbury Square  
London  
EC4Y 8JX

## **Part 2 – Equalities legislation and disability equality impact assessments**

Our responses to the questions in Part 2 are as follows:

### **5. Who is responsible for enforcing Disability & equality Laws with regards Elections, if Disabled People are discriminated at these Elections, also who do Disabled People report acts of Disabled Discrimination at Election for investigation and to Address properly?**

If you experience or witness discrimination in the voting process - for example, a disabled voter is turned away from a polling station - it should immediately be reported to the Returning Officer of the local authority against which the complaint is made. The Returning Officer will be best placed to investigate the issue locally and ensure that the issue is resolved. We can also follow up with the local authority concerned if a complaint is made to us and, if appropriate, will continue to work with the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer concerned through our ongoing performance monitoring work (see also the heading 'Performance standards' under question 4 below).

If the issue is not satisfactorily dealt with locally or a person wishes to pursue their complaint further, it should be addressed to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (details below):

Equality and Human Rights Commission  
Fleetbank House  
2-6 Salisbury Square  
London  
EC4Y 8JX

## **6. What improvement has the Electoral Commission made with regards Accessible Elections for All Types of Disabilities and All Disabled People in the last 21 years since the 1995 Disabled Discrimination Act, could you give examples of any?**

The Electoral Commission was established in November 2000 under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

We recognise that people living with a disability can face challenges when registering and casting their vote. We take very seriously the need to ensure that all voters can exercise their rights. Everyone who is eligible should be able to register and cast their vote without impediment.

However, it is worth noting that the Commission is not responsible for setting the rules governing elections and registration. Electoral legislation is a matter for the Cabinet Office. Their contact details are included below for your reference:

John Penrose MP  
Minister of Constitutional Reform  
Cabinet Office  
70 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2AS

### **Guidance for Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers**

Under Section 10 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act we have the power to give advice and assistance to Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers. We work to support well-run elections and referendums in the UK, offering support and guidance to those involved. As part of this, we give guidance to Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers to ensure electoral processes are accessible to all.

Our full guidance suite for Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers can be accessed from the web link below:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator>

Below are a number of resources that the Commission produces, which may be of particular interest:

- [Polling station handbook – includes guidance on accessibility throughout, but in particular, at Appendix 1.](#)
- [Polling station accessibility checklist](#) – used by staff to ensure polling stations are accessible.
- [Polling station staff training](#) – provided to Returning Officers / Counting Officers to assist with the training of polling station staff.
- [Design criteria for forms and notices](#)
- [Making your Mark guidance](#)

As well as the [participation resources for Electoral Registration Officers](#), there are also some specific guidance documents to help Electoral Registration Officers fulfil their equality obligations. These are:

- [The factsheet on producing accessible documents.](#)

- [Guidance on assisted applications](#) in England and Wales. There is an equivalent document for [Scotland](#).

We have also produced a guidance document for care staff that provides key information about registration:

- [Guidance for care staff](#) in England and Wales. There is an equivalent document for [Scotland](#).

### **Performance standards**

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 gave the Electoral Commission powers to set and monitor performance standards for electoral services.

The Commission's current performance standards framework for Returning Officers (Returning Officers) was established in September 2013 and aims to support Returning Officers in delivering a consistent high-quality service for voters and those standing for election. The current framework can be found here:

[http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/163821/New-performance-standards-for-Returning-Officers-November-2013.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/163821/New-performance-standards-for-Returning-Officers-November-2013.pdf)

Performance standard 1 focusses on ensuring that Returning Officer planning for and delivery of the poll enables voters to vote easily and know that their vote will be counted in the way they intended. One of the elements of this standard is 'Voters receive a high-quality service'. To achieve this outcome, Returning Officers are required to:

- Ensure that access needs are taken into account when planning for and setting up polling stations
- Decide on the allocation of electors and staff to polling stations to ensure polling stations are properly staffed so that voters receive a high-quality service, giving consideration to the factors set out in Commission guidance
- Ensure polling station staff are trained to assist electors and set-up polling stations in such a way as to take account of voters' needs.

The Commission's guidance aims to support Returning Officers to ensure that they are able to meet all elements of the performance standards. Where we are made aware of instances where this may not be the case, we will work with the Returning Officer and their team to improve their performance, but may also make an assessment that a Returning Officer has failed to meet an element of our standards and formally report on this. We do, however, not have powers to compel Returning Officers to take certain actions.

### **Polling place reviews and appeals**

All local authorities must review their UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places at least once every four years. By law, as part of the review, local authorities must seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to all electors, including those with disabilities. The council must have regard to the accessibility of disabled persons for all polling places or potential polling places.

The statutory responsibility for reviewing UK Parliamentary polling districts and places rests with each relevant local authority in Great Britain for so much of any constituency as is situated in its area.

The Commission has produced guidance for local authorities on administering a review, which is available on our website:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator/polling-place-reviews>

While legislation provides no role for the Commission in the review process, it does provide for a role after the conclusion of the review.

Once the local authority has published the results of its review, specified interested parties may make representations to the Commission to reconsider any polling districts and polling places. We may direct the authority to make any alterations to the polling places that we think necessary and, if the alterations are not made within two months, we may make the alterations ourselves.

### **Our public awareness work**

As part of our public awareness campaigns to increase voter registration and provide voters with the information they needed to take part in electoral events, we formed a wide range of partnerships with private, public and voluntary organisations to help us reach our audiences such as those people living with a physical disability.

The Electoral Commission provides its public awareness materials in several alternative formats. For example, the EU Referendum Voting Guide is available in the following:

- Audio
- BSL
- EasyRead
- Large print
- Braille

All are available in hard copy, and all (except for Braille) are available on our website.

### **Working in partnership with others**

Since 2014 the Commission has attended meetings with Cabinet Office, the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) and Mencap. In these meetings, accessibility issues, and potential measures to address them, are discussed. As a result of these meetings, Cabinet Office sponsored Mencap to produce easy read guides for voters with learning disabilities. The Commission carries these guides on our website and has promoted them among local authorities.

We will continue to work with Cabinet Office, RNIB and Mencap ahead of the May 2017 elections. In addition to these meetings, the Commission intends to undertake further work as part of a project on accessibility issues to determine what additional work or support would be useful.

The Commission also has experience of working with a range of disability organisations to help raise public awareness and increase our reach. Examples of this include joint resources developed with charities such as Mencap, Enable Scotland and RNIB Cymru.

An example of our joint resources can be found here:

[http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/200051/EC-Mencap-voting-factsheet-2016.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/200051/EC-Mencap-voting-factsheet-2016.pdf)

We will continue to develop partnerships with disability groups and to highlight resources through our webpages and social media.

## **7. Provide copies of Disability Equality Impact Assessment's (D-EIA's) Review Reports, current ones (no older than 2 years), for every polling station in Blackpool?**

The Electoral Commission does not hold copies of D-EIAs for polling stations. You will need to contact Blackpool Borough Council at:

**Blackpool Borough Council**  
 Electoral Registration Officer  
 Electoral Services  
 PO Box 1066  
 Town Hall  
 Blackpool  
 FY1 9SD  
 01253 477490 / 477161  
[electoral.registration@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:electoral.registration@blackpool.gov.uk)

- 8. Please provide the Disability Equality Impact Assessment's for the following polling stations:**
- n. Polling Station in Rt Hon David Cameron (Con) MP Constituency of Witney,**
  - o. Polling Station in Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn (Lab) MP Constituency of Islington North.**
  - p. Polling Station in Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh (SNP) MP Constituency of Ochil and South Perthshire,**
  - q. Polling Station in Tim Farron (LD) MP Constituency of Westmorland and Lonsdale.**
  - r. Polling Station in Mr Gregory Campbell (DUP) MP Constituency of East Londonderry,**
  - s. Polling Station in Mr Douglas Carswell (UKIP) MP Constituency of Clacton,**
  - t. Polling Station in Simon Danczuk (Ind) MP Constituency of Rochdale,**
  - u. Polling Station in Tom Elliott (UUP) MP Constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone.**
  - v. Polling Station in Mark Durkan (SDLP) MP Constituency of Foyle,**
  - w. Polling Station in Jonathan Edwards (PC) MP Constituency of Carmarthen East and Dinefwr,**
  - x. Polling Station in Lady Hermon (Ind) MP of Constituency North Down,**
  - y. Polling Station in Natalie McGarry (Ind) MP of Constituency Glasgow East**
  - z. Polling Station in Michelle Thomson (Ind) MP of Constituency Edinburgh West too?.**

**Please confirm if Electoral Commission holds current D-EIA's Review Reports for every Polling Station in the UK**

The Commission does not undertake, or hold copies of, D-EIAs for polling stations in the UK. For each polling station listed above in bullets a-m, you will need to contact the relevant local authority. For your information, we have included the contact details below:

Polling Station in Rt Hon David Cameron (Con) MP Constituency of Witney	<b>West Oxfordshire District Council</b> Returning Officer Council Offices Wood Green Witney Oxfordshire OX28 1NB 01993 861410 <a href="mailto:elections@westoxon.gov.uk">elections@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
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<p>Polling Station in Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn (Lab) MP Constituency of Islington North</p>	<p><b>London Borough of Islington</b>  Returning Officer  Islington Town Hall  Upper Street  London  N1 2UD  020 7527 3110  <a href="mailto:electoral.services@islington.gov.uk">electoral.services@islington.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Polling Station in Ms Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh (SNP) MP Constituency of Ochil and South Perthshire</p>	<p><b>Clackmannanshire Council</b>  Returning Officer  Kilncraigs  Greenside Street  Alloa  FK10 1EB  Tel: 01259 450000  Email: <a href="mailto:elections@clacks.gov.uk">elections@clacks.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Polling Station in Tim Farron (LD) MP Constituency of Westmorland and Lonsdale</p>	<p><b>South Lakeland District Council</b>  Returning Officer  South Lakeland House  Lowther Street  Kendal  LA9 4UQ  01539 733333  <a href="mailto:elections@southlakeland.gov.uk">elections@southlakeland.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Polling Station in Mr Gregory Campbell (DUP) MP Constituency of East Londonderry</p>	<p><b>Derry and Strabane</b>  The Electoral Office Headquarters  St Anne's House  15 Church Street  Belfast  County Antrim  BT1 1ER  0800 4320 712  <a href="mailto:info@eoni.org.uk">info@eoni.org.uk</a></p>
<p>Polling Station in Mr Douglas Carswell (UKIP) MP Constituency of Clacton</p>	<p><b>Tendring District Council</b>  Returning Officer  Town Hall  Station Road  Clacton-on-Sea  Essex  CO15 1SE  01255 686586  <a href="mailto:elections@tendringdc.gov.uk">elections@tendringdc.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Polling Station in Simon Danczuk (Ind) MP Constituency of Rochdale</p>	<p><b>Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council</b>  Returning Officer  PO Box 207  Town Hall  The Esplanade</p>

	<p>Rochdale OL16 1EW 01706 924758 <a href="mailto:elections@rochdale.gov.uk">elections@rochdale.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Polling Station in Tom Elliott (UUP) MP Constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone</p>	<p><b>Fermanagh and Omagh</b> The Electoral Office Headquarters St Anne's House 15 Church Street Belfast County Antrim BT1 1ER 0800 4320 712 <a href="mailto:info@eoni.org.uk">info@eoni.org.uk</a></p>
<p>Polling Station in Mark Durkan (SDLP) MP Constituency of Foyle</p>	<p><b>Derry and Strabane</b> The Electoral Office Headquarters St Anne's House 15 Church Street Belfast County Antrim BT1 1ER 0800 4320 712 <a href="mailto:info@eoni.org.uk">info@eoni.org.uk</a></p>
<p>Polling Station in Jonathan Edwards (PC) MP Constituency of Carmarthen East and Dinefwr</p>	<p><b>Carmarthenshire County Council</b> Returning Officer Block 4 Parc Myrddin Richmond Terrace Carmarthen SA31 1HQ 01267 228889 <a href="mailto:electoralservices@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">electoralservices@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Polling Station in Lady Hermon (Ind) MP of Constituency North Down</p>	<p><b>North Down and Ards</b> The Electoral Office Headquarters St Anne's House 15 Church Street Belfast County Antrim BT1 1ER 0800 4320 712 <a href="mailto:info@eoni.org.uk">info@eoni.org.uk</a></p>
<p>Polling Station in Natalie McGarry (Ind) MP of Constituency Glasgow East</p>	<p><b>Glasgow City Council</b> Returning Officer Glasgow City Council City Chambers Glasgow G2 1DU 0141 287 5684 <a href="mailto:elections@glasgow.gov.uk">elections@glasgow.gov.uk</a></p>

Polling Station in Michelle Thomson (Ind)  
MP of Constituency Edinburgh West

- Electoral Registration Officer  
Lothian Valuation Joint Board  
17A South Gyle Crescent  
• EDINBURGH  
EH12 9FL  
0131 344 2500
- Email [usenquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk](mailto:usenquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk) Electoral Registration Officer

Lothian Valuation Joint Board  
17A South Gyle Crescent  
• EDINBURGH  
EH12 9FL  
0131 344 2500  
Email [usenquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk](mailto:usenquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk)  
[www.lothian-vjb.gov.uk/](http://www.lothian-vjb.gov.uk/)  
**City of Edinburgh Council**  
Electoral Registration Officer  
Council Headquarters  
Waverley Court  
4 East Market Street  
Edinburgh  
EH8 8BG  
0131 469 3126  
[elections@edinburgh.gov.uk](http://elections@edinburgh.gov.uk)

I trust that this information satisfies your request. The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority.

If you are not satisfied with this response, please note that the Commission operates a review procedure, details of which can be found on the Commission website at:  
<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information-requests/how-do-i-make-an-foi-request>

Please also note that if you have exhausted all internal Commission review procedures and you are still not satisfied you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner. Details of this procedure can be found on the ICO website: <http://www.ico.gov.uk>

Yours sincerely

**Paul O'Malley**  
**Information Adviser (Records Management)**

The Electoral Commission

3 Bunhill Row

London EC1Y 8YZ

Tel: 020 7271 0554

Fax: 020 7271 0665

[www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)

[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)

Putting voters first



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