

Risk register

Scottish Independence Referendum – 18th September 2014

Date:

Author:

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Reviews:			
Name	Role	Date	Sign-off (✓)

Defining the level of impact and likelihood of risk

Inherent risk evaluation

How **likely** is it that the risk going to happen?

- Unlikely – Likelihood of occurrence is relatively slim - <10% chance of occurrence
- Possible – Quite possible that the risk could occur especially if control measures are inadequate - 10% - 50% chance of occurrence
- Probable – More likely to happen than not - >50% chance of occurrence

What would the **impact** be if the risk was to crystallise?

- Minor – Unlikely to have a permanent or significant effect
- Moderate – Potential impact on performance and service delivery. May be adequately managed through existing processes
- Significant – Severe impact on performance through a reduced ability to deliver.

The 3x3 matrix below can be used to calculate the overall risk score:

IMPACT	3 Significant	3 (Significant & Unlikely)	6 (Significant & Possible)	9 (Significant & Probable)
	2 Moderate	2 (Moderate & Unlikely)	4 (Moderate & Possible)	6 (Moderate & Probable)
	1 Minor	1 (Minor & Unlikely)	2 (Minor & Possible)	3 (Minor & Probable)
		1 - Unlikely	2 - Possible	3 - Probable
	LIKELIHOOD			

Residual risk evaluation

Once the appropriate action has been identified to address an individual risk, the action is given a score of 1 to 3 based on an assessment of how likely it is to be effective in reducing the risk (not all risks are capable of being reduced).

The risk owner will need to make an assessment as to whether the control measures are:

- **Good:** would score a **3**, i.e. control measures are fully in place, agreed by line manager and form part of everyday activity
- **Average:** would score a **2**, i.e. some controls in place but further actions to be planned and/or executed
- **Poor:** would score a **1**, i.e. no control measures in place as yet, although actions may be planned

The initial (inherent) risk score is then divided by the score for the control action to give a residual risk score. This is the ultimate assessment of the scale of the risk and whether it is Red, Amber or Green.

How to use this template

1.1 This risk register template provides some example risks and suggestions for mitigating them. In addition to the risks identified in the template, you should also identify any other risks, including ones specific to your local circumstances, and how you would mitigate those. This template also provides a template issues register to log any issues that arise and subsequent action taken.

1.2 You must prepare a risk register, treat it as a 'living document' and keep it under regular review, using it to monitor the risks and any changes, as well as ensuring that mitigating actions are being taken forward as appropriate. To meet the standard, your risk register must identify:

- Any difficulties and problems that may occur, and the actions taken to mitigate them.
- The seriousness of any risk by indicating both the likelihood of the risk occurring and the impact of the risk if it did occur.

1.3 Further guidance on planning for the referendum can be found in [Part B – Planning and organisation](#) of the Chief Counting Officer's guidance for Counting Officers.

Risk register

Number	Risk	Cause	Impact description	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent rating	Mitigation / current controls	Control Score	Residual rating	Further action required	Lead Officer	Date of completion
PLANNING												
	Failure to ensure proper plans in place	No comprehensive written project plan Poor planning assumptions	Necessary activities not completed or completed late Missed deadlines Potential breach of legislation				<i>Maintain and update project plan to ensure all activities are planned for and sufficient resources are available as and when required</i> <i>Ensure evaluation of previous electoral events has been integrated into the planning process</i>					

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LOSS OF PREMISES												
	Loss of polling stations	Venue affected by flood, fire, vandalism, etc.	Voters unable to cast their vote				<p><i>Prepare list of alternative venues, including making standby arrangements for use of portacabins/ mobile vehicles if necessary</i></p> <p><i>Brief Presiding Officers on possible emergency alternatives (e.g. setting up a temporary polling station in their car)</i></p>					
	Loss of postal vote issue/ opening venue	Venue affected by flood, fire, vandalism, etc.	<p>Delay in delivery of postal ballot packs</p> <p>Unable to check 100% of postal</p>				<p><i>Identify alternative venues</i></p> <p><i>Have an emergency protocol in place,</i></p>					

Number	Risk	Cause	Impact description	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent rating	Mitigation / current controls	Control Score	Residual rating	Further action required	Lead Officer	Date of completion
			<p>vote identifiers</p> <p>If it affects the last opening session, potential delay to the verification and count</p>				<p><i>and ensure staff are briefed on what to do in such circumstances</i></p>					
	Loss of verification and count venue	Venue affected by flood, fire, vandalism, etc.	<p>Delay in completing the verification</p> <p>Delay in counting</p> <p>Delay in declaration of result</p>				<p><i>Identify alternative venues</i></p> <p><i>Have in place an emergency protocol that ensures the security of ballot papers</i></p> <p><i>Ensure staff are briefed on what to do in such circumstances</i></p>					

Number	Risk	Cause	Impact description	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent rating	Mitigation / current controls	Control Score	Residual rating	Further action required	Lead Officer	Date of completion
	Loss of referendum office	Office affected by flood, fire, vandalism, etc.	Unable to administer referendum Loss of data				<i>Check council's emergency plan for relocation and security arrangements, and identify alternative temporary accommodation</i> <i>Ensure daily back-up of data held off-site</i>					
FAILURE OF IT PROVISION												
	Loss of IT capability	System or network failure	Unable to administer the referendum to the required deadlines Need to carry out processes manually				<i>Perform daily back-ups and download documentation onto disc for secure storage off-site</i> <i>Ensure hard copies of data are available</i>					

Number	Risk	Cause	Impact description	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent rating	Mitigation / current controls	Control Score	Residual rating	Further action required	Lead Officer	Date of completion
							<p><i>Check with electoral registration/ electoral event management software supplier with regards to availability of duplicate system</i></p> <p><i>IT provider to ensure adequate support throughout the period of the referendum and particularly on critical days</i></p> <p><i>Emergency generator provision by IT provider</i></p>					

Number	Risk	Cause	Impact description	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent rating	Mitigation / current controls	Control Score	Residual rating	Further action required	Lead Officer	Date of completion
	Delay in postal vote opening session	Technical problems with scanners/ printers	<p>Unable to verify 100% of postal vote identifiers</p> <p>Integrity of polls brought into question</p> <p>If it affects the last opening session, potential delay to the verification and count</p>				<p><i>Ensure scanners have been fully serviced and tested</i></p> <p><i>Identify alternative printers and scanners within the building and ensure necessary network connections are in place</i></p>					

Number	Risk	Cause	Impact description	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent rating	Mitigation / current controls	Control Score	Residual rating	Further action required	Lead Officer	Date of completion
							<p><i>Have sufficient scanning capacity so that the breakdown of one scanner would not delay a postal vote opening session</i></p> <p><i>Draw up contingency plans for undertaking postal vote identifier verification manually ensuring that access to hard copies of postal vote application forms is available</i></p>					

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COMMUNICATION												
	Queries unable to reach electoral staff	Telecom/fax/IT failure Wrong advice given to voters Lack of voter information	Voter confusion Voters unable to register or to vote				<p><i>Ensure dedicated line to referendum office, plus mobile numbers made available as back up</i></p> <p><i>Seek out use of other fax machines within building to use if necessary</i></p> <p><i>IT provider to ensure adequate support throughout the period of the referendum and particularly on critical days</i></p> <p><i>Emergency generator provision by IT provider</i></p>					

Number	Risk	Cause	Impact description	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent rating	Mitigation / current controls	Control Score	Residual rating	Further action required	Lead Officer	Date of completion
							<p><i>Ensure all outgoing information contains referendum office contact details</i></p> <p><i>Provide frontline staff with FAQs</i></p>					
FAILURE ON THE PART OF CONTRACTORS												
	Non/late delivery of poll cards/postal ballot packs	<p>Missed printing deadlines or non-completion</p> <p>Printing errors</p> <p>Postal strike</p>	<p>Electors unaware of when/where to vote</p> <p>Voters unable to cast their vote</p>				<p><i>Check out performance of potential suppliers with other clients and consider visiting premises of the selected contractor to inspect capacity, set up and processes</i></p> <p><i>Prepare and agree contracts as soon as possible and regularly monitor</i></p>					

Number	Risk	Cause	Impact description	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent rating	Mitigation / current controls	Control Score	Residual rating	Further action required	Lead Officer	Date of completion
							<i>performance against expectations</i> <i>Close liaison with contractor to identify potential problems in advance</i> <i>Consider contingency arrangements to print products elsewhere in the event of non-completion</i> <i>Ensure robust proofing procedures are in place and include quality checking mechanisms in contract or in any in-house</i>					

Number	Risk	Cause	Impact description	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent rating	Mitigation / current controls	Control Score	Residual rating	Further action required	Lead Officer	Date of completion
							<i>arrangements prior to issue</i> <i>Close liaison with account manager at Royal Mail</i> <i>Consider alternative options for distribution e.g. by hand using in-house teams or by an alternative provider/carrier</i> <i>Develop process for re-issue of lost/not received postal ballot packs during legislative time-frame</i> <i>Consider alternative means of getting postal ballot packs back</i>					

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							<i>to the Counting Officer in time for close of poll (e.g., establishing postal vote collection points and promoting the ability for voters to hand in their completed postal ballots at polling stations in the relevant electoral area)</i>					
	Poll cards/ballot papers/postal ballot packs do not contain correct information	Printing errors / lack of checking mechanisms	Voters do not receive the correct information and are unable to cast their vote/ their vote is not counted				<i>Ensure robust proofing procedures are in place and that quality checks are carried out throughout the process</i> <i>Where ballot papers are</i>					

Number	Risk	Cause	Impact description	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent rating	Mitigation / current controls	Control Score	Residual rating	Further action required	Lead Officer	Date of completion
							<i>collected in advance of polling day by Presiding Officers, require them to check the sequential numbering of ballot papers on collection</i>					
INTEGRITY ISSUES												
	An individual votes as someone else	Electoral malpractice	The integrity of the results is called into question				<i>Presiding Officers to ask statutory questions where appropriate</i> <i>Presiding Officer to hold police contact number</i> <i>Prepare template for polling station staff for recording statements</i> <i>100% postal vote</i>					

Number	Risk	Cause	Impact description	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent rating	Mitigation / current controls	Control Score	Residual rating	Further action required	Lead Officer	Date of completion
							<i>identifier verification</i>					
	A threat to public safety	Public order incident	Delay/postponement of polls				<i>Liaison with local police SPOC</i> <i>Review of security arrangements and analysis of risks</i> <i>Police attendance at polling stations and the count according to level of risk identified</i>					
	Ballot papers interfered with	Security of referendum stationery is breached	Integrity of the polls is called into question				<i>Ensure method of storage is such that you can be satisfied that you have taken all necessary steps to ensure that the ballot papers are kept securely.</i>					

Number	Risk	Cause	Impact description	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent rating	Mitigation / current controls	Control Score	Residual rating	Further action required	Lead Officer	Date of completion
STAFFING												
	Unable to appoint sufficient staff	Insufficient/non-provision of resources Difficulty in recruiting suitable staff	Insufficient staff to cover processes				<i>Early agreement on availability and release of local authority staff</i> <i>Seek alternative sources of recruitment – e.g. community groups</i> <i>Ensure sufficient staff have been identified and allocated to all referendum processes</i> <i>Consider training additional staff as a contingency</i>					
	Loss of staff	Sickness Outbreak of pandemic or	Insufficient number of staff to cover processes				<i>Ensure all staff have contact details for the referendum office</i>					

Number	Risk	Cause	Impact description	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent rating	Mitigation / current controls	Control Score	Residual rating	Further action required	Lead Officer	Date of completion
		other contagious illness affecting large numbers of referendum staff					<p><i>for use in the event that they can no longer attend</i></p> <p><i>Ensure list of trained, reserve staff with contact numbers is in place</i></p> <p><i>Provide appropriate training and guidance notes to staff who have been re-deployed and are carrying out unfamiliar tasks</i></p> <p><i>Consult with local authority's contingency planning unit</i></p> <p><i>Have processes in</i></p>					

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							<i>place to minimise the risk of cross-infection, taking into consideration any advice provided by the Department of Health</i>					
	Insufficient support staff appointed	No detailed assessment of staffing requirements	Inability/difficulty in meeting deadlines Mistakes by overworked staff, which could adversely affect the voter				<i>Map-out staffing requirements at an early stage in project planning process. Consider need to appoint temporary support staff to assist the project team at different points of the process.</i>					
	Mistakes by inexperienced staff or by staff	Inadequate/lack of training	Voters are unable to cast their vote				<i>Training to be scheduled for all staff to ensure they</i>					

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	not fully aware of legislation /procedure		Results called into question				<p><i>are provided with the necessary information to be able to undertake their duties</i></p> <p><i>Provide adequate resources such as guidance notes and polling station handbooks to relevant staff</i></p> <p><i>Use of polling station inspectors to troubleshoot any issues identified on polling day</i></p>					
POLLING DAY												
	Presiding Officer unable to gain access to polling station	Venue manager does not provide keys Vandalism, loss of venue etc.	Delay in opening the polling station				<i>Presiding Officer to open up temporary polling station outside with guidance from the referendum office,</i>					

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							<p><i>pending access being made available</i></p> <p><i>Consider having a locksmith on call</i></p> <p><i>Prepare list of alternative venues, including making standby arrangements for use of portacabins/mobile vehicles if necessary</i></p>					
	Poor accessibility to the voting process, including for disabled voters	<p>Polling station not set-up appropriately</p> <p>Staff not adequately trained</p>	Not everyone who is entitled to vote is able to do so				<p><i>Accessibility issues to be highlighted in training sessions for polling station staff</i></p> <p><i>Provide training for staff on good</i></p>					

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							<i>customer care and access issues</i> <i>Give Presiding Officers instructions about installing any necessary accessibility alterations</i> <i>Require Presiding Officers to set up the polling station with reference to the checklist in the polling station handbook</i> <i>Ensure Presiding Officers and polling station inspectors carry out checks throughout polling day</i>					

Number	Risk	Cause	Impact description	Likelihood	Impact	Inherent rating	Mitigation / current controls	Control Score	Residual rating	Further action required	Lead Officer	Date of completion
	Missing equipment	Equipment not properly prepared prior to poll	Delay in issuing ballot papers to electors				<i>Use check list for preparing sundries</i> <i>Instruct Presiding Officer to check box and accompanying materials on receipt</i> <i>Equip visiting officers with spare equipment/ stationery</i>					
	Electoral registration problems	Errors on polling lists Staff unaware of clerical errors procedure	Not everyone who is entitled to vote is able to do so				<i>Liaison between ERO and CO and their respective staff to establish communication procedures for use on polling day</i>					

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							<i>Ensure helpline is equipped to deal with all polling day queries and the electoral registration and referendums office are staffed throughout polling day to handle queries</i>					
	A threat to public safety	Problems with voter dissatisfaction or aggressive behaviour	Staff feel threatened and are unable to carry out their role Delay/postponement of polls				<i>Provide guidance and training to front line staff, including FAQs to assist with giving answers to common queries Provide guidance on dealing with aggressive customers, drawing on resources developed by other</i>					

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							<i>council departments</i> <i>Provide contact details for the police</i>					
	The public are unable to cast their votes	Polling station runs out of ballot papers	Results of referendum called into question				<i>Allocation of 100% of ballot papers</i> <i>Use of polling station inspectors to monitor and troubleshoot throughout polling day</i>					
THE COUNT												
	Insufficient space at venue	Inadequate planning	Lack of transparency and loss of confidence in the process				<i>Plan layout of count venue in advance, allocating space to accommodate all those entitled to attend</i>					

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	Delay of delivery of ballot boxes from the polling stations to the count venue/failure of ballot boxes to arrive from the polling station	Presiding Officer has difficulties getting from the polling station to the count venue (e.g., becomes lost, car breaks down, has an accident)	Delay in verification and count				<p><i>Agree ballot box delivery routes from polling stations to count location</i></p> <p><i>Establish effective lines of communication between central control point and individual vehicles</i></p> <p><i>Contact details of all Presiding Officers to be available at the count</i></p>					
	Errors during verification of ballot paper accounts	Inadequate training	<p>Delay to completion of verification and count</p> <p>Inaccurate result</p>				<p><i>Develop clear, easy-to-use ballot paper accounts</i></p> <p><i>Ensure Presiding Officers are adequately trained</i></p>					

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							<i>to avoid errors in the completion of their ballot paper accounts</i>					
	Evacuation of count centre	Emergency alarm activated (due to fire, etc.)	<p>Delay to declaration of results</p> <p>Security of ballot papers compromised</p> <p>Potential loss of ballot papers</p>				<p><i>Have in place an emergency protocol for the count.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure that evacuation and re-entry procedures are developed so that any evacuation can be conducted in such a way as to ensure that the count is not compromised i.e., ballot boxes and papers are secured or removed from premises</i></p> <p><i>Make an</i></p>					

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							<p><i>appropriate announcement at the start of the count to communicate evacuation procedures</i></p> <p><i>If re-entry is not possible, invoke contingency plans.</i></p>					
	Failure of the electronic counting system	<p>Power failure to the count centre</p> <p>Technical issues with the system</p>	<p>Loss of confidence in the process</p> <p>Delay in declaring results</p>				<p><i>Ensure adequate power supply and back-up generation available at the count centre</i></p> <p><i>Check no planned works to the electricity supply on the day of the count</i></p> <p><i>Ensure sufficient technical support</i></p>					

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							<i>is available on-site</i> <i>Prepare emergency protocol to use another count centre if necessary</i> <i>Prepare plans for a manual count if the electronic count cannot be recommended</i>					
AFTER THE DECLARATION OF RESULTS												
	Legal action against the Counting Officer	???????????	Result of referendum bought into question				<i>Maintain a clear audit trail of processes, including evidence of a project management approach and structured risk management process</i>					

Comment [A1]: Check scope for legal action

Issues register

This issues register can be used to record any issues arising. The log should cover the nature of the issue, its source, the date it was raised and its potential impact. It should also include the proposed action to deal with the issue, as well as assigning clear ownership to the issue and establishing the date of its anticipated resolution.

An issue which has occurred is usually the result of an earlier risk which has now become reality, so it is vital to ensure that both the issues register and risk register are live documents and that they are reviewed and updated in conjunction.

Issue (already occurred)	Issue source (Where/Who raised)	Date issue arose	Potential impact (1-3)	Action	Issue owner	Target date for resolution (completion date in brackets)	Status – Open/Closed

