

Dear Colleagues

This week's bulletin provides details of our out of hours service during the election period, information on the completion of verification and the declaration of results, an update on referendum campaigning, further details on insurance provisions and a summary of recent and forthcoming circulars and publications that will be of interest to you.

## Out of Hours Advice Service

We offer a comprehensive advice service during the election period through staff based in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Coventry, Exeter, London and York. This service will be staffed from 8:30am to 5:30 pm on weekdays and between 10am and 5pm on Bank Holidays on our usual [office numbers](#). After hours assistance for urgent enquiries is also available until 10pm on weekdays and from 10am until 5pm at weekends. Contact numbers for urgent out of hours enquiries are:

England	01392 314617
Northern Ireland	07789 920413
Scotland	07917 038549
Wales	07789 920411

I will provide further details of the advice service that will be available from 5 to 9 May 2011 in a later bulletin.

## Verification and the declaration of results

I thought it would be helpful to highlight again the process for completing the verification and declaring results. As I set out in module 4 of my instructions - 'verification and count' - the verification of all contests must be completed before you can declare the local referendum total or any election results. This does not mean that the counting of votes cannot begin before the verification of all ballot papers in the voting area has been completed, only that the results of any particular poll cannot be declared. The verification process will have been completed once the statement of verification for each poll has been prepared and signed.

Tomorrow we will provide Counting Officers with our verification and count information communication protocol which will set out the process for communicating information about the verification and counting of votes to the Regional Counting Officer at the referendum, in advance of the rehearsal which will take place during the afternoon on Friday 8 April.

## Referendum Campaigning Update

The Commission has designated the official lead Yes and No campaigners for the referendum: 'Yes in May 2011 Ltd' (campaigning as 'Yes to Fairer Votes') and 'No Campaign Limited' (campaigning as 'NO to AV') respectively.

Both organisations now have access to specific benefits which are not afforded to other campaigners, including an increased campaign spending limit of £5 million each, a public grant of up to £380,000 each, referendum broadcasts, a free delivery of campaign material to voters and the use of public rooms.

You can expect to see referendum broadcasts on from the two lead campaign groups on the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 on the following dates:

11 April - NO campaign  
12 April - YES campaign  
2 May - NO campaign  
3 May - YES campaign

## Insurance Provisions

As you know, the Commission has taken out insurance cover for the referendum for Employers Liability, Public Liability, Professional Indemnity and Personal Accident. The policies provide cover to the Electoral Commission, the Chief Counting Officer, the Deputy Chief Counting Officers, the Regional Counting Officers and the Counting Officers, as well as their staff.

It has been brought to my attention that the Personal Accident Policy contains a General Exclusion restricting cover to people who are under 80 years of age. We have now contacted our insurance broker who has confirmed that they are able to extend cover to people of 80 years and over as long as they are notified in advance.

If you are intending to employ staff who are 80 years of age or over, please send Carlos Freitas ([cfreitas@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:cfreitas@electoralcommission.org.uk)) the following details for each person, so that appropriate cover can be arranged:

- Full name
- Council
- Age on 5 May

## Publications and circulars

Last week we published two circulars, EC13/2011 on the designation of lead campaign groups for the UK-wide referendum and EC14/2011 requesting a further copy of the full register from each authority for research purposes.

Tomorrow we will be issuing a circular which will provide further information on our public information campaign in the run up to May 5 and provide guidance on how to direct any resulting enquiries from the public. It will also give advice on handling enquiries from the media over the coming weeks.

As I set out in module 1 of my instructions ('Planning and organisation', which was issued on 23 December 2010), I will be monitoring compliance with the directions, which will include asking for confirmation that you have completed the required tasks through the completion of checklists at pre-determined points in the electoral process. This real-time monitoring will replace the performance standards framework for the purposes of the 5 May 2011 polls. Tomorrow we will issue a circular which sets out what confirmation, data and information I will be seeking from 1 April 2011 in order to gain assurances about how the referendum and combined polls on 5 May 2011 are being conducted.

If you have any comments or suggestions to make about the content or format of these bulletins then please contact Barbara Lines ([blines@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:blines@electoralcommission.org.uk))