



Introduction

**The Scottish Independence
Referendum
Guidance for Counting Officers**

Translations and other formats

This document can be made available in certain alternative formats. For further information, contact Ros Wilson at ros.wilson@edinburgh.gov.uk, telephone 0131 469 3820.

1 Introduction to this guidance

Purpose

- 1.1 This guidance has been prepared by the Chief Counting Officer to support Counting Officers and their teams in successfully planning for and managing the Scottish Independence Referendum to be held on Thursday 18 September 2014. The aim is to provide clear operational procedures and to promote consistency of practice throughout the whole of Scotland in such a way that people will have confidence in the conduct of the poll and in the ultimate result.
- 1.2 This guidance should be read in conjunction with any directions or additional instructions issued by the Chief Counting Officer as part of her role in co-ordinating the delivery of the referendum.
- 1.3 This guidance is based on the legislative requirements in:-
 - [The Scotland Act 1998 \(Modification of Schedule 5\) Order 2013](#)
 - [The Scottish Independence Referendum \(Franchise\) Act 2013](#)
 - [The Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013, and](#)
 - [The Scottish Independence Referendum \(Chief Counting Officer and Counting Officer Charges and Expenses\) Order 2014.](#)
- 1.4 Counting Officers must also have regard to the Public Sector Equality duty contained in [Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.](#)
- 1.5 In addition, Counting Officers must comply with any direction issued by the Chief Counting Officer in relation to the referendum.¹

How to use this guidance

- 1.6 This guidance is divided into six parts:-
 - [Part A – Roles and Responsibilities](#)
 - [Part B – Planning and Organisation](#)
 - [Part C – Administering the Poll](#)
 - [Part D – Absent Voting](#)
 - [Part E - Verifying and Counting the Votes](#)
 - [Part F – After the Declaration of the Result](#)

¹ SIRA 2013 Section 7(6)

1.7 Each of these parts covers:-

- What you are required to do by law ('musts')
- The criteria that must be met to fulfil the performance standards set by the Chief Counting Officer
- Recommended best practice to promote consistency and to help you carry out your duties

1.8 The guidance is supplemented by resources which can be accessed through links contained throughout the guidance.

1.9 The Chief Counting Officer is indebted to the Electoral Commission for the provision of materials and support for the preparation of this guidance.

1.10 Thanks are also due to Aileen Knudsen, Depute Returning Officer of South Lanarkshire Council, and the Forms Working Group for preparing an extensive collection of forms and styles for use by Counting Officers. The forms are referred to throughout this guidance and are hosted in the secure environment of the [Knowledge Hub](#).