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Overview We have the power to set and monitor performance standards for electoral services. We have been setting standards for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) in Great Britain since 2008, with the most recent update in 2016. With our guidance and resources, the performance standards form part of a package which supports EROs with planning for and delivering well-run electoral registration services across Great Britain. Electoral registration in Great Britain is changing as a result of the reforms to the annual canvass being introduced this year. This provides us with an appropriate and timely opportunity to develop a new performance standards framework. We want these standards to be used by us and by EROs to understand and improve their performance, ensuring that registers are as accurate and complete as possible and that everyone who is eligible to vote and wants to is able to do so. We want your views on a set of draft standards and how they should be used.

How to respond This consultation is now closed. View our response to feedback Meetings Throughout the consultation period we will attend scheduled meetings - such as the Association of s (AEA) branch meeting and Scottish Assessors Association (SAA). We'll also meet 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.

How we developed the new standards How we developed the new standards While the reforms to the annual canvas give us an appropriate and timely opportunity to introduce new standards, our intention is that we establish a set of standards which can be used by EROs and us throughout the year (including in the lead up to electoral events) to understand and improve their performance. The aim is to ensure that registers are as accurate and complete as possible and that everyone who is eligible to vote and wants to is able to do so. Over the past year, we have been working collaboratively with representatives from across the electoral community – including the Association of s (AEA), Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) and Solace – to help shape the draft standards. After agreeing a set of key principles to underpin the new framework, we established a working group of electoral administrators from across Great Britain and held a workshop with them to scope out what a set of standards might look like. From this, we developed a draft standard around the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers, which we tested with this group and the AEA, SAA and Solace. Their feedback has informed the content of the draft set of standards that we are now consulting on. As well as seeking views on the draft standards, we also want to hear views on how they should be used to support well run electoral registration services. We will consider all feedback provided and use it to inform the final standards and how they will be used, ahead of the launch of the new framework in May 2020.

About the draft standards The proposed new standards are focused on the outcomes that should be delivered, rather than the processes that are followed. The objective is to help EROs and their teams to understand the impact of their electoral registration activities. This should help EROs to make informed decisions about what activities are undertaken, how these activities are carried out and how their limited resources can be deployed efficiently and effectively. Objectives of the draft performance

standards To support EROs and their teams to deliver efficient and effective electoral registration services, and to allow them to demonstrate the impact of their electoral registration activity To provide reassurance to the public and key stakeholders (such as political parties and elected members) that EROs are doing everything they can to ensure that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so What the draft standards comprise of An outcome: This states the broad goal that EROs 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 EROs are likely to need to undertake to be able to meet the outcome. Our guidance and resources for EROs will support them in determining the specific activities that will need to be carried out in their particular circumstances What information is needed to understand the impact of our 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 we and EROs 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 the ERO feels 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 our 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 The draft standards have been designed to be flexible enough to recognise the varying local circumstances each ERO is working within. With this in mind, whilst we recognise the benefits of EROs using targets for their registration activity locally, we remain of the view that it would not be appropriate to set performance targets at a national level, given the activities and impacts will vary significantly by local area reflecting the particular demographics and circumstances EROs are each working within. Questions Questions Do you think the draft standards will support EROs with understanding and improving their own performance? Do you think the standards will enable the Commission to understand the performance of EROs and to identify where support and challenge is needed? 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 ERO? Are there any gaps or is there anything included that shouldn't be there? Using the standards: Electoral Registration Officers We want to ensure that EROs and their teams find the standards useful in understanding, improving and reporting on their performance. The standards, and the tools and templates we will make available to support them, have been designed to help EROs understand the impact of their activities on the overall delivery of their registration services. They should also help to identify where improvements can be made, and support EROs to report on their own performance locally. EROs should be using the data, and qualitative information set out in the standards, to help them understand the impact of their activities in any case, so they can identify what works, what doesn't, and where improvements can be made. The framework is designed to

support this analysis and focus EROs on the key data and information that will indicate what is working well and what is not working so well. The standards, and the supporting tools and templates, should also help EROs to demonstrate locally – whether within an ERO's local authority, to elected members, or more broadly – how the activities they are carrying out contribute to the provision of an efficient and effective electoral registration service and, ultimately, will help to ensure that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so. It is critical that data is readily available to EROs through their electoral management software (EMS) systems at any point within a year. The analysis of accurate and easily available data is vital for EROs to understand their performance, monitor their progress and assess the impact of their registration activities. We are continuing to work closely with Cabinet Office as part of the preparations for the introduction of canvass reform to ensure the relevant data can be easily accessed by EROs when they need it.

Guidance and resources We will continue to provide guidance and resources for EROs designed to support the end-to-end delivery of well-run electoral registration services, which will reflect the standards. The guidance and supporting resources will continue to set out EROs' statutory responsibilities and also provide wider practical guidance to help administrators plan for and manage the day-to-day delivery of electoral registration services. We are continuing with plans to reform our approach to presenting guidance on our website, drawing on feedback from administrators and user testing. As we update our guidance for EROs as a result of canvass reform, we will move away from the current PDF format and will instead present our guidance in a web-based format, in line with modern practice and evolving technology. The objective of this new approach is to make the guidance clearer and easier to navigate and use, while retaining features that we know are important to administrators, such as the ability to print hard copies of sections of the guidance as needed.

Additional tools to support the standards We intend to develop new tools and templates to support EROs in using the performance standards and reporting on their performance locally. We expect these would include: a resource on using data, to include information on what data is available, how EROs can access it, how they can use it and what it should tell them additional planning and key performance indicator (KPI) setting guidance, including how to develop, monitor and evaluate against KPIs reporting templates, providing a framework for EROs to report on the impact of their activities locally

Questions Do you think the standards and the types of additional tools the Commission intends to provide will support EROs to understand and report on their own performance? Are there any other additional tools and guidance that would help to support EROs in using the standards?

Using the standards: Electoral Commission We have the power in law to issue directions to EROs to provide reports on their performance against the standards, and to prepare and publish assessments of their performance against the standards. **Proposed approach** Our aim is to use the standards to inform how we engage with EROs and their teams over the course of the year. This will help us to understand their performance and to identify any issues or concerns, enabling us to provide support and challenge where it is most needed. However, we also have a responsibility to be transparent to the range of interested stakeholders across Great Britain, including voters, about the performance of EROs and, in particular, to highlight where the outcomes of the standards are not being delivered. We therefore intend to summarise the data and information gathered through our engagement with EROs and their teams to inform regular progress reports. These reports would provide reassurance to the public and key stakeholders (such as political parties and elected members) that EROs are doing

everything they can to ensure that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so, highlighting any instances where this is not the case. Engagement and reporting Engagement with EROs Over the last year we have already started to evolve the way we work with EROs and their teams. We have moved towards more regular engagement across the year, rather than focussing our activity around the annual canvass and electoral events. We want to continue to build on this and to use the new standards to inform our discussions on electoral registration issues. We want to provide a structure to help ensure we can develop a shared understanding of performance and identify any areas for improvement, as well as examples of good practice. While we will still want to collect data from all EROs to help us understand the state of the electoral registers across Great Britain, we are not proposing that EROs would routinely collate and provide us with all the information listed within the standards. However, we expect that EROs will be using the relevant data and information themselves to help them understand the impact of their activities and where improvement is needed. We also intend to work with EROs and their teams in analysing the data and information to help us with supporting and challenging their performance locally. Our objective is to work with all EROs and their teams at least once every two years. We will prioritise the order, frequency and intensity of the engagement based on risk. We will continue to take into account a range of factors when determining risk, including: experience of the ERO any significant changes in staffing in the electoral registration team any known issues with the delivery of electoral registration activities other relevant local circumstances Reporting We are proposing publishing regular reports that highlight the outcomes of our engagement with EROs and their performance locally. This will enable us to draw out successes and examples of good practice, as well as any issues faced, and to report on progress and improvements. The information we gain through our engagement with EROs will also help us to develop a broad understanding of the challenges faced by the electoral community in delivering registration services. This will facilitate reporting on general data analysis and wider themes, for example, in relation to local authority resilience and capacity, or the use of data locally to support registration services. Question Question Will our proposed approach to how we engage with EROs and their teams enable us to provide effective support and challenge? Is there anything more or different we should be using the standards to do? Do you have any views on the proposed approach to reporting? Download and review the draft potential performance standards Appendix A - Draft potential performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers