

(Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain You are in the Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain section Home Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain View the navigation tree Go to main guidance section: Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain Returning Officer and (Acting) Returning Officer Planning for the election Voter Materials Starting the election timetable Nominations Agents Absent Voting Polling station voting Equipment and materials to be provided for the polling station Setting up polling stations Providing information about the number of ballot papers issued Close of poll Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers - Polling station voting Verification and Count After the election Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers Polling station voting This part of the guidance focuses on the preparations you will need to make in advance of polling day and some of the issues that you, as RO, may need to consider on the day. It covers what equipment and materials you will need to provide for polling stations, information on polling station set-up and managing the close of poll. Our polling station handbook covers in detail the voting procedures and what polling station staff can expect on polling day. Polling station handbook – UK Parliamentary election (PDF) - We are updating this resource to reflect new measures introduced by the Elections Act 2022. It will be available again once the updates have been completed. If you are running a UK Parliamentary by-election you should contact your local Commission team for support and advice. You can find our guidance on the identification of suitable polling stations in our section on booking suitable polling stations . Last updated: 31 May 2023 Book traversal links for Polling station voting Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers - Absent voting Equipment and materials to be provided for the polling station

(Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain You are in the Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain section Home Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain View the navigation tree Go to main guidance section: Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain Returning Officer and (Acting) Returning Officer Planning for the election Planning for a UK Parliamentary election Learning from previous polls Developing plans for the election Planning for the delivery of key processes Allocating sufficient staff resources and providing training Identify and book suitable venues and plan layouts Managing contractors and suppliers Maintaining the integrity of the election Planning for communication activity Accredited Observers and Commission representatives Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers - Planning for the election Voter Materials Starting the election timetable Nominations Agents Absent Voting Polling station voting Verification and Count After the election Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers Planning for the election Planning for the election A UK Parliamentary election is a significant event which brings with it its own particular challenges. Having robust plans in place are crucial to ensure you are able to deliver a well-run election. This section of the guidance covers the planning you will need to do to support the delivery of the election, including what your project plan should contain and how you should go about implementing it. It also contains guidance on staffing and staff training required, the specific venues needed for key processes, and support on the use of suppliers and contractors. Additionally, this section also contains guidance on identifying, monitoring and mitigating risk, and developing plans with the police to ensure the integrity of the election is maintained. Finally, it provides guidance on how you will need to plan for your public awareness activity to promote both voter registration and provide information to support electors voting, and engagement with candidates and agents. Last updated: 30 May 2023 Book traversal links for Planning for the election Relevant legislation Planning for a UK Parliamentary election

Starting the election timetable | Electoral Commission

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election Poll Card delivery Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers - Starting the

election timetable Nominations Agents Absent Voting Polling station voting

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Starting the election timetable This section of the guidance covers the statutory

actions that must take place to enable the election timetable to formally commence.

This includes: the process for the issue and receipt of the writ the subsequent

publication of the notice of election the requirement to deliver poll cards as soon

as is practicable after the notice of election is published Last updated: 31 May 2023

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(Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain You are in the Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain section Home Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain View the navigation tree Go to main guidance section: Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain Returning Officer and (Acting) Returning Officer Planning for the election Voter Materials Starting the election timetable Nominations Agents Absent Voting Polling station voting Verification and Count Planning for the verification and count Attendance at the verification and count Verification The count Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers - Verification and Count After the election Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers Verification and Count This section is intended to help you make decisions about some of the key aspects of delivering the verification and the counting of the votes, such as managing attendance and observation, ensuring security of ballot papers, audit processes and dealing with doubtful ballot papers. It provides guidance to support the key decisions you need to make, and highlights recommended approaches to assist you in understanding and discharging your duties, ensuring that there is transparency in the process and enabling you to deliver an accurate result in which voters, candidates and political parties have confidence. Last updated: 31 May 2023 Book traversal links for Verification and Count Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers - Polling station voting Planning for the verification and count

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Attendance at the verification and count | Electoral Commission

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Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain You are in the Verification and Count section Home Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain Verification and Count View the navigation tree Go to main guidance section: Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain Returning Officer and (Acting) Returning Officer Planning for the election Voter Materials Starting the election timetable Nominations Agents Absent Voting Polling station voting Verification and Count Planning for the verification and count Attendance at the verification and count Verification The count Counting the votes Doubtful ballot papers Reconciliation of count totals Provisional results and recounts Equality of votes Declaring the results Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers - Verification and Count After the election Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers The count Count staff should arrive at the times agreed by you in advance and should check the count stationery and equipment is present, using our checklist to assist. You should ensure that staff are checked in and that you brief them as necessary to ensure smooth delivery of the count. You must have taken reasonable steps to begin counting the votes as soon as practicable within four hours of the close of poll. The fact that there may be voters waiting in a queue to cast their vote does not alter the fact that close of poll continues to be 10pm. This means that you will need to have taken all reasonable steps to start the count by 2am, even if voters are waiting in a queue at 10pm. 1 At stand-alone polls, you do not have to wait until you have completed the verification, before you can start counting the votes. 2 What to do if you are unable to start the count within four hours of the close of poll If you do not commence counting the votes within four hours of the close of poll you must publish and deliver to the Commission a statement setting out the time at which counting did begin, the steps you had taken to comply with the duty and the reasons why the counting of votes had not commenced by 2am. You must also publish the statement, which should include making it available on the local authority's website. We have produced a template statement for those (A)ROs who do not commence counting within four hours of the close of poll and you can access this from our resources page for this section. 3 It is important that you keep a record of all steps taken in order to provide an audit trail demonstrating your decision making processes. If you consider that all reasonable steps have been taken and that a further step is not reasonable, you should keep a record of your consideration and why you have decided it would not be reasonable. You should be able to explain your decisions, and should be prepared to do so in response to enquiries. The statement should include the: name of constituency name of (Acting) Returning Officer date and time (in 24 hour format, e.g. 03:45) at which the counting of the votes given on the ballot papers began description of the steps taken to ensure the counting of votes commenced within 4 hours of the close of poll (Acting) Returning Officer's explanation for why the counting of the votes did not commence by 2am You should send statements to your local Commission team, preferably by e-mail, and must send them by not later than 30 calendar days of the declaration of result. We are legally required to publish in our statutory report on the election a list of all constituencies where counting did not begin within the prescribed timescale. 1. Schedule 1 rule 45(3A) Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983) ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Paragraph 22(1AB) The Representation of the People (Combination of Polls) (England and Wales) Regulations 2004 (Combination of Polls Rules) ■ Back to content at footnote 2 3. Sch 1 rule 45(8) RPA 1983 ■ Back to content at footnote 3 Last updated:



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Officers Agents This section of the guidance covers the appointment of election  
agents, the requirement to give public notice of the appointment of election agents  
and how an appointment can be revoked. You will also find guidance on the appointment  
of agents to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the verification and  
count, and information on the secrecy and conduct requirements for attendance at  
these key electoral events. Last updated: 31 May 2023 Book traversal links for Agents  
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Returning Officer and (Acting) Returning Officer | Electoral Commission  
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Returning Officer and (Acting) Returning Officer Returning Officer and (Acting) Returning Officer appointment (Acting) Returning Officer - role and responsibilities (Acting) Returning Officer - skills and knowledge Planning for the election Voter Materials Starting the election timetable Nominations Agents Absent Voting Polling station voting Verification and Count After the election Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers Returning Officer and (Acting) Returning Officer This section of the guidance covers the appointment of the Returning Officer and (Acting) Returning officer as well as the roles and responsibilities for those appointed to this post. It also contains guidance on the consequences of the breach of official duty and the legislative powers available to the (A)RO to use in certain circumstances. Additionally, this section also contains guidance on the skills and knowledge that is expected to be required of an (A)RO. Finally, it provides a detailed list of the relevant legislation that the guidance has been written to reflect, and which an (A)RO should be familiar with. Last updated: 30 May 2023 Book traversal links for Returning Officer and (Acting) Returning Officer Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain Returning Officer and (Acting) Returning Officer appointment

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## Planning for the verification and count | Electoral Commission

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verification and count Attendance at the verification and count Verification The

count Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers - Verification and Count After the

election Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers Planning for the verification and

count There are a variety of methods for arranging verification and count processes at an election, and there is no one size fits all approach which can be applied.

Every electoral area has its own set of local circumstances that will influence the decisions that you must make as part of your planning for how you will deliver the

verification and count processes. When planning for the delivery of the verification

and count you should keep your general planning assumptions under review to ensure

they continue to be realistic and robust. This should include assumptions on turnout

, the number of candidates, speed and capability of count staff and expected timing

for completing the various count stages. Such a review will help inform a realistic

assessment of whether you will be able to deliver the overall plan for the count, and

whether and when it may be necessary to implement contingency plans. In all cases,

your plan should be flexible enough to allow you to respond if any of your

assumptions change, covering what contingency actions you will take in such

circumstances. Your plan should also identify key points during the count process at

which you will review progress against the expected schedule. This progress review

should be used to keep candidates, agents and the media informed of the progress of

the count. Decision-making You should keep a record of all steps taken in order to be

able to provide an audit trail demonstrating your decision-making process. You should

be able to explain your decisions, and you should be prepared to do so in response to

enquiries. To help build confidence in your plan for the verification and count, you

should share information and consult and engage on your plan with stakeholders. You

should communicate throughout your planning process and be prepared to explain the

reasons for the decisions you are taking. For key decisions, you should provide your

reasons to stakeholders in writing. You should also identify in advance those

decisions about the management of the count that must be taken in consultation and

agreement with candidates and agents, and make clear to them on what basis you will

be making decisions. This includes, for example, decisions on re-counts and the

suspension of the count. While you should seek input from those affected or

interested to inform your decision-making, ultimately the responsibility for making

decisions remains with you as (A)RO. You will need to decide the best way to

communicate these decisions once taken. Documentation You should produce templates

for all the documents to be used at the verification and count in advance and ensure

staff are familiar with them. Colour coding the documentation can be an effective way

of quickly locating the relevant documents. Equipment and set up You will need to

decide what equipment you will require to administer the verification and count (as

appropriate) and to communicate with the candidates and agents and anybody else

attending the count, including: public announcement systems phone lines mobile phones

and mobile signals general IT equipment and spreadsheets for recording verification and count figures equipment for verifying the personal identifiers on returned postal votes (if the final opening of postal votes is to take place at the verification venue) screens for displaying any relevant information throughout the count We have prepared a checklist to help relevant staff ensure that all materials, including stationery and equipment required at the verification and count venue are present. Example checklist of materials required at the verification and count (DOC) We have also developed guidance to support you should you need to procure any equipment. Last updated: 31 May 2023 Book traversal links for Planning for the verification and count Verification and Count Principles of an effective verification and count

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Parliamentary election - We are updating this resource to reflect new measures introduced by the Elections Act 2022. It will be available again once the updates have been completed. Secrecy requirements - the poll (DOC) Verification and count Checklist when dealing with ballot box variances (DOC) Doubtful ballot paper placemat (UK Parliamentary elections) Doubtful ballot paper booklet (UK Parliamentary elections) Example checklist of materials required at the verification and count (DOC) Observer access restrictions log (DOC) Observers at UK elections booklet - We are updating this resource to reflect new measures introduced by the Elections Act 2022. It will be available again once the updates have been completed. Secrecy requirements - count - S66 Tips on managing the media at the count (DOC) After the election Access and Supply Checklist - All Election Types Close of poll packing instructions (DOCX) Polling station handbook - UK Parliamentary election - We are updating this resource to reflect new measures introduced by the Elections Act 2022. It will be available again once the updates have been completed. Postal voting ballot paper account (DOC) Last updated: 28 September 2023 Book traversal links for Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers - After the election

Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain You are in the Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain section Home Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain View the navigation tree Go to main guidance section: Guidance for (Acting) Returning Officers administering a UK Parliamentary election in Great Britain Returning Officer and (Acting) Returning Officer Planning for the election Voter Materials Production of poll cards Production of postal voting stationery Production of ballot papers Quality assurance and proof checking of election materials Starting the election timetable Nominations Agents Absent Voting Polling station voting Verification and Count After the election Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers Voter Materials Voter Materials It is vital to the delivery of the election that voters can receive the information they need, without errors, in an accessible format and within time for them to take necessary action in relation to their vote. This guidance provides an overview of the legal requirements relating to poll cards, postal vote stationery and ballot papers, and of the areas where you have discretion regarding design and the information to be included on these materials. It also includes information to help you quality-assure the process of producing voter materials, including guidance on proof-checking and on working with suppliers and contractors. Last updated: 31 May 2023 Book traversal links for Voter Materials Resources for (Acting) Returning Officers - Planning for the election Production of poll cards