**Ballot Box Opening**

**Aims**

* Opening of Postal Vote Ballot Boxes and Polling Station Ballot Boxes ready for eCounting
* Ballot Papers to be unfolded, orientated, repaired ready for eCount scanning
* Ballot Papers to be placed in appropriate Ballot Paper Tray ready for eCount registration
* Issues identified and raised with the Ballot Box Opening Supervisor

**Team**

* Ballot Box Opening Assistants – open ballot boxes and orientate ballot papers
* Ballot Box Marshalls – deliver ballot boxes to Awaiting Scanning racks
* Ballot Box Supervisor(s) – briefing of Opening Assistants, overseeing their role and resolving any issues. Supervisors may be appointed to control particular areas/zones/wards.
* Ballot Box Manager – Manage arrangements and liaison between the Opening Team and the eCount Registration/Verification Operators and RO/DRO/Count Centre Manager (CCM)
* Logistics team – set up/delivery of ballot boxes to Opening Assistants to allow them to carry out their role

**Ballot Box Opening Assistants Role**

* Ballot Box will be brought to the Opening Assistants’ table
* Check the Postal Vote or Polling Station Ballot Box, Ballot Paper Tray and Ballot Paper Account match ie same Ballot Box Number
* Show Ballot Box details to Candidates, Agents, Observers
* Ballot Box will then be opened and the contents emptied onto the table
* Check Ballot Box is empty – show empty Ballot Box to Candidates/Agents
* Split ballot papers as evenly as possible among Assistants at the table (if more than one Assistant opening each box)
* Sort into bundles face up, same orientation
* Once complete, put all Ballot Papers on the table into the Ballot Paper Tray
* IF, unscannable ie barcode on the back unreadable, place ballot paper into the red plastic wallet (some councils do this at point of scanning only). Place the red plastic wallet on top of the ballot papers.
* Place Ballot Paper Account on top of the Ballot Papers in the Ballot Paper Tray.
* Opening Assistants will remain in charge of empty Ballot Box and Ballot Paper Tray until your Tray and Ballot Box has been removed.
* A Marshall will take the Ballot Paper Tray to the ‘Awaiting Scanning’ area
* The Logistics Team will take the empty Ballot Box into storage
* Another Ballot Box will be allocated to your table – repeat all of the above

***Accuracy is essential at this stage to ensure the scanning process runs well***

**Issues Arising**

* Questions from Candidates, Agents, Observers – Supervisors should deal with any reasonable questions and pass any issues to the Manager who will liaise with the RO/DRO/CCM.
* Tendered ballot papers – raise with Supervisor to deal with this
* If the Ballot Box/Ballot Paper Tray/Ballot Paper Account don’t match – raise with the Supervisor
* Timescale of process – if significant delays – Manager should advise the RO/DRO/CCM.

**Ballot Papers placed in ballot paper tray**

**Ballot Box Opening Reception**

**Put Ballot Paper Account on top of tray**

**Check ballot box, Tray and Ballot Paper Account match**

**Papers orientated**

**FACE UP - BUNDLES**

**Tray Taken to ‘Awaiting Scanning Racking’ by Marshall and empty Box taken to storage by Logistics Team**

**Ballot Box opened**

**Once Registered Ballot Papers will be Scanned**

**Split into bundles for each person at the table**

**Lift Ballot Papers onto table**