

Scottish Independence Referendum

INSTRUCTIONS TO STAFF DEALING WITH THE OPENING OF POSTAL VOTERS' BALLOT PAPER ENVELOPES

The Postal Voters' Ballot Box contains covering envelopes 'B', each of which should contain a Postal Voting Statement (PVS) and envelope 'A', in which the ballot papers should be enclosed.

The following procedure will apply when opening the box and dealing with its contents:

Stage 1 – Verification

- (a) Open the ballot box and count the number of envelopes 'B' and give a note of the number of envelopes to the Supervisor.
- (b) If the Supervisor agrees with the total you will be asked to proceed. If not, you will be asked to count again.

Stage 2 – Opening and Checking Postal Voters' Envelopes

When the Supervisor advises you should deal with the envelopes as follows:

- (a) Open envelope 'B' and remove the PVS and envelope 'A.'
- (b) Place the PVS to your left and the envelope 'A' to your right.
- (c) If there is no PVS in envelope 'B' open envelope 'A' to ascertain if it is there. If there is still no PVS, clip all documents together and put in the Supervisor's tray. Do not remove the ballot papers from envelope 'A' at this stage.
- (d) If the PVS is not in envelope 'B' but found to be in envelope 'A', this should be removed. If on checking envelope 'A' you discover there are no ballot papers, clip all documents together and put in the Supervisor's tray.
- (e) Check the number on the PVS matches the number on envelope 'A'.
- (f) If they do not match, check the number on the back of the ballot papers and if they match, the PVS should be accepted. Place the ballot papers back into envelope 'A'.
- (g) If the PVS is not signed, clip all documents together and put in the Supervisor's tray.
- (h) If the ballot papers are received along with the PVS in envelope 'B' and not in envelope 'A' this is acceptable.
- (i) When you are finished this stage you should have 2 bundles: PVS' on your left and envelopes 'A' on your right.
- (j) The Supervisor will take away the PVS for scanning and thereafter they will be sealed in an envelope with the constituency details.

Stage 3 – Opening the Ballot Paper Envelope

- (a) Envelopes 'A' should then be opened and the ballot papers removed and placed FACE DOWN.
- (b) Check the number on the back of the ballot paper matches the number on envelope 'A'. If it does not, clip them together and place in the Supervisor's tray.
- (c) If you discover there are no ballot papers inside envelope 'A', place the envelope in the Supervisor's tray.
- (d) Place the ballot papers to your right and the empty envelopes 'A' to your left.
- (e) On completion, band together the empty envelopes 'A' and the Supervisor will remove these and place them in an envelope with the ward details.

Stage 4 – Counting the Ballot Papers

- (a) Count the ballot papers FACE DOWN.
- (b) Advise the Supervisor of the total.
- (c) If the count does not agree with the Supervisor's total, then you will be asked to count again.
- (d) If the count agrees, the Supervisor will remove the ballot papers from the table.