

A quick guide for polling station staff

This guide should be used alongside the Chief Counting Officer's [Handbook for polling station staff](#). Page numbers given in this guide show where more detailed information can be found in the handbook.

Who can vote at the polling station?

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Letters next to an elector's entry on the register show whether they are entitled to vote at the referendum. Only the following electors **can** be given a ballot paper in the polling station:

Letters	Who
No letters	Ordinary electors
No letters + N	Anonymously registered electors
G or G+N	Certain citizens of EU member states
K or K+N	Certain citizens of EU member states
L or L+N	Peers
P or P+N	Proxy voters (These votes will normally be cast by a proxy on the voter's behalf. However, the voter may vote on their own behalf if they arrive to cast their vote before the proxy.)

Who can't vote at the polling station?

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The following electors **must not** be given a ballot paper in the polling station:

Letters	Who
A or A+N	Postal voters
E or E+N	Overseas peers
F or F+N	Overseas electors
U or U+N	Certain citizens of EU member states

What is the usual voting process?

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Stage 1 - Checking the voter	Greet the elector and ask them to state their name and address.
	Confirm that they are eligible to vote by checking their entry on the polling list.
	Mark the voter's entry in the polling list in such a way as to show clearly that they have voted.
	Read out their name and elector number (including the polling district reference) from the polling list.
Stage 2 – Issuing the ballot paper	Write the elector number on the corresponding number list next to the relevant ballot paper number. Do NOT write anything on the ballot paper.
	Ensure that the ballot paper to be issued bears the number on the back.
	Ensure that the ballot paper to be issued bears the correct official mark on the front.
	Read out the instructions on the ballot paper and hand it to the elector.
Stage 3 – Voting	The elector marks the ballot paper in the privacy of the polling booth.
	Ask the elector to show you the ballot paper number on the back of the ballot paper before they place it in the ballot box.

What if...

...the key-holder has not arrived? (p9)

Try to make contact with them. If possible, make alternative arrangements. Inform the referendum office. Polling must begin at 7am.

...an elector spoils their ballot paper? (p21)

Cancel the spoilt ballot paper. Place it in the appropriate envelope, write "cancelled" on the corresponding number list and issue the elector with another ballot paper.

...an elector cannot gain access to the polling station? (p28)

Take the ballot paper outside to the elector after informing any agents present. Ensure ballot secrecy at all times.

...a disabled elector needs assistance? (p28)

Offer assistance. Explain what support is available.

...the person asking for a ballot paper appears on the polling list as having already voted? (p48)

Check whether they had appointed a proxy. If not, follow the tendered ballot process. Ask the prescribed questions before issuing a tendered ballot paper. Do not issue a tendered ballot paper if the questions are not answered satisfactorily.

...an elector with an 'A' marker on the polling list says they did not apply to vote by post? (p35)

Do not issue an ordinary ballot paper.

If they have received their postal vote: - encourage them to return it to any polling station in the council area or to the referendum office by 10pm. If they don't want to return it, follow the tendered ballot procedure.

If they have not received their postal vote: - if it is before 5pm, direct them to the referendum office for a replacement. If it is after 5pm or if they don't want a replacement, follow the tendered ballot procedure. Ask the prescribed questions before issuing a tendered ballot paper. Do not issue a tendered ballot paper if the questions are not issued satisfactorily.

...an elector claims to have lost or not received their postal vote? (p36)

Before 5pm: direct them to the elections office for a replacement.

After 5pm: follow the tendered ballot procedure. Ask the prescribed questions before issuing a tendered ballot paper. Do not issue a tendered ballot paper if the questions are not answered satisfactorily.

...a voter asks how to complete their ballot paper? (pp21, 22)

Read out the instructions on the ballot paper. Read the referendum question and explain that the voter must choose whether to answer yes or no by marking an X in the box against their choice.

...a person is not on the polling list or any of the notices? (p32)

Re-check the list carefully, including the section for 'Other Electors' (which may not be at your station). If you still cannot find the entry, do not issue a ballot paper. Direct the voter to the Electoral Registration Office.

...an elector hands you a poll card without a name or address? (p39)

Poll cards like this are sent to anonymously registered electors and to the proxies of such electors. Do not ask for the elector's name and address. Follow the procedure for issuing a ballot paper to anonymous electors.

...an elector wants to return their postal vote to the polling station? (pp22 and 35)

Check the postal vote is for the council area. If it is, place it in the packet provided. If it is not, or you are unsure, direct the elector to the referendum office. Do NOT place it in the ballot box

...a person asks to vote on behalf of someone who has had a medical emergency or has been called away suddenly for employment, service or other reasons and is unable to vote in person? (page 38)

Only issue a ballot paper if they have been officially appointed as an emergency proxy. If not, explain that emergency proxies can be appointed up until 5pm and refer them to the Electoral Registration Officer for more information.

...you, or someone else, suspects that the person applying for a ballot paper is not who they say they are? (p48)

Before – and only before – issuing a ballot paper, the Presiding Officer may ask the prescribed questions. Agents have a right to require the Presiding Officer to ask these questions. If they are answered satisfactorily, an ordinary ballot paper must be issued. No further enquiries may be made as to someone's right to a ballot paper.

...there is a serious disturbance (e.g. fire, flood etc.) (p46)

Do not put the safety of anyone at risk. If safe to do so, set up a new polling station nearby. Inform the referendum office.

Contact details

If you are unsure about any of the procedures described in the handbook you should contact the referendum office.

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