Polling station scenarios

Scottish council elections

Aim	The approach	Comments
This exercise is designed to demonstrate how to deal with voters on polling day	Model the most effective method of dealing with the voter, including the range of circumstances that polling station staff may face on polling day.	There may be various models depending on the space available and the layout of the polling station.
The plan		
Setting up the polling station and briefing the players. For this exercise it is assumed that one Presiding Officer (PO) and two poll clerks (PCs) are appointed.	Ensure there is suitable and accessible space such that all delegates can see and hear. Identify and brief staff playing the role of poll clerk, giving them prepared 'scenarios' for each module.	Role play works most effectively with small groups (maximum 20 people). If there is not sufficient room for them to gather around the set-up, walk through the exercise in slow time.
Precise requirements	**What is required?**	✓
Make it real	Ballot booths	
	Notices	
	Signs	
	Mock ballot papers	
	Example register	
	CNL	
	Sundries Box	
	Ballot box with seals	
	Poll cards (as per scenarios below)	
	Flip chart, pad and pens	
	Ballot paper account	

	Roving microphone (dependent on set up)	
Role play		
Module 1 – Setting up the polling station	Model setting up the booths, tables and the location of the ballot box to suit different types of spaces. Remind the delegates about the importance of accessibility. Reinforce the message about security and integrity of the voting process. Explain the need for clear signage and instructions and where statutory forms must be placed.	Interact with the delegates to obtain their views on the best model. Model the flow of the process to agree the most suitable path. The security of the ballot box(es) and the secrecy of the vote is key.
Module 2 – The voting process	In slow time – trainers walk through the normal voting process with two volunteer PCs. <u>Who does what?</u> Demonstrate the flow (i.e. what a PC does and how it relates to what the PO does) and issue a ballot paper to a voter (the trainer).	It is important to get this right – refer to the polling station handbook and quick guide.
Module 3 - The scenarios	Work through the various scenarios.	Players should be rehearsed with their scenarios.
	1. Elector not on the register	Scenario 1
	2. Postal voter: did not receive, or has lost, or has spoilt their postal vote	Scenario 2
	3. Postal voter: claims did not request a postal vote and wants to vote in person	Scenario 3
	4. Proxy voter: voting for proxy and as self	Scenario 4
	5. Elector marked as having already voted	Scenario 5
	6. Voter handing in a completed postal vote	Scenario 6

	7. Overseas elector who is only entitled to vote in UK Parliamentary elections applies for a ballot paper	Scenario 7
Module 4 - Nearing close of poll	Explain how to deal with a queue of voters as only those in the queue at the correct polling station at 10pm can vote or hand in a completed postal vote.	
Module 5 – Completing the ballot paper account	Using model ballot paper account, go through step-by-step process of completion after close of poll.	Ballot paper account exercise

Scenarios

Scenario 1 – Voter not on the register

The PC will:

1. Check the register but find no entry against the address.
2. As well as the register, check the 'other electors' and clerical error sections/notices. If there is more than one polling station in your polling place, check to see whether the elector is on the register at the other station.
3. Contact the electoral registration office for them to check their files.
4. If the registration office has confirmed that they are not registered, explain that unfortunately you have to be registered in order to vote and that it is not linked to other records such as council tax. If that does not satisfy them, ask them to contact the electoral registration office.

Get the 'voter' to produce a 'prop' passport or driving licence and be quite assertive at wanting to vote. The PC, supported by the PO should politely but firmly say that they cannot issue a ballot paper and that they must contact the electoral registration office. Go back

Scenario 2 – Postal voter did not receive, has lost, or has spoilt their postal vote

The PC will suggest that the voter goes to the elections office to obtain a replacement postal vote at any time until 5pm (at elections before 5 May 2022) or 10pm (at elections on or after 5 May 2022) and give the voter details of the address. If it is before 5pm (at elections before 5 May 2022) or 10pm (at elections on or after 5 May 2022) but the elector cannot or does not want to make arrangements for a replacement to be issued, the PO should follow the procedure for issuing a tendered ballot paper instead.

The PO will have to put the appropriate prescribed questions to the voter and then issue a tendered ballot paper if the prescribed questions are answered satisfactorily. Go through the tendered ballot paper process slowly, including:

- showing the packet that the tendered ballot papers will be kept in
- explaining that the packet should only be opened when you have to issue a tendered ballot paper
- how to issue a tendered ballot paper

Make clear that the tendered ballot paper must not go in the ballot box but instead in the special envelope. Go back

Scenario 3 – Postal voter did not request a postal vote and wants to vote in person

The PC will explain that if the person received their postal ballot pack, they can return it to the polling station. Also explain that they cannot issue an ordinary ballot paper and the PO can only issue a tendered ballot paper after the elector has answered the prescribed questions satisfactorily. **Tendered ballot papers must not be put in the ballot box.** However, the elector should be advised that, up until 5pm (at elections before 5 May 2022),or up until 10pm (at elections on or after 5 May 2022), the Returning Officer may issue a replacement postal ballot pack. The elector details should be included in the PO's log book. Go back

Scenario 4 – A voter states they have been appointed as proxy for another voter and also wishes to cast their own votes

One PC will advise that they should vote for themselves first and should then return to their desk to apply to vote for their proxy (don't make them queue up again if there is a queue). The other PC will ask for both the elector's and proxy's name and address. The PC checks the register to see if the elector has already voted and checks that the elector they are voting on behalf of is eligible to vote. If satisfied that ballot papers can be issued, the PC will draw a line against the entry on the list of proxies and mark the elector's entry as usual. Go back

Scenario 5 – Voter marked as having already voted

The PC will explain that they have already been marked as having voted, and will direct the voter to the PO. The PO will explain that they can issue a tendered ballot paper, provided that the prescribed questions are answered satisfactorily. The PO will ask the prescribed questions. The elector's details are entered on the list of tendered votes. Ask the voter to mark the ballot paper in secret, fold and return it. **Tendered ballot papers must not be put in the ballot box.** Cover the ballot box slot. The PO will endorse the tendered ballot paper with the name of the voter and their elector number and place it in the envelope for tendered ballot papers. Go back

Scenario 6 – A voter hands in a completed postal vote

The PC will check that it is for the correct area and, if so, accept it and pass it to the PO for insertion into the appropriate envelope/packet. Go back

Scenario 7 – Overseas elector who is only entitled to vote in UK Parliamentary elections applies for a ballot paper

A person registered as an overseas elector applies for a ballot paper to vote at the election. The PC will check the register and identify the marker against their name ('F' marker). The PC will explain that they are only entitled to vote in UK Parliamentary elections and cannot vote at the local elections. If they

are now back living in the UK they need to register again as an ordinary elector to be able to vote at all future elections. [Go back](#).