Instructions and checklist for polling station inspectors

Polling station inspectors play an important role in the effective management of the poll and should be able to deal with queries and problems arising at the polling station on polling day. Polling station inspectors must ensure that all of their assigned polling stations are properly set up, fully equipped and accessible to all voters. Polling station inspectors should also check that any measures determined by the RO to mitigate the impact of coronavirus and to ensure the safety of voters, polling station staff and others are in place, as relevant.
The polling station inspector acts as a trouble shooter throughout polling day and works with the Presiding Officer and other polling station staff to identify and deal with any problems arising -for example, if there are any queues building up.

They should receive the same training as polling station staff and should be instructed to read the Commission's polling station handbook and quick guide.

For the initial visits, the polling station inspector should aim to visit all of the allocated polling places **as quickly as possible** dealing with as many of the key issues listed on the checklist as appropriate and re-assuring the elections office that all stations had opened on time at 7am and were operating effectively.

Subsequent visits should be made throughout the day to finalise the outstanding items on the checklist. Polling station visits can also be used to check that all the notices remain properly displayed throughout the day, to deliver any missing or additional equipment that is required and to answer any questions that polling station staff may have. In some cases, the polling station inspector may be asked to deliver cheques for the payment of polling station staff.

The collection of postal votes as directed by the Returning Officer is a task that must be conducted with care making sure that all those collected are properly and accurately logged. At no time should these postal votes be left in a vehicle while the polling station inspector visits the polling stations.

Each polling station inspector should receive the following:

• a mobile phone (if required)
• an ID badge clearly showing their name as a representative of the Returning Officer
• a label for the car windscreen with appropriate identification
• a map of the area identifying the location of all of the polling places allocated to the inspector

- the names of all polling station staff and a contact number for each of the Presiding Officers
- a contact list of all of the key holders for the polling places in the allocated area (it may also be useful to have the contact number of a locksmith in case a lock is jammed)
- a contact number for the police
- a ballot box with spare seals
- a sundries box
- a copy of the register for each polling station
- spare ballot papers (sealed and only to be used in an emergency)
- a wallet/packet with a sealing mechanism to collect returned postal votes, along with a log for recording number of postal votes removed, the time of collection and details of the person who collected them
- a spare blank ballot paper account
- a polling place/station checklist to be completed for each polling place
- copies of the Code of conduct for tellers (reprinted in the Commission's guidance for candidates and agents) and any other local instructions

The polling station inspector may be involved in liaising with the elections office regarding clerical errors on the register and emergency proxy applications. In these instances, the elections office will advise on the procedures to be followed.

The completion of the attached list will produce a useful document which can be used to support the review of polling places as part of the evaluation of the poll, and so all completed checklists should be retained and provided to the elections office for this purpose.

Polling place checklist for use by polling station inspectors

Polling station number(s)	
Polling place name and address	
Presiding Officer name (*)	
Presiding Officer mobile number	

(*) *If multi station – name of supervising Presiding Officer*

Polling place assessment	(√)	Comments
Parking facilities		
• Adequate		
• Reserved/signed for disabled voters		
• Conveniently located for voters		
Pathways & external areas		
• Level throughout		
• Non-slip		
• Well maintained (no obstructions)		
• Well-lit		
• Official signs displayed in suitable places		
Entrance		
• Level or securely ramped with handrail		
• Adequate door width or alternative entrance for powered wheelchairs		
• All entrances signed to assist voters		
• Space for tellers		
• Official notice displayed at entrance or outside the building?		
• Public health notices in place?		
•		
Inside the building		
• Level throughout		
• All doors, except fires doors, propped open?		
• Non-slip		
• Adequate corridor access		
• Adequate lighting		

Polling place assessment	(√)	Comments
Inside polling station		
• Does the layout assist the flow for voting? Check that there are no obstructions, including at a low level.		
• Does the layout help to maintain the security of the ballot box and secrecy of the vote?		
• Does the layout prevent voters from leaving the polling station without placing their ballot paper in the ballot box?		
• Is the lighting adequate?		
• Are the polling booths well-lit, but out of direct sunlight?		
• Is the furniture appropriate?		
• Is there a low-level voting booth?		
• Is the ballot box accessible?		
• Is the posting slot visible?		
• Is there seating available for voters? Check is not positioned so that blind or partially sighted people could walk into it.		
• Are the notices visible? - Official notice for inside the polling station - Official notice for the inside of each polling booth		
• Are the large-print ballot paper(s) and the hand-held sample ballot paper(s) visible?		
• Are the tactile template(s) appropriate for each election available and in full view? • Do the staff know how to use it/them?		
General observations		
• Polling station opened on time?		
• Staff clearly identified (name badges worn)?		
• Polling station staff helpful and friendly?		
• Staff dealing competently with marking the register and the CNL(s)?		
• Staff dealing competently with issuing the ballot paper(s)?		
• Ballot box(es) sealed?		
• All stationery accounted for?		
• Clear understanding about postal votes (how to deal with those handed into the polling station and with a clear understanding of who is entitled to receive a tendered ballot paper and at what time)?		
• Clear understanding about completion of		

Polling place assessment	(√)	Comments
the ballot paper account(s)?		
• Any polling agents able to observe and hear but not obstructing the voting process?		
• Guidance material and handbooks available for reference purposes?		
• Tellers aware of the code of conduct and other instructions?		
• Presiding Officer aware of transportation and handover arrangements for ballot box(es) and materials at close of poll?		

Some of the following arrangements may also be in place to help manage the safety of voters and staff during the coronavirus pandemic. Your RO will confirm which apply to your polling stations.

Polling place assessment	(√)	Comments
Polling station staff following and encouraging public health guidelines – cleaning hands, maintaining social/physical distancing, wearing face coverings?		
Are the public health notices visible?		
Is hand sanitiser available at the entrance and exit?		
Does the set up make best use of space and enable social/physical distancing?		
Does the layout allow a one way flow of voters?		
Social/physical distancing markers in place, as relevant?		
Are there cleaning materials ready for cleaning tactile templates or large print ballot papers after use?		
Is there adequate ventilation?		
Are the polling booths socially/physically distanced?		
Are pens/pencils available for voters who haven't brought their own?		
Are cleaning materials available to clean pen/pencils? (unless single-use pencils are being used)		

Comments or feedback from Presiding Officer / Poll Clerk:

Polling station inspector's comments on first visit: (time of visit _____)

Polling station inspector's comments on second visit: (time of visit _____)

Polling station inspector's comments on third visit: (time of visit _____)

Polling station inspector's comments on fourth visit: (time of visit _____)