

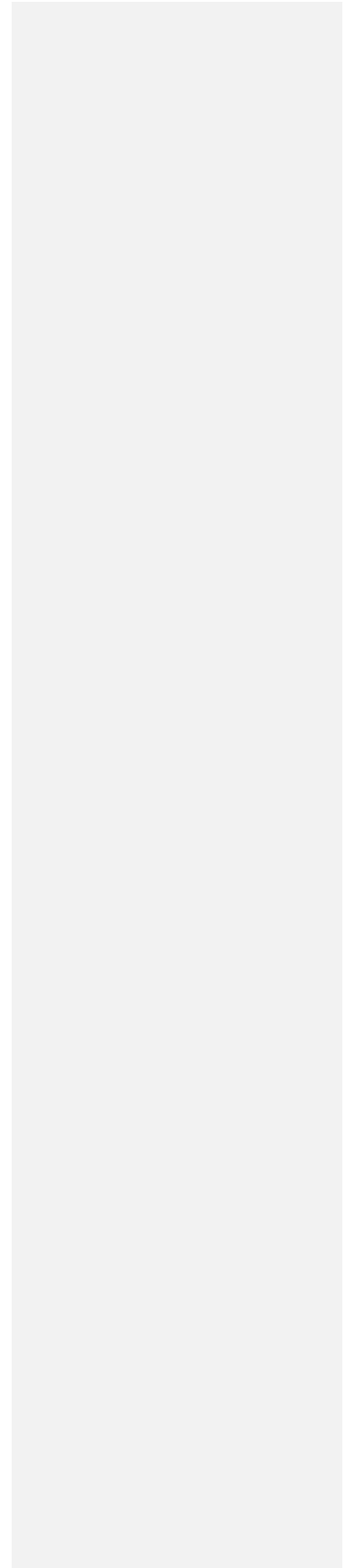
Part C

Administering the poll

The Scottish Independence

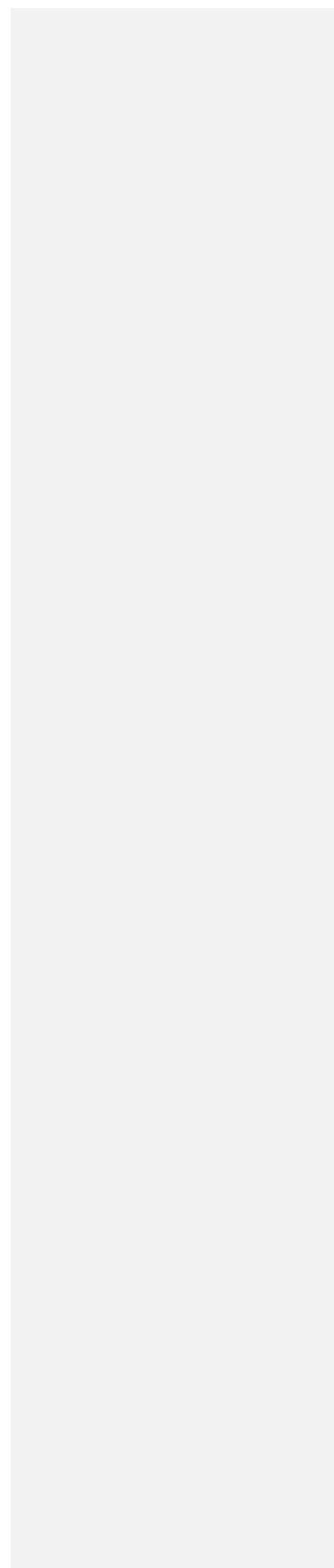
Referendum

Guidance for Counting Officers



Translations and other formats

For information on obtaining this publication in another language or in a large-print or Braille version please contact *(details to be inserted)*.



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1 Campaigners and agents

Permitted Participants and Designated Organisations

1.1 Anyone can campaign for a particular outcome in the referendum as long as they do not spend more than £10,000. Anyone spending more than this amount must register with the Electoral Commission as a “permitted participant”.

1.2 Only the following types of individuals or organisations can register as permitted participants:

- A registered party
- A qualifying individual (i.e. a person resident in the United Kingdom or registered on the electoral register or the register of young voters)
- A qualifying body as defined in Part 2 para 4 of Schedule 4 of the Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2014

1.3 The register of permitted participants can be accessed on the Commission’s website at

1.4 Once registered, permitted participants are entitled to obtain, on request and free of charge, one copy of the register of local government electors and of the absent voters’ lists for campaigning purposes. The Chief Counting Officer has developed forms for permitted participants to use for requesting copies of the register and absent voters’ lists and these are available on the EMB website.



Detailed information on access and supply of the register of local government electors to permitted participants and others can be found in Part H “Access and Supply” of the [ER guidance – Managing electoral registration](#) etc.

1.5 Permitted participants must register someone as a “responsible person”. This person will be responsible for making sure that the permitted participant complies with rules on spending and donations under the Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013.

Designated Organisations

1.6 The Commission may designate one of the permitted participants for each of the proposals in the referendum as representing all those campaigning for that proposal. To attain this status, permitted participants must make application to the

Comment [AL1]: Insert hyperlink?

Comment [AL2]: Take in list from legislation and include charities

Comment [AL3]: Add hyperlink

Comment [AL4]: CCO or ERO

Comment [A5]: ER guidance?

Comment [A6]: Specific advice for referendum presumably

Commission. The successful participants will be termed “designated organisations”.

- 1.7 Designated organisations are entitled to obtain, on request and free of charge, one copy of the edited polling list and of the absent voters’ lists. A request form is available on the [EMB website](#).

Comment [AL7]: hyperlink

- 1.8 As prescribed in paras 7 and 8 of Part 2 of Schedule 4 of the Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2014, persons authorised by designated organisations are entitled to use publicly maintained accommodation, such as schools and other meeting rooms, for public meetings in support of their campaigns during the period of 28 days prior to the referendum. The use of the accommodation is to be free of charge, except for expenses involved in preparing and servicing the accommodation and is subject to reasonable notice and availability.

Comment [AL8]: hyperlink

- 1.9 Any person authorised by a designated organisation is entitled to inspect the Council’s list of its premises covered by this requirement in terms of [paragraph 6 of Schedule 5 of the Representation of the People Act 1983](#) or to copy such a list.

Comment [AL9]: hyperlink?

- 1.10 Accordingly, you should ensure that your Council’s list of suitable premises is up-to-date and that staff who make bookings are aware of the requirements of the Act insofar as they relate to the premises on the list.

Referendum Agents

Comment [AL10]: Insert one line about appointing a new agent.

- 1.11 A permitted participant can appoint [one referendum agent](#) per local authority area, who can be the “responsible person” referred to above. Referendum agents carry out a similar role to election agents, but they are not, in that capacity, responsible for campaign spending.

Comment [AL11]: What happens if they don’t appoint an agent?

- 1.12 Where a permitted participant wishes to appoint a referendum agent, the “responsible person” for the permitted participant is required by law to give you written notification of the appointment of a referendum agent by not later than noon on the twenty-fifth day before the referendum - i.e. by Thursday 14 August 2014. [Forms for the notification of a referendum agent have been developed by the Chief Counting Officer and are available on the \[EMB website\]\(#\).](#)

Comment [AL12]: Check final legislation in case of any date change.

Comment [AL13]: Insert hyperlink. Will there be a different area for forms that are for the use of campaigners?

- 1.13 If you are notified that a permitted participant has appointed a referendum agent, you are legally required to publish a notice giving the name and address of the referendum agent and the name of the permitted participant as soon as practicable. A style for this notice has been developed by the Chief Counting Officer and is available on the [EMB website](#).

- 1.14 A permitted participant may rescind the appointment of a referendum agent and appoint a replacement by giving you written notification. Similarly, where a referendum agent dies, the permitted participant may also appoint a replacement in writing. In these circumstances you must publish a notice to that effect as soon as is practicable. [The Chief Counting Officer has developed a style for this notice which is available on the EMB website.](#)

Comment [AL14]: Hyperlink – but check with Forms Group

Guidance for campaigners

- 1.15 The Electoral Commission is responsible for providing guidance for campaigners on registration, designation, campaign spending and donations. It is not for Counting Officers to offer advice on these issues. Any enquiries on these topics should be referred to the Electoral Commission’s Scotland Office [on](#)

Comment [AL15]: Insert contact details

Guidance on the referendum process

- 1.16 Counting Officers are responsible for providing guidance on the referendum process locally. You must ensure that referendum agents are issued with written guidance including local arrangements.

To demonstrate that you have met performance standard ?, you must be able to provide the Chief Counting Officer with confirmation that referendum agents are issued with written guidance on the process, including local arrangements.

- 1.17 Referendum agents should be provided with a local information pack to contain:
- Written guidance for agents covering key aspects of the referendum process including campaigning dos and don’ts, accessing referendum proceedings such as the opening of postal votes and the count and what happens after the declaration of the result
 - Information on the respective responsibilities of the Counting Officer and the Electoral Commission at the referendum
 - Contact details for your referendum team, for the Chief Counting Officer’s office, for the Electoral Commission’s Scotland Office

- Any other relevant local information

(styles for these documents have been developed by the Chief Counting Officer and are available on the EMB website)

Comment [AL16]: hyperlink

Briefings

- 1.18 You must ensure that any local referendum campaigners who have contacted you and all local referendum agents are offered a briefing session on the referendum process, including local arrangements. The Chief Counting Officer has produced a template presentation for referendum agents that you could use for the purpose.

Comment [AL17]: Both categories still relevant (in AV ref guidance)

Comment [AL18]: hyperlink

To demonstrate that you have met performance standard ? you must be able to provide the Chief Counting Officer with confirmation that briefing sessions have been offered, the date(s) of sessions and confirmation that briefing resources have been prepared.

- 1.19 All briefing sessions should stress the importance of following the Conduct Rules for the referendum, as contained in Schedule 3 of the Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013.
- 1.20 You should also highlight any security arrangements that have been put in place in consultation with the police.
- 1.21 The briefings should allow for the fact that there may be people who have little or no knowledge of referendum rules and procedures or who have not previously been involved in any electoral events.
- 1.22 You may choose to hold more than one briefing session (for example, one in the early evening to accommodate agents who may be working during the day).

Other agents at the referendum

- 1.23 Referendum agents can appoint agents to observe the opening of postal votes, the poll and the count. They are not entitled attend or to appoint agents to attend the issue of the postal votes.



For further details on the role of these agents, see ????"Your right to attend key electoral events" of the Commission's (CCO's) guidance for referendum agents

Comment [A19]: CCO or EC

- 1.24 You are required by law to ensure that all appointed agents are given a copy of the relevant secrecy requirements for the opening of postal votes, the poll and the count. These have been published on the EMB website.

Comment [A20]: Insert hyperlink

Comment [A21]: check

The opening of postal votes

- 1.25 Postal voting agents are permitted by law to observe the opening of returned postal votes and the checking of signatures and dates of birth provided on returned postal voting statements. Such appointments must be made in writing before the start of any particular session that the agents are seeking to attend. Forms for these purposes have been developed by the Chief Counting Officer and are available on the EMB website. However, referendum agents do not have to use these forms. Written notice, signed by the referendum agent and delivered to you by the relevant deadline, is sufficient for the purpose.

Comment [AL22]: hyperlink

- 1.26 You are legally required to give referendum agents at least 48 hours' notice of the time and place of any postal vote opening session and the number of agents that may be appointed to attend each opening. A form for this purpose has been prepared by the Forms Working Group and can be found on the EMB website.

Comment [AL23]: check

Comment [A24]: check if there is further advice to offer here.

Comment [A25]: hyperlink

- 1.27 It is for the Counting Officer to decide how many postal voting agents may be appointed to attend the sessions, but the number must be the same for each referendum agent. In deciding the number of agents to attend, you should take into account the capacity of the accommodation to accommodate agents and any observers together with any relevant health and safety factors.

The poll

- 1.28 Polling agents are entitled by law to access polling stations for the purpose of detecting personation. They can also observe the procedures to be followed inside a polling station. The law requires that you are notified in writing of any polling agents that have been appointed not later than five working days before the date of the referendum – i.e. by Thursday 11 September 2014 - for their appointment to be effective. The notice must set out which polling stations the polling agent may attend. A form for the notification of appointment of polling agents has been developed by the Forms Working Group and is available on the EMB website.

Comment [A26]: hyperlink

- 1.29 Referendum agents can appoint polling agents to attend at a particular polling station, although by law only one polling agent may be admitted at the same time to a polling station on behalf of the same permitted participant. The same polling agents may be appointed to attend more than one polling station but the notice appointing those agents must specify the polling stations that they are to attend.

The count

Comment [AL27]: recount ref agent role

- 1.30 Referendum agents may appoint counting agents to observe the verification and counting processes. The law requires that you are notified in writing of the appointment of counting agents by not later than five working days before the date of the referendum – i.e. by Thursday 11 September 2014 - for their appointment to be in force by the time of the count. The notice must set out which counts the agent may attend. A form for the appointment of counting agents has been prepared by the Forms Working Group and is available on the EMB's website. You are legally required to give counting agents who have been appointed notice in writing of the time and place at which the verification and count will begin.

Comment [A28]: hyperlink

- 1.301 As Counting Officer, it is for you to determine how many counting agents may be allowed access to each count. Each referendum agent should, as far as possible, be permitted to appoint sufficient numbers of counting agents to enable full and proper scrutiny of the verification and count processes.

- 1.32 The number of counting agents that may be appointed by each referendum agent should not be less than the number obtained by dividing the number of clerks employed on the counting by the number of referendum agents.

- 1.33 You must ensure that the number of counting agents that may be appointed by each referendum agent is the same.

- 1.34 You must consider any health and safety implications, including fire regulations for the count venue, when deciding on maximum numbers of counting agents per participant.

Access needs for agents

- 1.35 You should bear in mind that referendum and other agents may have specific access needs and also may need any guidance produced in a large print or other format, such as Braille or audio, or in a language other than English. It is important to seek information on any specific access needs at an early stage.

2. The electoral registers and the polling list

The register of young voters

- 2.1 The Scottish Independence Referendum is the first national electoral event in which young people aged 16 and 17 will have the right to vote.
- 2.2 The Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Act 2013 provides for a register of young voters to be compiled in each local government area. This register will comprise the names of young persons not currently on the local government register but who meet the requirements (other than the age requirement) for inclusion on it and who have reached the age of 16 or who will attain that age on or before the date of the referendum.
- 2.3 The register will contain the names of the persons so entitled together with their respective dates of birth, qualifying addresses (except for anonymous entries) and voter numbers.
- 2.4 The register of young voters is not to be published and Electoral Registration Officers are not permitted to disclose any information from it other than in the precise and limited circumstances stipulated in Section 9 of the Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Act 2013.

The polling list

- 2.5 For the referendum, Electoral Registration Officers will merge the entries in the register of young voters with those in the register of local government electors to form the polling list which will be used in polling stations.
- 2.6 The entries in the polling list will not differentiate between entries from the two registers. Dates of birth will be omitted, so there will be no distinguishing mark to identify entries drawn from the register of young voters.
- 2.7 The Electoral Registration Officer will supply the Counting Officer, on request and free of charge, with one data copy and as many printed copies of the polling list, notices of alteration and records of anonymous entries as may be reasonably required for the purposes of the referendum.

- 2.8 Similarly, the Electoral Registration Officer will supply the Counting Officer with as many printed copies of the postal voters list, the list of proxies and the proxy postal voters list as may reasonably be required for the purposes of the referendum.
- 2.9 The designated organisations are eligible to receive from the Electoral Registration Officer one copy of the edited polling list (i.e. with all voter numbers and all anonymous entries removed) on request and free of charge either in paper or in data form.
- 2.10 The permitted participants are eligible to receive from the Electoral Registration Officer one copy of the register of local government electors on request and free of charge either in paper or in data form.
- 2.11 While Counting Officers may issue the designated organisations and permitted participants with the respective request forms for the electoral information above, it is the responsibility of the Electoral Registration Officer to provide the edited polling list directly to the designated organisations and the register of local government electors to the permitted participants.

Destruction of registration documents

- 2.12 Counting Officers must ensure the secure destruction of all copies in their possession of the registration documents comprising the polling list, the alteration documents specified in Schedule 2 Part 4 para 46 (1) (b) of the Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013, any records of anonymous entries, the postal voters list, the list of proxies and the proxy postal voters lists no later than one year after the date of the referendum, unless otherwise directed by an order of the Court of Session or a sheriff principal.
- 2.13 Failure to comply with para 2.12 above constitutes an offence liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale (£5,000).
- 2.14 The same obligation of secure destruction applies to any person holding copies of these documents. This should be emphasised to designated organisations and permitted participants.

Comment [AL29]: check whether there is any change to this in the final legislation

Comment [AL30]: hyperlink

3. Production of notices, poll cards and ballot papers

Production and publication of notices

- 3.1 You are legally required to publish the notice of referendum by posting it in a conspicuous place within your local area. This should be defined as including local authority offices, noticeboards, libraries and other public buildings. The notice may also be given in such other manner as you think fit.
- 3.2 You must ensure that the notice of referendum is accessible for anyone who may be interested in it, such as through using the local authority's website in order to make access easier.

Comment [A31]: check



See [Part B – Planning and Organisation](#) for more general guidance on communicating information to electors.

Comment [A32]: hyperlink

Translation and formats of notices

- 3.3 You are legally required, where you consider it appropriate to do so, to ensure that notices are translated or provided in another format. You may produce them:
- in Braille
 - in languages other than English
 - using graphical representations
 - in audio format
 - using any other means of making information accessible

Notice of referendum

- 3.4 You are required by law to publish the notice of referendum not later than the twenty-fifth day before the referendum – i.e. by Thursday 21 August 2014.
- 3.5 The notice of referendum must be produced in accordance with the legislation and must include the following:-

- the date of the referendum
- the hours of polling
- a description of who is entitled to vote at each polling station: and
- the situation of each polling station in the local government area

3.6 The notice should also include the date by which –

- applications to register to vote
- applications to vote by post or proxy and
- other applications and notices about postal or proxy voting (including emergency proxies)

must reach the Electoral Registration Officer to be effective for the referendum.

3.7 Contact details for the Electoral Registration Officer should be supplied

3.8 The notice should be in the form prescribed by the Chief Counting Officer or to like effect. Accordingly, the Chief Counting Officer has developed a [template notice of referendum](#) that you can adapt for your use. This template is available on the EMB website. It is strongly recommended that you use the template provided.

Comment [A33]: Insert hyperlink

To demonstrate that you have met performance standard ?. you must be able to provide the Chief Counting Officer with a link to the page on the local authority website on which the notice of referendum has been published.

3.9 The Chief Counting Officer may recommend that all Counting Officers post the notice of referendum on the same date.

Comment [AL34]: Is this appropriate? More details needed

Production of poll cards

3.10 You must ensure that poll cards are produced in accordance with the [example templates](#) that the Chief Counting Officer has issued or designed in line with the criteria set out [in Electoral Commission guidance](#).

Comment [A35]: Insert hyperlink

Comment [A36]: Check and hyperlink if appropriate.

3.11 Each poll card must, by law, follow the form prescribed by the Chief Counting Officer or be to like effect. The example templates produced by the Forms Working Group for the Chief Counting Officer are in a form to like effect and contain the legislative requirements. It is strongly recommended that you use the templates provided. If, however, you are not using the Chief Counting Officer's templates, you must ensure that you include all of the essential elements on the poll card. You will find these in the Scottish Independence Referendum Act, Schedule 3 para 11.

3.12 The poll card must include:-

- the name of the local authority area where the vote is being conducted
- the elector’s name, qualifying address and number on the polling list (except where the elector is registered as anonymous – see next paragraph below)
- the date and hours of the poll
- in the case of a polling station voter, the situation of the polling station
- in the case of a postal or postal proxy voter, confirmation that they will receive their ballot paper by post, with an indication as to when it is likely to be sent out, and information on how the elector may arrange to cancel their postal vote or obtain a replacement postal ballot pack
- in the case of a proxy or postal proxy voter, the proxy’s name and address in addition to the details of the elector for whom the proxy is voting
- such other information as you consider appropriate
- the prescribed instructions to be included on the back of the poll card


3.13 In the case of an anonymous elector, the name and address of the anonymous elector are to be omitted. The Chief Counting Officer’s example templates include template poll cards for anonymous electors.

To demonstrate that you have met performance standard [17](#), you must be able to provide the Chief Counting Officer with confirmation that your poll cards have been produced in accordance with any example templates that have been provided or designed in line with the criteria contained in the [Electoral Commission guidance](#).

Comment [A37]: insert perf standard

Comment [A38]: check whether appropriate

3.14 You will need to despatch your poll card data to your printers. If you are outsourcing the production of poll cards, you should ensure that your software (or that of your Electoral Registration Officer, depending on how you manage the process locally) is able to produce a data file that your printers can use to produce the materials to the specification required. At an early stage in discussions with suppliers you should address the format in which you will supply the data and the format in which they will send you any proofs and this should be included in your specification and contract.

 Further details on the management of contractors and suppliers can be found in [Part B – Planning and Organisation](#)

Comment [A39]: hyperlink

3.15 You should conduct a test-run by submitting sample data to the printers in advance of “live” data being submitted. This will also enable pre-proofs to be developed, so that it is clear which part of the data should go where on the poll card.

- 3.16 You must ensure that you have a process in place for proof-checking poll cards. You should also have in place arrangements to check the actual stationery being produced, which will highlight if any of the signed-off proofs have been inadvertently altered.

To demonstrate that you have met performance standard **?**, you must be able to provide the Chief Counting Officer with confirmation that arrangements for proof-checking poll cards are in place.

Comment [A40]: insert perf standard

- 3.17 Electoral registration data held by contractors should be destroyed as soon as possible after the day of the referendum. A written undertaking should be produced for contractors to sign confirming this. It should state that the contractor understands that information from the full polling list cannot be disclosed at any time, confirming that they will not disclose data to any unauthorised party and that, after the referendum, they will return any discs and paper records provided to them and securely destroy any other electronic or paper copies of the data.

Comment [A41]: FWG to produce?

Poll card delivery

- 3.18 You are required by law to send out poll cards as soon as practicable after the publication of the notice of referendum. The latest date the notice of referendum can be posted is Thursday 25th August – the twenty-fifth day before the referendum.

- 3.19 The Chief Counting Officer may recommend a date for all Counting Officers to issue their poll cards. Notwithstanding, it is important that the poll cards are issued as early as possible, to give electors sufficient time to apply for or cancel postal or proxy votes.

Comment [AL42]: As above. Does this apply?

Comment [AL43]: check

To demonstrate that you have met performance standard **?**, you must be able to provide the Chief Counting Officer with the scheduled and actual date of despatch of poll cards.

Comment [A44]: insert perf standard

- 3.20 By law, a poll card must be sent to the elector's qualifying address or, in the case of a proxy, to the proxy's address as shown in the list of proxies.

- 3.21 In the case of anonymous electors, the poll card must, by law, be sent to the elector's qualifying address or, where a different address has been specified on their registration application, the poll card must, by law, be sent to that other address. The law requires that a poll card must be sent to anonymously registered electors in a covering envelope.

- 3.22 You can deliver poll cards by hand, by post, or by some other method determined by you as the most appropriate for your area. If you decide that poll cards are to be delivered by hand, you should appoint sufficient staff to enable the delivery of poll cards to be completed efficiently. You should have in place a mechanism for monitoring the delivery of poll cards across the whole of your area.
- 3.23 For poll cards delivered by post, you should track deliveries so that you are well placed to be able to respond to any queries from electors. If you are using Royal Mail for posting poll cards, you should liaise with them on a regular basis.

Poll cards delivered to electors under the eleven day rule

- 3.24 The cut-off date for registering to vote is Wednesday 5 September 2014 – the eleventh day before the referendum.
- 3.25 An update of the registration data should be sent to your printers as soon as practicable after the registration deadline to enable the production of poll cards for new electors.
- 3.26 You may wish to liaise with the Electoral Registration Officer on the potential for sharing distribution costs by combining the required confirmation of registration with the poll card for those registering under the 11 day rule.

Comment [A45]: does this still apply?

Comment [A46]: Is this practical advice/

Production of ballot papers

- 3.27 Counting Officers are responsible for arranging the printing of the ballot papers for their local authority area.
- 3.28 The form of the ballot paper is prescribed in legislation (Schedule 1 of the Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013) and you have a legal duty to follow this precisely. By law, ballot papers for postal voters and for polling station use must be the same in form, except that the official mark may be different if so desired.
- 3.29 It has been determined that the colour of the ballot paper at the referendum will be white. Tendered ballot papers must be a different colour and it has been determined that the tendered ballots at the referendum will be pink. You must use the prescribed colours for the ballot papers.

Comment [A47]: check colour

Comment [A48]: check colour

- 3.30 The ballot paper must be at least 180mm wide and the voting boxes where the vote is to be marked must each be 21mm square.

Front of the ballot paper

- 3.31 The form of the front of the ballot paper must be in accordance with the directions contained in Schedule 1 to the Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013.

The official mark

- 3.32 An appropriate security mark – the “official mark” – is required by law to be added to the ballot paper. The mark should be distinctive and does not have to be a perforation added at the time of issue of the ballot paper, although stamping instruments may still be used to create a perforating official mark. It could be a printed emblem or mark or a special printing device such as a watermark. It should be capable of being **seen on the front of the ballot paper** so that it can be seen without having to turn the ballot paper over.

Comment [A49]: Legislation as it stands requires this on the back – will representations made change this?

- 3.33 You have discretion to what this mark should be in your area. However, you should be careful that the security mark you choose cannot be in any way associated with either of the campaigns.

- 3.34 By law, the official mark:

- Can be the same for all ballot papers at the referendum or different official marks can be used for different purposes, for example one for postal votes and another for polling station ballot papers
- Must be kept secret

Form of the back of the ballot paper

- 3.35 **The following information** is required by law to be included on the reverse of the ballot paper in the following format:

Comment [A50]: Check ultimate decision on where the official mark should be placed

A Unique Identifying Number (ballot paper number)

Comment [AL51]: No provision for a UIM as well as a number

Area of *(insert Council name)*

Referendum on Thursday 18th September 2014

3.36 Ballot paper numbers should run consecutively but do not have to start at 1.

Printing of the ballot papers

3.37 You should start the printing of ballot papers as soon as possible after the final proofs have been signed off.

3.38 You must ensure that a process is in place for proof-checking ballot papers. You should also have in place arrangements to check the actual ballot papers being produced, which will highlight if any of the signed-off proofs have been inadvertently altered.

3.39 When proof-checking ballot papers, you should check that every detail on the ballot paper is spelled and located correctly and in accordance with legislation.

3.40 Once you have received the batches of printed ballot papers, you should carry out a final check before any ballot papers are issued either at a postal vote issuing session or are supplied to a polling station. This should be done by checking at least the first and last ballot paper in each book and by checking that the unique identifying numbers in each book or packet run sequentially.

To demonstrate that you have met performance standard [7](#), you must be able to provide the Chief Counting Officer with confirmation that arrangements are in place for proof-checking ballot papers.

Comment [A52]: insert perf standard



General guidance on the management of contractors and suppliers can be found in [Part B – Planning and Organisation](#).

Comment [A53]: hyperlink

3.41 You should base your print-run on 100% turnout of eligible electors. [Your print run should be based on the registers \(including the register of young voters\)](#) in force at the time of printing, with provision made for any extras that may be required to deal with any additions to the register after that point. There are significant risks attached to printing ballot papers based on lower turnout levels.

Comment [AL54]: correct terminology?

3.42 If you decide for any reason not to print ballot papers based on 100% turnout, you should carefully assess the risks.

3.43 As part of your risk assessment you should consider:-

- Expected turnout levels – bear in mind that a high percentage poll has been predicted at the referendum. Do not base your calculations on the turnout at the European Parliamentary Elections where there is traditionally a low poll

- any particular local circumstances
- any local or national issues which might affect turnout

3.44 You should also take steps to ensure that additional ballot papers can be printed at short notice if required and decide how polling station staff would be briefed should this situation occur.

3.45 Guidance on the allocation of ballot papers to polling stations can be found in [paragraph??](#) below.

Comment [A55]: para 3.14 but this may change. Hyperlink?

Ballot Paper Security

3.46 Once the official mark is printed on your ballot papers, they are effectively “live”. Regardless of whether you have outsourced your printing or are printing in-house, you must take steps to ensure the security of ballot papers during production and storage. Your security arrangements should prevent unauthorised access to or use of the ballot papers during all stages of the production process and storage between printing and the poll.

To demonstrate that you have met performance standard [?](#), you must be able to provide the Chief Counting Officer with confirmation that steps are taken to ensure the security of ballot papers.

Comment [A56]: insert perf standard

4 Polling Station Voting

- 4.1 The Chief Counting Officer has produced a [polling station handbook](#) which covers in detail the voting procedures and what to expect on the day of the referendum.
- 4.2 The guidance contained in the polling station handbook has not been reproduced here. Instead, this part of our guidance focuses on the preparations Counting Officers will need to make in advance of the referendum.

Comment [A57]: hyperlink

Setting up polling stations



Guidance on the identification of suitable polling stations can be found in [Part B – Planning and Organisation](#)

Comment [A58]: hyperlink

- 4.3 You should take all necessary steps to ensure that polling stations are laid out with the voter in mind. In particular, the needs of voters with a range of disabilities should be taken into account. The positioning of all the required furniture and equipment, as well as the locations to display notices, should also be considered, along with the placement of signage within the polling station and external signage.
- 4.4 You should develop plans for the layout of each of your polling stations which can be used to assist those setting them up.
- 4.5 Whoever is in charge of setting up polling stations should be instructed on how to do so and what the layout should be capable of achieving.
- 4.6 You must ensure that all polling station staff are trained to set up polling stations in such a way that takes account of voter needs, considering voter throughput and flow, including how the voter will move through the voting process from entering to exiting the polling station.
- 4.7 Even if polling station staff are not expected to set up polling stations, they should be instructed to check that the polling station has been set up properly and should have reference to any layout plans you have produced and the polling station set-up checklist in the Chief Counting Officer's polling station handbook when doing so. The polling station handbook also covers the positioning of equipment and display of notices and provides examples of layouts both for a room where there is one polling station and a room where there is more than one.

To demonstrate that you have met performance standard [?](#), you must be able to provide confirmation that guidance/training has been provided to polling station staff on how to set up polling stations.

Comment [A59]: insert perf standard



Further guidance on the training of polling station staff can be found in [Part B – Planning and Organisation](#)

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4.8 Polling station inspector visits can be used to check polling station set-up and to ensure that all notices remain properly displayed throughout the day of the referendum.



Further details of the role of polling station inspectors can be found in [Part B – Planning and Organisation](#)

Comment [A61]: hyperlink

Polling station equipment and materials

Comment [A62]: check with Aileen whether anything is missing. Ask for list of forms in Book of Forms

4.9 You are legally required to provide polling stations with certain materials:-

- ballot box(es)
- ballot papers (including tendered ballot papers)
- materials to enable voters to mark their ballot papers (in practice, pencils- you may wish to provide string to attach pencils to the polling booths)
- the relevant part of the polling list
- absent voters' lists – postal voters', proxy voters' and postal proxies' lists
- a form to record the details of electors who have been issued ballot papers after the correction of a clerical error (which may be appended to the station's polling list)
- corresponding number list(s) (CNLs)
- large-print version of the ballot paper
- enlarged hand-held sample copy of the ballot paper
- voting device for use by blind or partially sighted voters
- ballot paper accounts
- declarations for use of companions of voters with disabilities
- list of tendered votes
- list of votes marked by the Presiding Officer
- statement of number of votes marked by the Presiding Officer
- list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions
- guidance for voters notices
- instructions for voters notices (to be displayed inside the polling booth)
- polling screens
- packets, with seals, in which to place postal ballot papers returned to the polling station

Comment [A63]: check this

4.10 In addition, you must, by law, provide a copy of [the requirements as to secrecy](#).

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4.11 You should also provide the following:-

- envelopes, with seals, in which to place any ballot papers that have been issued but which the elector has not placed in the ballot box
- a form or list to record electors marked as postal voters but who claim not to have applied for one
- notepaper for use by polling station staff

- stationery items as required, e.g. paper clips, drawing pins, adhesive tack, adhesive tape, pens and pencils, pencil sharpener for ballot pencils
- plastic sacks for returning stationery and equipment to the verification venue
- envelopes for marking up assorted packets

- 4.12 You should check that all polling station equipment is fit for purpose and that you have a sufficient quantity. You should have prepared your polling station equipment and materials in good time before the referendum, either for delivery to polling stations or collection by Presiding Officers.
- 4.13 As part of your evaluation of the suitability of your polling station, you will already have considered accessibility issues both inside and outside each of your polling stations. You should ensure that any additional equipment you have identified as required to make the polling station accessible is delivered and set up in good time for the opening of the poll.


Allocation of ballot papers

- 4.14 By law, you must provide each polling station with such number of ballot papers as, in your opinion, may be necessary. Careful consideration need to be given to the number that will be required in each case, particularly if you are considering allocating fewer ballot papers than would be required in the event of 100% turnout of eligible electorate (i.e. all electors entitled to vote in person at the polling station).
- 4.15 As part of your consideration, you may wish to consider expected turnout levels. Media predictions are that the turnout will be particularly high for this referendum.
- 4.16 If you decide for any reason not to allocate ballot papers to polling stations based on 100% turnout of eligible electorate, you should take steps to ensure that additional ballot papers can be provided in a timely manner to any polling station that may require them.
- 4.17 When allocating ballot papers to polling stations, it is important to ensure that the numbers on the ballot papers allocated to each polling station run consecutively in order to avoid any problems with completing the corresponding number list or ballot paper account. Further guidance on the printing of ballot papers is provided in [Section 3 – Production of notices, poll cards and ballot papers](#) above.
- 4.18 By law, tendered ballot papers must also be supplied to Presiding Officers. Tendered ballot papers should be supplied to polling stations in a sealed envelope with instructions stating that the envelope should be opened and the ballot papers within it issued only in prescribed circumstances, and a brief description of those circumstances should also be provided. This can help to avoid tendered ballot papers being issued in error.
- 4.19 You should take all necessary steps to ensure that all polling station staff understand that there are limited circumstances in which tendered ballot papers can be issued

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and that they are made aware of what these circumstances are and what processes they must follow for issuing them. The circumstances in which tendered ballot papers can be issued and the processes for doing so are covered in [the polling station handbook](#).

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 Further guidance on training polling station staff can be found in [Part B – Planning and Organisation](#)

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Polling lists and absent voting lists in polling stations

- 4.20 By law, you must provide each Presiding Officer with the appropriate part of the polling list for their station and appropriate absent voting lists. These lists can be printed once the referendum notice of alteration has been published - i.e. [five working days before the referendum](#).
- 4.21 Procedures should be put in place to deal with any necessary amendments to the polling lists for polling stations and proxy lists notified by the Electoral Registration Officer after that time resulting from alterations arising from the correction of clerical errors or court decisions on registration appeals and the granting of emergency proxy applications.
- 4.22 Whether such determinations are made before polling day or on polling day itself, if you are not also the Electoral Registration Officer, you should agree with them a method of communicating the relevant information to Presiding Officers which may be done [orally or](#) but which is best done in writing.
- 4.23 Where a clerical error has been rectified and the relevant elector arrives at the polling station and applies for a ballot paper, the Presiding Officer is legally required to issue a ballot paper in the usual manner. The Presiding Officer is also under a legal duty to make a written record of the elector to whom a ballot paper has been issued following an alteration to the polling list due to a clerical error. This record should include the elector's name and elector number. To assist Presiding Officers, you should attach an additional sheet to the polling lists in use at the polling station to allow them to record any such amendments.
- 4.24 Similar processes should also be developed to communicate additions to the proxy voters' list as a result of emergency proxy applications.
- 4.25 Where an elector makes a complaint to polling station staff that suggests that he/she should be on the polling list, the Presiding Officer must, by law, communicate that representation to the Electoral Registration Officer as soon as is practicable. For this to work effectively there will need to be suitable communication systems in place between Presiding Officers and the Electoral Registration Officer.

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Comment [A69]: is this satisfactory?

Corresponding number lists

- 4.26 You are under a legal obligation to prepare and provide a corresponding numbers list (CNL) for each polling station. The corresponding numbers list is a document prescribed by the Chief Counting Officer. The prescribed style is available on the EMB website.
- 4.27 There are two types of corresponding number list. The first list, which is the list to be used at postal vote issuing sessions, contains the unique identifying number of every postal ballot paper produced as well as the elector numbers of postal voters. The second list, which is the one to be used in polling stations, contains the unique ballot paper numbers and a column to add the elector numbers of voters to whom those ballot papers are issued.

Packets for postal ballot papers delivered to polling stations

- 4.28 Postal voters can return their postal vote by hand to any polling station in their local authority area.



Polling station staff should be advised that only postal votes for the local authority area can be returned to their polling station. Further details on training polling staff can be found in [Part B – Planning and Organisation](#)

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- 4.29 You should provide polling stations with sufficient packets for received postal votes. Records of all such packets should be kept so that each one can be accounted for. The packets should be clearly labelled as containing postal votes. The labels should include the name of the polling station and polling station identifier. You should ensure that the packets are capable of being securely sealed. Polling agents are entitled, by law, to attach their seal to sealed packets before they are removed from the polling station and must therefore be permitted to do so.
- 4.30 You should emphasise to Presiding Officers the importance of maintaining the security of postal votes returned to polling stations by instructing them to place any returned packets immediately in the packets provided and to ensure that the packets are stored securely.
- 4.31 You should arrange for postal votes to be collected from polling stations throughout the day as this will help to reduce the number that will have to be dealt with after the close of poll. Polling station inspectors can perform this duty. You should ensure that processes are in place to maintain a clear audit trail and to ensure the security of collected postal vote packets while in transit.

Polling station log

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- 4.32 You should prepare a polling station log for polling station staff to use to record any problems or anomalies. In particular, polling station staff should be advised to use

this log to record anything that may help to explain any apparent issues with the ballot paper account at the verification – for example, if a voter has been seen leaving the polling station with a ballot paper.

Guidance for voters notice

- 4.33 The contents and display of the “Guidance for voters” notice are prescribed by the Chief Counting Officer.
- 4.34 You must design and print the notice in accordance with the [example template](#) that the Chief Counting Officer has developed in line with the criteria set out in the Electoral Commission Guidance. The template is available on the EMB website.
- 4.35 The “Guidance for voters” notice is to be printed in conspicuous characters and exhibited inside and outside of the polling station as well as inside every polling booth.

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Close of poll

- 4.36 [Any voter](#) who is in a queue at the polling station at 10pm but who has not yet been able to cast their vote must, by law, be permitted to do so.
- 4.37 Good planning and flexible staffing should minimise the risk of there being queues. However, you still need to be prepared to deal with any queues should they arise.

Comment [A73]: check reference



Further guidance on flexible staffing arrangements at polling stations and relevant training of staff so that they can carry out each other’s roles insofar as the law permits can be found in [Part B – Planning and Organisation](#)

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- 4.38 The Chief Counting Officer’s polling station handbook will set out in detail the processes to be followed at the close of poll, including how to deal with voters held in a queue at 10pm.