Candidates and Agents Briefing

UK Parliamentary general election, 8 June 2017
Topics

- who’s who
- key dates of the election timetable
- qualifications & disqualifications
- nominations
- agents
- postal votes
- the poll
- counting of votes
- Candidates’ expenses
- contacts
Who’s who

- The (Acting) Returning Officer (ARO) is the person responsible for running the elections - Ian Anderson

- The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters’ lists – Ian Anderson

- (Acting) Deputy Returning Officers – Assist the ARO

- Debra Marshall, Electoral Services Manager
## Election Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publication of Notice of Election</td>
<td>Friday 5 May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nominations Commence</td>
<td>Monday 8 May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close of Nominations</td>
<td>Thursday 11 May – 4 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Withdrawal of Nominations</td>
<td>Thursday 11 Ma – 4 m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notification of appointment of election agents</td>
<td>Thursday 11 May – 4 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publication of notice of poll/situation of polling stations</td>
<td>Thursday 11 May – 5 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publication of statement of persons nominated</td>
<td>Thursday 11 May – 5 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for applications to register to vote</td>
<td>Monday 22 May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for new postal vote applications</td>
<td>Tuesday 23 May - 5pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appointment of counting and polling agents</td>
<td>Tuesday 31 May - 5pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Polling Day</strong></td>
<td>Thursday 1 June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delivery of return of election expenses</td>
<td>Friday 14 July</td>
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Qualifications and Disqualifications
Qualifications

- Candidates must satisfy criteria on the day they are nominated and on polling day:

  - be at least 18 years of age

  - either be a British Citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a qualifying Commonwealth citizen

  - There is no requirement to be a registered elector in the UK.
Certain people are disqualified from becoming an MP, such as:

- civil servants
- members of police forces
- members of the armed forces
- government-nominated directors of commercial companies
- judges
- members of a foreign legislature (outside the Commonwealth)
- peers who sit and vote in the House of Lords
- those who are subject to a bankruptcy restrictions order or debt relief restrictions order (but not those who are simply bankrupt) in England, Wales or Northern Ireland.
Nomination forms
Submitting nomination papers

- All candidates must submit by by 4pm – Thursday 11 May 2017
  - their nomination form (1a)
  - their home address form (1b)
  - the consent to nomination (1c)

- The nomination and home address form may only be delivered by:
  - your proposer or seconder, or
  - by your election agent (if the (Acting) Returning Officer has previously received notification of their appointment).
Submitting nomination papers

- Take care when completing your nomination papers as mistakes may invalidate your nomination! Complete your nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an informal check.

- Deliver nomination papers to
  - Room 140
  - Guildhall

- If you would like an informal check prior to submission of your nomination papers, contact Electoral Services on 613386 to make an appointment
Nomination form (1a)

– Include your full name and home address

– Optional: use commonly used name box(es) if commonly known by a name other than full name and wish to use it.

– Description field – 3 options:
  - leave blank
  - Independent
  - party candidates can use party name or description authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the party’s Nominating Officer
-- Subscribers: 10 subscribers from the constituency are required.

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-- Check details of subscribers against electoral register in force (May register).

-- Only ask subscribers to sign after completing the candidate’s name, address and description on the form.
Home address form (1b)

- Must state home address in full

- Must state if you do not want your address to be made public and to appear on the ballot paper. If so:
  
  - give the name of the constituency in which your home address is situated or,
  - if you live outside the UK, the name of the country in which you reside.
Consent to nomination – form 1c

Must include:

- Statement you are qualified and not disqualified from standing
- Your date of birth
- Name, address and signature of witness
- Statement you are not a candidate in another constituency
Certificate of authorisation (2)

- Party candidates must have written permission to use the party name/description from the party’s Nominating Officer (or a person appointed to act on their behalf).

- The certificate may:
  - allow the use of the party name or a particular description
  - allow candidate to choose whether to use the party name or any of the descriptions registered with the Electoral Commission

- Must be submitted with other nomination papers by 4pm Thursday 11 May 2017
Emblem request form (3)

- Party candidates can ask for an emblem to be printed on the ballot paper
- Emblem request form must be submitted by 4pm on Thursday 11 May 2017
- Refer to Electoral Commission’s website to view emblems and descriptions and use description of the emblem required
Joint candidates

- Nominated by **more than one party**

- May use registered joint descriptions
  - must be supported by certificate of authorisation **from each party**

- May use one emblem of one of the parties but there are no joint emblems
Election agent form (4)

Role

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly its financial management.

- Thursday 11 May 2017. Agent Form is included in nomination pack (form 4)

- You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed.
Nomination Papers - Recap

- Parliamentary nomination papers **must** be delivered between 10.00am – 4.00pm to the Guildhall

- Nomination papers accepted from 8 May to 11 May

- You can arrange an informal check before submission by contacting Electoral Services

- The £500 deposit must be received by 4.00pm on Thursday 11 May for your nomination to be valid

- We accept the following methods of payment:
  - Cash
  - Banker’s draft
Other Agents
Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on your behalf:

- The Acting Returning Officer requires notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by Thursday 1 June.
- The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of the session. The Acting Returning Officer will give 48 hours notice.
- Forms for notifying the Acting Returning Officer of other agents will be sent with the election agents packs after close of nominations.
Postal vote agents

- You and your agent may automatically act as a postal vote agent
- You may appoint agents to attend on your behalf
- A postal vote agent is allowed to attend and observe postal vote opening sessions
- Postal vote opening sessions start on Friday 26 May
- You must let us know beforehand if you are planning to attend a postal vote opening session
- Always phone and check the session is still running in advance because sessions may be cancelled
- Postal voting secrecy requirements apply
Postal Vote Opening Sessions

- Ballot papers will be kept face down throughout a postal vote opening session.

- Anyone attending a postal vote opening must not attempt to look at identifying marks or numbers on ballot papers, disclose how any particular ballot paper has been marked or pass on any such information gained from the session.

- To maintain secrecy rules the use of mobile phones is not allowed in the Banqueting Hall during postal vote opening sessions.

- Anyone found guilty of breaching these requirements can face a fine of up to £5,000, or may be imprisoned for up to six months in England and Wales.
Access to the register
Access to electoral register/absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:

- Make **written** request to the Electoral Registration Officer – forms are available from the office and are included at the back of the nomination pack.
Access to electoral register / absent voting lists

- Only use data for permitted purposes
  - to complete the nomination form
  - to help you campaign
  - to check that donations/loans are permissible

Any person found breaching the restrictions on use of the electoral register could face a fine of up to £5,000.
Registration

- As a candidate you are uniquely placed to encourage people to register to vote.

- You should encourage people to register as soon as possible.

- The deadline for applying for the election is 22 May 2017.

- Individuals can register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. It only takes a few minutes. We can supply forms if required.
Registration

- When discussing registering to vote with individuals, you will need to make them aware that they will need:
  - their National Insurance number,
  - date of birth and address to register.

- People who do not have / cannot retrieve their National Insurance Number can still register, but they may need to provide further information. If so, they will be contacted by the Electoral Registration Officer.
The Campaign
Free candidate mailing

- All candidates who are validly nominated are entitled to send one election communication, free of charge, to electors across the constituency.
- It must include matters relating to the election only.
- You can choose to send either:
  - one unaddressed election communication of up to 60 grams to every postal address, or
  - one election communication of up to 60 grams addressed to each elector
- contact Royal Mail to make arrangements [www.royalmail.com/specialist-services/candidate-mailing](http://www.royalmail.com/specialist-services/candidate-mailing)
Campaigning

- Use imprints on all your campaign material, including websites.
- Comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners.
- Make sure outdoor posters are removed 2 weeks after the election.
- Do not produce material that looks like a poll card.
- Do not pay people to display your adverts (unless they display adverts as part of their normal business).
• Campaigners are an essential element of a healthy democracy, but their activities should not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process.

• **Electoral registration and absent vote applications:**
  – Ensure forms fully conform to the requirements of electoral law
  – Include the Electoral Services address for the return of forms
  – Ensure unaltered applications are sent to Electoral Services within **two working days**.
  – Make sure electors understand implications of applying for an absent vote.
  – Do not encourage postal ballot pack redirection.
  – Do not encourage electors to appoint a campaigner as proxy.
Code of conduct for campaigners

- **Postal ballot packs:**
  - Never touch a postal ballot paper
  - Never observe electors completing their postal vote.
  - Never handle or take any completed ballot paper or postal ballot pack from voters

- **Campaigning outside polling stations:**
  - You are allowed to put your messages to voters on polling day, including public spaces outside polling places
  - Keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter.
  - As a guiding principle, if there is any doubt about a particular activity, campaigners should ask themselves “what would a reasonable observer think?”
Polling day and count
Polling day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm

- Office open 6.45 am to 10 pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the election

- Voters in the polling station or in a queue outside the polling station at 10 pm can apply for a ballot paper

- Postal votes – can be handed into polling stations within constituency or delivered to the elections office until 10pm.

- ! A person in a queue at a polling station at 10pm waiting to hand in postal vote can do so after 10pm.
Location of Counts

The counting of votes will take place at the Guildhall from 10 pm (doors opening at 9.45 pm).

The counts for each constituency will be held in different locations in the Guildhall:

- Hull West and Hessle - C1
- Hull North - Banqueting Hall
- Hull East - Reception Room

To maintain the secrecy of the count Mobile phones are not to be used in the count rooms.

The opening of postal votes handed in to polling stations will take place in the Banqueting Hall.
Counting of votes

- There are access restrictions to the count, passes will be issued to all those who are entitled to attend the count venue.

- No dignitary, such as existing councillors, etc. have automatic access rights, although the Acting Returning Officer can appoint such people as guests and they should apply if they wish to attend.

- Also entitled to attend are registered observers and Electoral Commission staff, as well as accredited media.

- Television screens will be installed around the count venue showing results as they are announced.
Counting of votes

The proceedings will run in the following order.

1. Verification of parliamentary ballot papers
2. Count of parliamentary ballot papers

Candidates, election agents, counting agents and one other person appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend.

The number of counting agents that can be appointed will be advised.
Results

- Once ballot papers have been counted by candidate and the doubtful ballot papers have been adjudicated the Deputy Returning Officer will reconcile the figure counted with the amount of votes verified.

- At this point a recount can be requested and would be considered by the Acting Returning Officer or Deputy Returning Officer.
Spending issues
Candidate spending

- Defined as certain expenses ‘used for the purposes of the candidate’s election’ during the regulated period
- Responsibility of election agent
  - Must get and keep receipts (over £20)
The spending limit

- **Fixed amount**: £8,700
- **Variable amount**: 6p per registered parliamentary elector

**Regulated period**
- **Short campaign**

**Spending limit**
Candidates’ spending returns

- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election 14 July 2017

- Returns made public by Returning Officer

- Sample of returns may be reviewed by the Electoral Commission

- Failure to submit an expenses return is a criminal offence enforceable by the police

- No spending will be reimbursed
Contacts
• Elections office – 613386

• Electoral Commission contacts
  – For questions on the Commission’s guidance on standing for election, contact North@electoralcommission.org.uk
  – www.electoralcommission.org.uk/contact-us/our-offices
  – For questions on election spending, contact 020 7271 0616
Questions
Thank you

Please ensure you take your candidate’s pack for guidance