

Consultation: Draft performance standards for Returning Officers and updated performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers | Electoral Commission Search

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Overview We have the power to set, monitor and report on performance standards for Returning Officers (ROs), and have done so since 2009. The performance standards framework for ROs was last updated in 2013. Together with our guidance and resources, the performance standards form an important part of our package of support for ROs in planning for and delivering elections across Great Britain. The introduction of the Elections Act has provided a timely opportunity to review the RO framework. We want the standards to provide a robust framework for the delivery of well-run elections, to support the effective and consistent implementation of legislative changes, and to enable transparent reporting on how elections have been delivered at a local level and across Great Britain. The changes arising from the Elections Act will also impact on the role of Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), and we have identified a number of areas where the current ERO framework, which was last reviewed in 2021, will need to be updated to reflect these new responsibilities. We want to hear your views on the draft standards, how they should be used and whether they will support the achievement of these aims.

How to respond The consultation has now closed. The feedback provided during this consultation will be used to inform the final standards ahead of them being laid in the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments and published by the end of this year. Alongside the final standards we will also publish a response to this consultation, showing the feedback we received and how we have addressed it.

Meetings Throughout the consultation period we will attend scheduled meetings - such as Association of s (AEA) branch meetings - and will also be discussing the standards at meetings with individual stakeholders. We will take these opportunities to get views on the draft standards and how we use them. We are happy to consider meeting with any other groups or interested individuals on request. We have also scheduled a series of virtual drop in sessions which any groups or interested individuals can join to ask questions and provide feedback. These will be held on 29 June, 21 July and 5 August. Please email us at performancestandardsinbox@electoralcommission.org.uk if you wish to attend a session.

How we developed the new standards How we developed the new standards We started developing the new RO performance standards last autumn, using the ERO performance framework structure as our basis. The ERO framework was last updated in June 2021 and focuses on outcomes rather than the processes that have been followed. We have informally discussed the approach with a number of ROs from across Great Britain to get their input at an early stage, and their feedback has helped shape the draft we are now consulting on. This has included discussions with small groups of ROs across England, as well as engagement with the Wales Electoral Coordination Board and the Electoral Management Board for Scotland. The draft standards have also benefitted from input from the Association of s, at an official level as well as through discussions around the high-level approach with members at their regional branch meetings. The draft standards have also been discussed with government officials and the elections leads at the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace).

About the draft standards The proposed new standards are focussed on the outcomes that should be delivered, rather than the processes that are

followed, with the objective of helping ROs and their teams to understand and demonstrate the impact of their election activities. This should help ROs to make informed decisions on what activities are undertaken, how these activities are carried out and how their limited resources can be deployed efficiently and effectively. There are four proposed new standards which are focused on the following outcomes: Electoral services are robust and support the delivery of well-run elections Everybody who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so and has confidence in the voting process Everybody who is eligible and wants to stand for election is able to do so and has confidence in the process Everyone can have confidence that the election process is well managed and in the accuracy of the results The four draft standards are designed not only to support ROs in the delivery of well-run elections but also to cover the ongoing planning and preparations that are needed to be ready to deliver polls whenever they may take place. Performance standard one is focused on ensuring that ROs have the structures and resources in place to enable and support their teams to deliver elections in practice, and can be used throughout the year to support and challenge performance. Performance standards two, three and four then focus on the operational delivery of elections, ensuring that all involved in the process can take part and have confidence in the results. Although these are more operational, they have been designed to ensure ROs are focussed on the outcomes that should be achieved for the various participants in the electoral process - namely voters, candidates and campaigners - rather than simply covering the activities to be carried out. While the standards will be kept under review and further updates made if necessary, the framework has been designed to give some flexibility to accommodate future legislative change, with the accompanying guidance being the vehicle for outlining the detail of what ROs should be doing to ensure they meet the standards. For example, we recognise that further legislative change is expected over the next few years, particularly in the devolved nations where the Scottish and Welsh Governments have each stated that they intend to bring forward their own reform legislation over the life of the current parliaments. The changes in the Elections Act will impact on the role of EROs as well as on ROs, and we have identified a number of areas where the current ERO performance framework will need to be updated to reflect these new responsibilities, which we are also seeking views on through this consultation. The draft amendments reflect our current understanding of how the changes in the Act will impact on the role of EROs but given much of the detail on how these provisions will work in practice is still to follow in secondary legislation, the precise content may be subject to further change. What the draft standards comprise of What the draft standards comprise of We have used the framework created for the ERO performance standards as our starting point for the RO standards. This framework is comprised of the following elements: An outcome: This states the broad goal that ROs should be seeking to achieve. What inputs are needed? This sets out the resources that will need to be put into the service to enable the necessary activities to be delivered. What activities are being undertaken? This does not provide an exhaustive list of activities, but instead summarises the headline activities that ROs are likely to need to undertake to be able to meet the outcome. Our guidance and resources for ROs will support them in determining the specific activities that will need to be carried out. What information is needed to understand the impact of the activities? This highlights the data and qualitative information which will help to demonstrate the impact of the activities and which should form the basis of how ROs and the Commission can determine the success of their work. Again this is not an exhaustive list and the information listed may be supplemented by

additional data or information that is relevant to their performance. What difference is being made? This summarises the combined effects that the activities should have and which, taken together, would contribute to the delivery of the overall outcome. How can we determine the success of the work? This sets out measures that will help to demonstrate what difference the work is making. In some cases the difference will not be straightforward to quantify or otherwise measure, and so an aggregation of several measures may be relied upon to demonstrate what the work is achieving.

Questions Are the standards focussed on the right outcomes? If not, what outcomes should be reflected? Do the draft standards demonstrate a clear link from inputs through to the overall outcomes? Do the standards focus on the right activities? If not, what activities should be included? Do you have any thoughts on the measurability of the impact of the activities set out in the draft standards? Do the standards cover the full range of responsibilities of the RO? Are there any gaps, or is there anything included in the standards that shouldn't be there? Do the standards provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate future legislative change?

Using the standards The standards will be used in three main ways: to support and challenge the performance of ROs; to support the effective and consistent implementation of legislative changes; and to report transparently on RO performance and how elections are delivered.

Support and challenge The standards, alongside our guidance and advice, form a central part of the Commission's work to support and challenge ROs in the delivery of well-run elections. The new framework has been designed to be used not only in the period leading up to polls but throughout the whole year. The first of the standards in particular aims to provide a basis for year-round engagement between the Commission and ROs and their teams, including in relation to local structures and approach to elections delivery. The intention is that this will help with identifying and addressing any issues further out from elections and with ensuring readiness for polls, whenever they may take place. This will complement the work we are taking forward as part of our strategy to support increased local authority capacity and resilience, to develop a range of tools and resources to support local authorities with designing and managing their electoral services. Taken together, we will use these to offer tailored advice, support and resources which will help local authorities to develop the resilience and capacity to deliver well-run elections in their own specific circumstances. The second aspect of our support and challenge is focussed around targeted engagement in the period leading up to and during an election. This builds on our already-established process, where we undertake risk assessments to inform how we prioritise our engagement. These risk assessments take into account a range of factors, including the experience of the RO and their team, any staffing changes, demographics of the area and electoral fraud risks. While we aim to engage with all ROs with elections, we have more frequent and deeper engagement with those we have identified as being at greater risk of not being able to deliver well-run polls. The framework of the standards will be used to support structured conversations with ROs and their teams. This will enable us to understand more about the preparations that are being made, to challenge where things are not progressing as we would expect, and to provide support and advice to help refine the arrangements. The intention is that the new standards can be used by ROs, alongside our guidance, to plan for and deliver consistent and high quality experiences for all who are involved in the electoral process. The information and data set out in the standards will be used to shape the structured discussions. We may not work through it all in all cases, but we would expect ROs and their teams to be using the information and data themselves anyway to help them to understand the

impact of their activities - so they can identify what works, what doesn't, and where improvements can be made - so we would hope it should be straightforward to make it available and go through it with us on request. Our emphasis in each case will be dependent to some extent on our rationale for engagement: so, for example, if there has been a previous issue around counts, we would expect to focus in particular on those aspects of the standards in our discussions. Alongside this, we will also collect management information from all ROs, which aligns with the information and evidence outlined in the standards. As well as giving us an important source of information to analyse and use to inform engagement with local ROs, it also provides a picture of progress at a national level and gives us data we can use proactively and reactively to tell the story of how the elections are being managed. We don't plan to collect significant amounts of information routinely, with our focus instead being around key information during an election period which would provide an overview of the key preparations that have been made (for example, around polling station venues and staffing, count venues and timing, and postal vote despatch arrangements).

Questions Will the proposed approach to how the Commission will use the standards to engage with ROs enable the identification and provision of effective support and challenge? Is there anything more or different the Commission should be using the standards to do? Do you think the standards will support ROs to provide a consistent, high-quality experience for voters, candidates and agents? Do you think the standards, alongside our guidance, will be effective in supporting ROs with planning for and delivering elections? Are there any other tools and guidance that would help to support ROs in using the standards to understand and improve their performance? Supporting consistent implementation of legislation Along with our guidance and advice, the standards will also play an important role in supporting the effective and consistent implementation of legislative changes, including the significant changes resulting from the Elections Act. Our approach to supporting and challenging ROs, as outlined above, will have a particular emphasis on helping to ensure the necessary arrangements to deliver the range of changes are in place ahead of the May 2023 and May 2024 polls, and the data and information we collect will also help to inform our evaluation and reporting. For example, for the changes relating to accessibility – where the legislation now provides flexibility for ROs in what arrangements they put in place to support disabled voters in the polling station – the framework will be used to support the structured conversations with ROs around the adjustments they propose and how these take account of those recommended in our guidance, and to help ensure appropriate arrangements are in place. We will also be able to collect the listed information to illustrate what adjustments were made by ROs, which will support us in meeting our statutory duty to report on this after the polls. In relation to the ERO standards we have made some changes to cover the new responsibilities relating to applications for voter cards, and we have also added additional detail to cover the extension of the franchise for overseas electors and the introduction of changes to the absent vote application process. We expect to monitor and report on the operation and impact of the new and changed provisions arising from the Elections Act as part of our existing statutory powers and duties to keep electoral law under review and to report on elections. Our wider engagement with ROs and EROs, underpinned by the standards frameworks, will enable us to develop a deeper understanding of the challenges and successes around implementation of the Act, which will inform this reporting.

Questions Do the standards, including the updates to the ERO standards, appropriately reflect the range of changes being introduced as a result of the Elections Act? Do you think the

standards, along with our guidance, will help with the consistent implementation of the legislative changes introduced? Do you think that the data and information set out in the standards covers the right areas and will provide robust evidence to inform our reporting on the implementation of the Act? Reporting When issues arise during the conduct of polls, our immediate priority is to support ROs and their teams with guidance and advice to help them address the issue and mitigate the impact of any issues on voters and campaigners. We then work with them after the polls to support them as they learn lessons and help them identify and take forward any actions required to help ensure that the issue does not happen again. However, we also need to ensure that where issues have arisen, we are transparent about these, being open and clear about what has happened, the impact, and the learning. To this end, the standards play an important role in enabling us to report on the administration of elections. The standards should also help ROs to demonstrate, and report locally on, the impact of their election activities. Where issues arise, the relevant pieces of data and information listed in the standards are collated and analysed to enable us to reach an assessment about whether or not the relevant aspects of the standards have been met in practice. We have an established process for doing this which includes consultation with a panel of Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board members (i.e. senior ROs from across the UK) to gather their feedback on the evidence, impact and provisional assessment of performance, before a final decision is taken. As well as highlighting areas where there have been issues, we will also use our reporting to highlight examples of good practice. This will be particularly important as we gather examples of new processes to support implementation of legislative changes, which we can then share with other local authorities to help inform their local arrangements. The information we gain through our engagement with ROs and their teams will not only provide us with an understanding of local performance but will also help us to build up a picture of how the system is working more generally. By capturing and collating the key points from our individual discussions with ROs we can identify emerging themes and issues, which can in turn inform our reporting and recommendations after elections.

Questions Do you think the proposed approach to reporting would support transparency, promotes confidence that elections are well-run and enable the sharing of good practice? Is there anything more or different the Commission should be doing to support ROs and their teams when issues arise? What happens next? The feedback provided during this consultation will be used to inform the final standards ahead of them being laid in the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments and published by the end of this year. Alongside the final standards we will also publish a response to this consultation, showing the feedback we received and how we have addressed it. We are also undertaking work to update our guidance and resources to support ROs and EROs in England, Scotland and Wales with delivering elections and electoral registration services, including to reflect the changes to processes that will be required as a result of the Elections Act. These updated materials will provide more detailed information to support EROs and ROs with delivering against the objectives set out in the standards. Draft performance standards for Returning Officers Draft Returning Officer Performance standards framework 2022 Draft performance standards for Returning Officers Outcome 1: Electoral services are robust and support the delivery of well-run elections What inputs are needed? RO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities – management and oversight of the delivery of elections, including the range of statutory functions of the RO, and an understanding of the strategic landscape, including any legislative changes that will impact on delivery.

Stakeholder engagement – establish and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders. Planning – maintain plans for the delivery of elections, scheduled and unscheduled, ensuring they are kept under review. Resources – identification and allocation of budget and permanent staffing; and management of contractors and suppliers. What activities are being undertaken? Understanding of statutory responsibilities Polls are delivered in accordance with legislation, guidance and directions (where issued). RO knowledge and understanding of role and responsibilities is developed and maintained, including through training. Formal appointment of deputies, ensuring clear delegations in place and roles are allocated and understood. Development and maintenance of robust delivery plans Establish project team to support preparations for and delivery of elections Clear plans in place, with objectives and success measures Contingency planning to ensure readiness for unscheduled events Business continuity planning Risk register in place, with risks monitored and mitigations identified and implemented Recruitment of necessary staff and identification of training needs Robust arrangements in place for managing issues Appropriate funding is accessed from the local authority Working with contractors and suppliers Identification of external services required of services Contract development and management of delivery Maintaining effective relationships with key stakeholders Engagement with key stakeholders on plans Ongoing engagement with stakeholders throughout the delivery of the polls Coordination and management of the poll (by ROs with a power of direction) Work across local authority boundaries with other ROs to develop guidance and issue directions where necessary to support consistent delivery of polls Engage with local Returning Officers on the arrangements they have in place to deliver the elections in their area What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Understanding of statutory responsibilities Awareness of guidance and legislation Records of training/meetings attended Evidence of quality assurance of the whole electoral process Notification of appointment of deputies Development and maintenance of robust delivery plans Clear agendas for and records of project team meetings, to support focus on outcomes Project planning documentation which is kept under regular review Evaluation of previous events and identification of lessons learned Analysis of wider context within which polls are being conducted Succession plans which are regularly monitored Training needs analysis and records of training Reconciliation of project costs against available budget Working with contractors and suppliers Records of formal procurement decisions Contracts in place with all suppliers, with mechanisms to manage and monitor performance Contract monitoring tools and escalation mechanisms, including supplier issues logs and risk registers Service level agreements Details of supplier business continuity plans Maintaining effective relationships with key stakeholders Minutes of meetings with stakeholders Consultation with and feedback from local stakeholders on plans and election arrangements Assessment of local accessibility requirements and demonstrated understanding of needs Records of issues or concerns raised by stakeholders and resolutions implemented Coordination and management of the poll (by ROs with a power of direction) Plans for communication with local ROs Plans for coordinating and delivering public awareness activity and engaging with electors across the electoral area Arrangements for the collation of results Records of any guidance issued and whether and how the power to issue directions has been used Analysis of post-election feedback What difference is being made? A consistent high-quality experience for electors, candidates and agents Public confidence in and satisfaction with election processes Teams delivering electoral services are supported to effectively deliver electoral processes The RO has the

right skills, knowledge and influence to support the effective delivery of the polls
How can we determine the success of our work? Events are delivered in accordance with legislation Elections delivered without legal challenge Analysis of team resilience, capability and capacity Analysis of feedback on the delivery of polls and any complaints received Performance against measures and objectives set out in your project plans Outcome 2: Everybody who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so and has confidence in the voting process What inputs are needed? RO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities - management and oversight of the delivery of elections, including the range of statutory functions of the RO Planning – maintain plans for the delivery of elections, ensuring they are kept under review and actively used to support delivery Resources – identification and allocation of budget and temporary staffing; and management of contractors and suppliers. Training – identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff What activities are being undertaken? Providing information to ensure voters understand how they can take part Develop and deliver a public awareness strategy, ensuring that electors are provided with the information they need to understand how they can take part Ensure all required election materials are accurate and made available as soon as practicable Production of election materials Production and publication of election notices Production and delivery of poll cards Proof-checking of election materials Production of ballot papers Managing absent voting Production and delivery of postal ballot packs Opening and processing returned postal votes Managing voting in person Identifying and booking suitable polling stations Assessing accessibility of polling stations Identifying and providing equipment to support voters with accessibility needs Ensuring appropriate staffing levels at polling stations Providing training for polling station staff What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? RO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities - management and oversight of the delivery of elections, including the range of statutory functions of the RO Analysis of different communication methods, to support targeting of messaging Evidence of working with partners to deliver public awareness Ballot paper rejection rates and postal vote rejection rates, contributing to an understanding of whether voters have been able to follow the instructions Feedback from polling station staff and data relating to those who were unable to vote due to not having appropriate identification (at relevant polls) (Wales only) Plans in place to ensure all information for electors is provided equally in English and Welsh, including all election materials Planning – maintain plans for the delivery of elections, ensuring they are kept under review and actively used to support delivery Accuracy of statutory notices Information on method and timing of delivery of poll cards and postal ballot packs Accuracy and timeliness of election materials: Record of arrangements for any outsourcing of production and delivery of poll cards, postal votes and ballot papers Record of proof checking processes Examples of election materials Record of data protection processes Resources – identification and allocation of budget and temporary staffing; and management of contractors and suppliers. Accuracy and timeliness of postal ballot packs: Record of arrangements for any outsourcing of production and delivery of postal ballot papers Audit trail of issuing of postal votes Record of checking processes Accurate records of postal vote openings including audit trails of postal votes opened, verified and rejected Training – identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff Evaluation checklists for polling stations to demonstrate suitability for use Polling station layout plans Approach taken to allocating electors and staff to polling stations

Checklists of required polling station equipment
Analysis of voter needs informing decisions about equipment to be provided to support voting
Feedback from voters and local interest groups on equipment provided to support voting
Guidance/training provided to polling station staff
Records of those refused a ballot paper, by reason
Records of postal votes handed into polling stations
What difference is being made?
Voters understand the different ways in which they can cast their vote
Voters are able to cast their vote using their preferred method
Voters are able to cast their vote in secret at polling stations
Barriers to voting are minimised
How can we determine the success of our work?
Evaluation of public awareness activities
Analysis of feedback and complaints from eligible voters, staff, candidates and agents
Analysis of available data relating to voters who have not been able to cast their vote (for example, due to not having appropriate Identification (at relevant polls))
No voters are prevented from casting their vote due to inaccessibility of polling station arrangements
Outcome 3: Everybody who is eligible and wants to stand for election is able to do so and has confidence in the process
What inputs are needed?
RO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities - management and oversight of the delivery of elections, including the range of statutory functions of the RO
Planning - maintain plans for the delivery of elections, ensuring they are kept under review and actively used to support delivery
Stakeholder engagement – establish and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders
Training – staff understand their responsibilities in relation to the processes to be followed for candidates seeking to stand for election
What activities are being undertaken?
Providing information to support anyone wishing to stand as a candidate in understanding what they need to do
Ensuring accessibility and awareness of electoral processes
Provision of information and guidance to parties, candidates and agents, including in relation to election spending rules
Briefings offered to candidates & agents
Gathering feedback from attendees to inform continuous improvement
Administration of the nominations process
Provision of informal checks
Determination of nomination papers
Close of nomination processes
Ensuring accurate ballot papers
Management of access to electoral processes to ensure transparency and enable scrutiny
Receipt of notifications of appointment of polling, postal voting and counting agents
Provision of information relating to polling stations, postal vote opening sessions and the count (layout plan, process documents, etc.)
What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities?
Providing information to support anyone wishing to stand as a candidate in understanding what they need to do
Records of attendance at briefings
Records of enquiries received from candidates and agents
Evaluation of feedback from candidates and agents on the information/briefings provided to those wanting to stand for election
Analysis of process queries from candidates and agents to support provision of relevant information
Number of nomination papers rejected by the RO, by reason
Administration of the nominations process
Records of arrangements in place for candidates to have their nominations informally checked
Timeliness and accuracy of publication of the statement of persons nominated
Accuracy of the ballot paper
Assessment of GDPR requirements and records of management of personal data received as part of the nominations process
Management of access to electoral processes to ensure transparency and enable scrutiny
Record of those entitled to access election processes
Information provided to attendees
What difference is being made?
Candidates are aware of the process they need to follow to stand for election
Nominations are accurately processed and everyone who is validly nominated is included on the ballot paper
Candidates and appointed agents are aware of their entitlement to attend electoral processes and are able to carry out their scrutiny role effectively
How can

we determine the success of our work? No errors on the statement of persons nominated or ballot papers Analysis of feedback and complaints from candidates, agents or parties Outcome 4: Everyone can have confidence that the election process is well managed and in the accuracy of the results What inputs are needed? RO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities - management and oversight of the delivery of elections, including the range of statutory functions of the RO Planning - maintain plans for the delivery of elections, ensuring they are kept under review and actively used to support delivery Stakeholder engagement – establish and maintain strong relationships and manage communications with key stakeholders Resources – identification and allocation of budget and staffing Training – identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff What activities are being undertaken? Postal vote opening Accurate processing of returned postal votes Verification of postal vote identifiers Managing the verification and count Development of venue layout and processes to ensure an accessible and transparent count Managing attendance at the verification and count Managing the verification and count processes Managing media liaison Managing the declaration of results Declarations are accurate and accessible Publication of results is timely and accurate Maintaining electoral integrity Ensuring the security of election materials Engagement with local SPOC Develop a fraud/integrity plan and work with the appropriate authorities to support the investigation of any allegations of electoral fraud/integrity issues What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Postal vote opening Audit trail of receipt and opening of postal ballot packs Arrangements for the secure storage of returned postal votes Number of postal vote rejections, by reason Postal vote opening venue layout information Records of those entitled to attend Managing the verification and count Evaluation of previous count venues and processes Assessment of access needs, with actions taken to address any issues Count venue layout information Audit trail of receipt and opening of ballot boxes Audit trails of count processes Number of rejected ballots for each contest, by reason Strategy for dealing with both proactive and reactive communication with the media Managing the declaration of results Processes in place to quality assure results Accurate declarations of results (in Wales, in both and Welsh) Audit trails of verification and count paperwork Statement of results (in Wales, in both and Welsh) and where they are published Maintaining electoral integrity Risk register showing security risks and associated mitigations Fraud/integrity plan, including risk assessments and mitigations Allegations of electoral fraud/integrity issues referred to the police What difference is being made? Voters have confidence their vote will be counted in the way they intended Candidates and agents have confidence in the accuracy of the result All those who have observed the election have confidence in the conduct of the election Voters can easily access the results of the election Voters have confidence their vote is secure How can we determine the success of our work? Elections delivered without legal challenge Analysis of feedback and complaints from candidates, agents and other observers Election results are accurate and readily available Analysis of police data relating to allegations of electoral fraud/integrity issues Draft updated performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers Performance standards for EROs 2022 Draft updated performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers Outcome 1: Electoral registers are as accurate and complete as possible, ensuring that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so *denotes updated text What inputs are needed? ERO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities – management and oversight of delivery of the electoral registration service, including the

statutory functions of the ERO, and stakeholder engagement Planning – maintaining a plan for registration throughout the year, ensuring it is kept under review and evaluation is undertaken, with lessons learnt fed back in, and a risk and issues register, identifying any risks to the effective delivery of your registration plan and corresponding mitigating actions Resources – identification and allocation of budget and staffing for electoral registration activities Training – identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff What activities are being undertaken? Identification of those not registered, including hard to reach groups Using available data and information sources, identify those not registered, including hard to reach groups Develop and maintain a public engagement strategy, ensuring planned activities are tailored to meet the needs of different groups of electors Undertaking year-round registration activity Maintain the property database Contact potential eligible electors, including carrying out work to target hard to reach groups Ensure those no longer entitled to be registered are identified and removed Develop and implement processes to identify and address potential integrity issues Manage special category electors Administering the canvass Using available data and information, identify the most appropriate method to canvass properties in your area Make arrangements to deliver the planned canvass activities Undertake the planned canvass activities Administering the voter card process* Develop and maintain an engagement strategy for those less likely to hold a required form of ID on how to obtain a voter card* Process voter card applications* Manage production and distribution of (temporary) voter cards* What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Identification of those not registered, including hard to reach groups Analysis of the scope and usefulness of data and information Ward level analysis of the registration area Identification of priority areas to target registration activity Evaluation of communications channels and approaches, including cost / benefit analysis of previous activity, supporting development of engagement strategy and activities Undertaking year-round registration activity Number of properties with UPRN/as a percentage of properties Analysis of any issues reported with the allocation of properties to polling districts to reflect relevant electoral boundaries The accuracy and usability of data sources used Analysis of response rates by channel, to understand impact of different approaches Number of ITRs sent (by channel) Number of ITRs followed up Number of ITRs not responded to after the reminder and personal visit stages Number of electors whose identity has not been verified and have yet to provide documentary evidence by type e.g. ordinary electors, overseas electors, etc.* Number of registration applications received by type e.g. ordinary electors, overseas electors, etc.* Number of additions to the register by type e.g. ordinary electors, overseas electors, etc.* Number of reviews of registration and number of deletions as a result Number of deletions not as a result of a review, by type Number of registration applications referred to the police Number of renewals sent by elector type* Number of special category elector applications (both new and renewals) processed, from different elector groups (overseas, service etc.) Number of special category electors renewed by elector type* Administering the canvass The accuracy and usability of local data sources used Results of data matching (national and local) Number of households intended for each route Analysis of available communications channels (e-communications, telephone, mail, etc.), to inform contact with individual properties Number of households canvassed, by route and channel Number of communications sent, by route and channel Number of responses by route and channel Assessment of success of canvass communication channels used Number of canvassers recruited and trained Evaluation of

canvasser performance Administering the voter card process* Identification of those less likely to hold a required form of ID, supporting targeting of activity* Evaluation of communications channels and approaches, supporting development of engagement strategy and activities* Number of voter card applications received by channel* Number of voter card applications received and processed by type (i.e. temporary/permanent)* Number of voter card applications rejected by type* Number of voter cards issued by type* What difference is being made? The demographics of the registration area and the needs of groups of electors within it are understood, enabling services to be targeted and designed to meet the needs of residents Barriers to registration are minimised, enabling all eligible individuals, including those from different elector groups, to register Potential new electors are identified and are given every opportunity to register to vote Changes in the registration status of individuals are captured and applied to the register in a timely manner Elections are effectively supported by the register Voters without one of the required forms of ID are able to obtain a voter card to enable them to cast their vote in person* How can we determine the success of our work? Performance against the KPIs/objectives set out in your registration plans Evaluation of public engagement activities undertaken, including of changes made to the register as a result of the activity Changes in levels of registration within and across the registration area, both generally and within identified under-registered groups An assessment of levels of additions and deletions, during the canvass and throughout the year. A year-on-year analysis of additions and deletions Assessment of the numbers of eligible electors who tried to vote on polling day but were unable to do so as a result of not being registered to vote or who were unable to vote due to not having appropriate identification (at relevant polls)* Outcome 2: Absent voting is accessible, ensuring that everyone who is eligible and wants an absent vote is included on the relevant absent vote list * denotes updated text What inputs are needed? ERO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities – management and oversight of delivery of the absent voting function, including the statutory responsibilities of the ERO, and stakeholder engagement Planning – maintaining a plan throughout the year, including arrangements for managing the absent voting process, and a risk and issues register, identifying any risks to the effective delivery of your plan and corresponding mitigating actions. Resources – identification and allocation of budget and staffing for absent voting activities Training – identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff What activities are being undertaken? Supporting electors to engage with the absent voting process Develop and implement a communications plan to ensure that electors are aware of the absent vote options available to them Ensure that all electors can access the absent vote process Administering absent vote processes Process new applications Process requested changes to absent voting preferences Maintain absent vote records and lists Undertake postal vote refresh process* Develop and implement processes to identify and address potential integrity issues What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities? Supporting electors to engage with the absent voting process Evaluation of information made available to electors on the absent voting process to help them understand the options available to them Number of absent vote applications from different elector groups (overseas, service etc.), by type (postal or proxy) Number and type of complaints received about ability to access the absent vote process from different elector groups (ordinary, overseas, service etc.) Administering absent vote processes Number of absent vote applications received by channel* Number of absent vote applications received by type (postal or proxy) Number of absent vote

applications rejected Number of absent vote confirmations sent Number of changes to voting arrangements processed Number of absent vote refresh notices sent, followed up and responses processed by type (e.g. ordinary elector, overseas elector, etc.)*
Number of postal vote applications for postal votes to be redirected to one address
Number of postal applications from one address Number of proxy applications from one address Number of emergency proxy applications by type Number of applications referred to the police for investigation What difference is being made? Electors are able to make an informed decision on what voting method is best for them Barriers to absent voting are minimised, enabling all eligible individuals, including those from different elector groups, to apply Changes to voting arrangements are captured and applied in a timely manner The integrity of absent voting records and lists is maintained How can we determine the success of our work? Performance against the KPIs/objectives set out in your plans Analysis of complaints and feedback received about ability to access the absent voting process Assessment of the numbers and types of errors in the absent voter lists Related content Report: How the 2017 UK general election was run Read our report about how the 2017 general election was run Report: The costs of delivering the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union Read our report about the costs of delivering the 2016 EU referendum 2017 electoral fraud data about electoral fraud in 2017 and view the data Draft guidance for Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for disabled voters (statutory consultation)