



## **HENEAGE WARD BY-ELECTION (NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL) – THURSDAY, 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2021**

### **INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES AND AGENTS**

There will be an election for one Councillor in the Heneage Ward of North East Lincolnshire Council following the recent resignation of Councillor Chris Nichols. The candidate who obtains the most votes at the by-election will receive the remaining term of office until May 2022.

#### **GUIDANCE FOR CANDIDATES AND AGENTS:**

The Electoral Commission has published comprehensive guidance for Candidates and Election Agents which will take you through the whole election process. These notes supplement that guidance and highlight some of the key points and local information.

A copy of the Electoral Commission's overview document is enclosed. Candidates and Election Agents can access all the detailed guidance from the Electoral Commission at:

[www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/local-elections-england](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/local-elections-england)

Candidates and Election Agents are strongly advised to read and take note of the information contained in the Electoral Commission's guidance.

#### **TIMETABLE:**

A copy of the election timetable is enclosed.

#### **POLLING STATIONS:**

A list of the polling stations is enclosed.

#### **NOMINATIONS:**

**The content of the Consent to Nomination form is fixed by law and the entire form (comprising 4 pages) must be returned in order for your nomination to be valid.** On the form you are asked to state that you are qualified and not disqualified from standing. You must also state your date of birth.

The Electoral Commission's guidance covers the criteria for qualification and disqualification. A Candidate must be a British, qualifying Commonwealth, Irish, or European Union citizen, and aged 18 by polling day. In addition, the Candidate must meet at least one of the other qualifications set out on the consent to nomination form.

**Candidates are advised to complete as many sections as apply to them on the Consent to Nomination Form (sections (a) – (d)).**

A Candidate must not be disqualified to stand by virtue of section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 or section 34 of the Localism Act 2011, copies of which are supplied with the Consent to Nomination form. Candidates must not hold a politically restricted post within the meaning of Part 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, under a local authority, within the meaning of that Part.

#### **Home address forms:**

The nomination pack contains a home address form. All Candidates need to complete Part 1 of the form. Where Candidates do not want to have their home address printed on the ballot papers and public notices, they will need to complete Part 2 of the form as well, giving the name of the relevant area (i.e. North East Lincolnshire) or, where outside of the United Kingdom, the country in which their home address is situated, and then sign the form.

If you complete Part 2 and choose not to use your home address, the statement of persons nominated, and ballot paper will state “address in .....” rather than use your home address.

#### **Submission of nominations:**

The election begins with publication of the Notice of Election on Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Nominations may be delivered between the hours of 9.30 am and 4.00 pm on the day after the publication of the Notice of Election, but not later than 4.00 pm on Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021. There is no power to accept late nominations - even if they are late by just a few seconds. It is advisable not to delay delivery until the last moment because if there is an error on the form there may be insufficient time to correct it.

Please note that the following papers must be delivered **by hand**:

- Nomination paper
- Home address form
- Candidate's consent to nomination

The following papers can be delivered **by hand or by post**:

- Certificate of authorisation
- Request for a party emblem
- Notification of Election Agent
- Appointment of Polling Agents
- Appointment of Counting Agents
- Appointment of Postal Vote Agents

Ensure that where signatures are required, you submit the **original signed version** of each completed paper. Documents without original signatures cannot be accepted.

The Registration of Political Parties Act 1998 contains requirements for Candidates representing a registered political party and about the use of party emblems. Nomination papers with descriptions which, in the opinion of the Returning Officer, are invalid will be rejected. Candidates standing on behalf of a registered political party should ensure that they submit the correct documentation, i.e. certificate of authorisation from the party and, if desired, a request to use the party's emblem on the ballot paper. **The description entered by a political party Candidate on their nomination paper must either be the party name or alternatively exactly match the description registered by the political party with the Electoral Commission.**

Great care should be taken when completing nomination papers as the details entered on them by the Candidate will appear on the ballot papers and public notices. ***Detailed instructions on completing nomination papers are set out in the Electoral Commission's guidance.***

Any written notice of withdrawal of Candidature must be delivered to the Elections Team by 4.00 pm on Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The Statement of Persons Nominated will be published not later than 4.00 pm on Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

### **ELECTION AGENT:**

Each Candidate must appoint an Election Agent and give notice in writing by 4.00 pm on Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The candidate may appoint another person, or act as their own Election Agent. If the Candidate does not appoint an Election Agent, then they are deemed to be their own Election Agent.

### **SECRECY REQUIREMENTS:**

The requirements in section 66 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) help to maintain the secrecy of the ballot. They apply to all Candidates, Election Agents, and to every person attending at the polling stations; the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers; and the count. Further guidance is given in the Electoral Commission's guidance document.

### **ELECTION POSTERS:**

Candidates are issued with a copy of North East Lincolnshire Council's *Conditions for the Display of Election Posters on or adjacent to the Highway*. There shall be no general display of election posters within the highway, including street lighting columns, poles, posts, trees and structures within the highway. These conditions must be adhered to.

### **COUNT:**

The verification and count of all North East Lincolnshire Council ballot papers will take place at 10pm on Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 in the Assembly Room at Grimsby Town Hall, Town Hall Square, Grimsby.

At a contested election, those entitled to attend the count are the Candidate and their guest, Election Agent and a specified number of Counting Agents (exact numbers of Counting Agents will be confirmed to Election Agents after closure of nominations). Notification in writing of the Candidate's Counting Agents and Guest must be given to the Elections Team no later than 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Entrance to the counting of votes is strictly controlled for security reasons and all passes will need to be collected by Election Agents during normal office hours on either 29<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

### **ABSENT VOTES:**

The closing dates for applications to vote by post and proxy are set out in the timetable. Postal votes will be sent out on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 (all together) Postal votes will be opened at the Municipal Offices at 9.30am on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> June and Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021. Please note that the final session of postal vote opening will be held at 9.30pm on Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

A copy of the Electoral Commission's Code of Conduct for Campaigners: Electoral Registration, Postal Voting, Proxy Voting and Polling Stations is enclosed. **Candidates are asked to ensure that they and everyone working with them take careful note of the contents of this document.**

**Candidates, Agents and Campaigners must also take account of current Government guidance relating to campaigning and social distancing.**

### **TELLERS IN AND AROUND POLLING PLACES:**

A copy of "*Tellers do's and don'ts*" issued by the Electoral Commission is enclosed. Candidates and agents are asked to bring this guidance to the attention of their tellers at polling stations. Further information about the role of Tellers and their conduct is given in the Electoral Commission's guidance.

### **ELECTION EXPENSES:**

Guidance relating to Spending and Donations can be found on the Electoral Commission website:

[www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/local-elections-england](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/local-elections-england)

The spending limit for local government elections depends on the number of electors in the Ward being contested. The current limits are £806 plus 7p per local government elector on the register for the electoral area

This is based on the number of local government electors for the Ward on the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021 register:

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Eligible Electorate</b>
Heneage	7,967

Maximum limits are reduced in the case of joint candidates. Further information and forms on expenses may be downloaded from the Electoral Commission's website (the return of expenses form can be downloaded as an excel spreadsheet). The website address is on page one of this document.

The last day for delivery to the Returning Officer of the Return of Election Expenses is Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

### **“DANGER AREAS”:**

There are several areas where there are regular difficulties, and the following are examples:-

- Failing to meet the time deadlines.
- Failing to complete all sections of the nomination paper (except for 'Description' which is optional).
- Failing to sign the consent to nomination and ensure that the appropriate sections are fully completed.
- Failing to submit a valid certificate of authorisation if standing on behalf of a registered political party.
- Failing to ensure that all notices, leaflets comply with legislation.
- Failing to control supporters about, for example, unlawful flyposting, defacing opponents' posters, unlawful display of posters, etc.

These examples are not intended to be an exhaustive list. **The candidate and his/her Election Agent are responsible for ensuring that nominations are completed accurately, and that the election campaign is conducted in accordance with the law.**

### **ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE AND CODE OF CONDUCT:**

The appointment of an elected Candidate as Councillor will become effective on the fourth day after the election. However, you may not act as Councillor (which includes attending and voting at meetings) until you have signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. This includes an undertaking that you will abide by the Council's Code of Conduct and declare in a public register your financial and other interests. The Declaration must be made within two months from the day of election. Failure to do so will result in automatic disqualification as a Councillor.

### **GENERAL:**

The legislation relating to elections is very extensive. Candidates and Election Agents are advised to familiarise themselves with the provisions. The Returning Officer and his staff are available to give general advice to Candidates and Election Agents and outline the legislation. However, they are NOT able to give detailed definitive advice on individual circumstances. In such matters, Candidates and Election Agents should seek their own independent legal advice.

May 2021

Elections Office, North East Lincolnshire Council, Municipal Offices, Grimsby DN31 1HU Tel: 01472 326117/324118/324161 E-mail: <a href="mailto:elections@nelincs.gov.uk">elections@nelincs.gov.uk</a>
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# Local elections in England and Wales

# Guidance for candidates and agents

## Overview document

December 2019

This document applies to district, borough, county, county borough and unitary authority elections. It does not apply to parish and community council elections, mayoral elections or elections to the Greater London Authority. Our guidance and resources for other elections in the UK can be accessed from our website at: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/local-elections-england>.

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# 2

## Purpose of our guidance for candidates and agents

1.1 Our guidance aims to provide practical advice for anyone who wants to stand as a candidate or be an agent at a local government election in England and Wales. It covers the main steps towards standing as a candidate, the campaign and election periods, the declaration of the result and election spending. It includes relevant factual material as well as a guide to sources of further information. Standing for election can be complicated, but we hope that our guidance will make it as straightforward as possible.

## How to use our guidance

1.2 Our guidance is made up of six parts, setting out the different stages candidates and agents need to go through when standing at a local government election in England and Wales.

1.3 Each part is accompanied by a number of forms and resources, which can be directly accessed via links in the individual parts. Alternatively, relevant guidance, forms and resources will be available on our [dedicated webpage for candidates and agents](#) at a local election in England and Wales.

1.4 The following parts make up our full guidance for local elections:

- [Part 1 – Can you stand for election?](#)
- [Part 2a – Standing as an independent candidate](#)
- [Part 2b – Standing as a party candidate](#)
- [Part 3 – Spending and donations](#)
- [Part 4 – The campaign](#)
- [Part 5 – Your right to attend key electoral events](#)
- [Part 6 – After the declaration of results](#)

Data protection legislation applies to the processing of all personal data.

Please contact the [Information Commissioner's Office](#) for further information about how the current data protection legislation affects you.

1.5 Before starting the process of standing for election potential candidates need to be confident that they meet all of the requirements. You should therefore first read [Part 1](#) of our guidance, which covers the qualifications and disqualifications.

1.6 Once satisfied that you can stand, you should read [Part 2a](#) of our guidance (if you are standing as an independent candidate) or [Part 2b](#) of our guidance (if you are standing as a party candidate), which deal with the nominations process and guide you through which forms you need to submit and by when.

1.7 Candidates and agents at local government elections must follow rules about how much they can spend, who they can accept donations from, and what they must report after the election. Failure to follow these rules could lead to you committing an offence and losing your seat, if elected. [Part 3](#) of our guidance explains the rules.

1.8 [Part 4](#) covers the rules on publication and display of campaign literature and what you need to bear in mind when campaigning.

1.9 Candidates and agents also have a right to attend key electoral events. These are: the opening of postal votes; the poll; and the count. Others can also be appointed to attend these electoral events. Details on your rights and what to expect at these events are provided in [Part 5](#).

1.10 Finally, there are a number of things candidates and agents will need to do once the result has been declared, including submitting their spending returns to the Returning Officer. This is covered in [Part 6](#).

1.11 To keep the guidance as relevant to the reader as possible, we have split most guidance parts into an 'Essential information' section, which all candidates and agents should read as it contains information that is relevant to all, and a 'Supplementary information' section, that will be relevant only to some. You will be directed to the 'Supplementary information' section at relevant points throughout the 'Essential information' section.

# 4

## Terminology used in the guidance

1.12 At local government elections, the local government area is subdivided into electoral areas for the purposes of administering the election. Throughout the parts we have used the term 'ward' to refer to the electoral area for any local government election. The term 'ward' should, however, be read as 'electoral division' in elections for unitary, county and county borough councils.

## Who does what at a local election and how to contact them?

### The Returning Officer

1.13 Local elections in England and Wales are run by the Returning Officer, who is normally a senior officer of the local authority and independent of the authority in respect of their electoral functions. You will be able to contact the Returning Officer for your area by contacting your local elections office. Addresses and telephone numbers of all elections offices in England and Wales can be found on our website [www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter).

1.14 The Returning Officer will offer briefings ahead of an election and we strongly encourage you or your agent to attend, even if you have been an agent or stood for election before.

### The Electoral Registration Officer

1.15 The Electoral Registration Officer is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters' lists for their local authority area. In England and Wales, the Electoral Registration Officer is normally a senior officer in the local authority and may also be the Returning Officer. You can find the contact details for your Electoral Registration Officer at [www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter)

## The Electoral Commission

1.16 We are an independent statutory body established in November 2000 by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. We are currently headed by ten Commissioners, including a Chair. We report directly to the UK Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

1.17 We are responsible for registering political parties and non-party campaigners, the monitoring and publication of significant donations to registered political parties and the regulation of party and non-party campaigner spending at certain elections. We also have a role in promoting voter awareness. We are required to report on the administration of certain electoral events, to keep electoral matters under review and, if requested, must review and report on any electoral matter. We also accredit observers to be present at election proceedings.

1.18 We do not run elections but have responsibility for providing advice and assistance on electoral matters to all those involved in elections, including Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, political parties and candidates.

1.19 We are here to help, so please get in touch if you have any questions.

# 6

## Contacting us

### If you are a candidate or agent in England

1.20 If your question is about **spending or donations**, please contact us at:

Email: [pef@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:pef@electoralcommission.org.uk)  
Tel: 0333 103 1928

1.21 For **any other questions**, please contact us at:

Email: [infoengland@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:infoengland@electoralcommission.org.uk)  
Tel: 0333 103 1928

### If you are a candidate or agent in Wales

1.22 In Wales, you can contact us for **all queries** at:

Email: [infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk)  
Tel: 0333 103 1929

# NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

## HENEAGE WARD BY-ELECTION

1 July 2021

### Election Timetable

New applications for first interim publication date		Tuesday 25 May 2021
Notice of Election:	To be published not later than	Wednesday 26 May 2021
Delivery of nomination papers: Between the hours of 9.30 am and 4.00 pm on any day from the date of publication of the Notice of Election	Commencing on -	Thursday 27 May 2021
Last day for delivery of nomination papers:	Not later than 4 pm on -	Friday 4 June 2021
Last day for withdrawals of candidature:	Not later than 4 pm on -	Friday 4 June 2021
Last day for notice of appointment of election agents:	Not later than 4 pm on -	Friday 4 June 2021
Publish notice of alteration for first interim publication date		Friday 4 June 2021
Publish Statement as to Persons Nominated	Not later than 4 pm on -	Monday 7 June 2021
New applications for second interim publication date		Monday 7 June 2021
Deadline for applications to be included on the register of electors to be used at the election		Tuesday 15 June 2021
Last day for new applications to vote by post or to change or cancel an existing postal vote or proxy appointment	Not later than 5 pm on -	Wednesday 16 June 2021
Publish notice of alteration for second interim publication date		Thursday 17 June 2021
Last day for new applications to vote by proxy	Not later than 5 pm on -	Wednesday 23 June 2021
Publication of Notice of Poll		Wednesday 23 June 2021
Last day for appointment of counting and polling agents:	Not later than -	Thursday 24 June 2021
Publish notice of alteration of register as a result of late applications		Thursday 24 June 2021
First day to issue ballot papers in response to requests to replace lost postal ballot papers		Friday 25 June 2021
Last day to make alterations to the register to correct a clerical error or to implement a court decision	Not later than 9 pm on -	Thursday 1 July 2021
Last day to issue replacements for spoilt or lost postal ballot papers:	Not later than 5 pm on -	Thursday 1 July 2021
POLLING DAY	(7 am to 10 pm)	Thursday 1 July 2021
Last day for new applications to vote by proxy on grounds of medical emergency	Not later than 5 pm on	Thursday 1 July 2021
Last day for delivery to the Returning Officer of Return of Election Expenses		Friday 6 August 2021

## NELC BY-ELECTION – Heneage Ward – 1 July 2021

<b>No.</b>	<b>PD</b>	<b>Polling Station</b>
12	HE1	Old Clee Church Hall, Church Lane
13	HE2	Old Clee Church Hall, Church Lane
14	HE3	Central Children's Centre, Edward Street
15	HE4	St. Christopher's Methodist Church
16	HE5	Rear of Peaks Lane Fire Station, Peaks Lane, Grimsby
17	HE6	Fusion Centre, Ladysmith Road
18	HE7	Fusion Centre, Ladysmith Road

# North East Lincolnshire Council

## Display of Election Posters on or Adjacent to the Highway

### Introduction

Under powers delegated to the Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Resources, there shall be NO general display of election posters within the highway, including street lighting columns, poles, posts, trees and structures within the highway.

The erection of election posters within private land is subject to the following conditions:

### Conditions

1. There shall be no display of posters on fences, walls, hedges etc. of public property abutting the highway.
2. Posters on fences, walls, in hedges etc., of private property abutting the highway shall be displayed only with the express consent of the owners.
3. No poster shall be displayed so as to obscure or hinder the ready interpretation of any authorised signs so as to endanger or inconvenience any users of the highway.
4. No posters shall be displayed within the limits of sightlines so as to obscure the view of users of the highway at junctions. No posters shall be displayed within the limits of pedestrian crossing road markings.
5. Free standing signs or signs fixed to stakes driven into the ground which is private property shall be confined to grass verges and shall be erected at least 2 metres from the edge of the carriageway, Precautions shall be taken to ensure that no damage is caused to Statutory Undertakers underground services.

### Contravention

Contravention of these conditions will lead to the removal of any unauthorised signs and may lead to prosecution under Section 132 of the Highways Act 1980 with a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale. Unauthorised signs so removed will be destroyed or retained for evidential purposes at the discretion of the Returning Officer and his deputies.

### Issue of these Conditions

These conditions are issued without prejudice to the requirements of any other Act, Regulations or by-law covering Elections.

The Returning Officer takes this opportunity to direct that No Election Posters shall be displayed within a Polling Station, within the grounds of a Polling Station or on approaches to a polling station.

### Interpretation

Any advice on the interpretation of these Conditions should be obtained from:

Assistant Director Law, Governance and Assets (Monitoring Officer)  
North East Lincolnshire Council  
Municipal Offices, Town Hall Square  
GRIMSBY, North East Lincolnshire DN31 1HU  
Tel: (01472) 324004

### Approval

The delegated decision of the Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Resources (then called Strategic Director of Environmental Services) was considered and noted by the Planning and Transportation Committee at its meeting on 17th December 1999.

### Complaints

Complaints about alleged offences in contravention of the above should be directed, in the first instance, to Mr Martin Ambler (Enforcement Officer) 01472 324245

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**Last Updated** : 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021  
**Last Reviewed** : 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021  
**Review Frequency** : Annual

# Code of conduct for campaigners: electoral registration, postal voting, proxy voting and polling stations

Campaigners are an essential element of a healthy democracy, and their right to put their arguments to voters should be supported and protected. It is equally important, however, to ensure that the activities of campaigners do not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process.

This Code provides a guide for campaigners, electoral administrators and police forces to what is, and is not, considered acceptable behaviour at polling stations and in the community during the lead-up to polling day.

As a guiding principle, if there is any doubt about a particular activity, campaigners should ask themselves “What would a reasonable observer think?”

More detailed guidance about electoral offences can be found in the guidance for candidates and agents, which is available at: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent>

The Code has been sent to all registered political parties in Great Britain, and Returning Officers will draw it to the attention of all candidates and parties contesting elections.

Some Returning Officers may identify the need to develop and seek agreement to specific local provisions which supplement the terms of this Code, in order to address identified local risks. Returning Officers must consult with local campaigners and the relevant national Nominating Officers as well as police forces to secure appropriate local agreement to such provisions, and should ensure that they are communicated and well-understood by campaigners locally.

## Scope of this code

This code covers all those actively involved in campaigning in elections or referendums in Great Britain. All references to campaigners in this code include:

- Candidates standing at an election, their agents and their staff and supporters
- Political party officers, members and supporters campaigning at an election
- Other people and organisations campaigning for or against a candidate, a group of candidates or a party at an election
- People and organisations campaigning for or against a particular outcome at a referendum

## Compliance with this code

Any concerns that this code has been breached should be raised first with the candidate, political party or campaigner in question.

Any further concerns should be drawn to the attention of the Electoral Commission. The Commission will raise them with the relevant party or campaigner if appropriate, and will agree appropriate actions to remedy or prevent a reoccurrence of any breach.

# 1 Electoral registration and absent vote applications

## **1.1 Campaigners should be free to encourage voters to register to vote and apply to vote by post or appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf, if that is the most convenient way for them to vote.**

Campaigners can help to inform voters about how to participate in elections, and Electoral Registration Officers should support you by providing you with a reasonable number of registration and absent vote application forms on request. Voters can also register online at: [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

## **1.2 Campaigners should ensure that any electoral registration forms and postal or proxy voting application forms conform fully to the requirements of electoral law, including all the necessary questions and the options open to electors.**

You can download electoral registration forms from [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) and absent vote application forms from [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)

## **1.3 Campaigners should ensure that the local Electoral Registration Officer's address is clearly provided as the preferred address for the return of registration and absent vote application forms.**

To ensure voters can make their own choice about how to return registration or absent vote application forms, you should always clearly provide the relevant Electoral Registration Officer's address as the preferred return address, even if an alternative address is also given. This will also minimise the risk of suspicion that completed applications could be altered or inadvertently lost or destroyed.

## **1.4 Campaigners should send on unaltered any completed registration or absent vote application forms given to them to the relevant Electoral Registration Officer's address within two working days of receipt.**

To minimise the risk of absent vote applications being refused because completed forms arrive with the Electoral Registration Officer after the statutory deadline before a poll, you must ensure that there is no unnecessary delay in forwarding on application forms which you receive directly.

## **1.5 Campaigners should always explain to electors the implications of applying to vote by post or appointing a proxy.**

It is important that electors understand that they will not be able to vote in person on polling day if they or their proxy apply for and are granted a postal vote, and will not be able to vote in person if their appointed proxy has already voted on their behalf. To avoid duplication and unnecessary administrative pressures for Electoral Registration Officers, campaigners should try to ensure that electors who are included in current postal or proxy voter lists, or have already applied for a postal or proxy vote for a particular poll, do not submit an additional application.

## Postal vote applications

### **1.6 Campaigners should never encourage electors to have their postal ballot pack redirected to anywhere other than the address where they are registered to vote.**

Electors should take care to protect their ballot paper and postal ballot pack, and they will be best able to do so at their home address unless there are compelling reasons why receiving the postal ballot pack at the address where they are registered to vote would be impractical. Electors must state on the application form the reason why they need their postal ballot pack sent to another address.

## Proxy vote applications

### **1.7 Electors should be encouraged to explore other options for people to act as a proxy – including relatives or neighbours, for example – before a campaigner agrees to be appointed as a proxy.**

To minimise the risk of suspicions that campaigners may be seeking to place undue pressure on electors, electors should not be encouraged to appoint a campaigner as their proxy.

# 2 Postal voting ballot papers

### **2.1 Campaigners should never touch or handle anyone else's ballot paper.**

If you are asked for assistance in completing a ballot paper, you should always refer the voter to the Returning Officer's staff at the elections office who may be able to arrange a home visit if necessary. Assistance will also be available for electors at polling stations.

### **2.2 Campaigners should never observe voters completing their ballot paper. If you are with a voter when they complete their ballot paper, remember they should always complete it in secret.**

You should ensure that the voter seals both envelopes personally and immediately after completing their ballot paper and postal voting statement. If you are asked to give advice, it is acceptable and often helpful to explain the voting process, but do not offer to help anyone to complete their ballot paper.

### **2.3 Campaigners should never handle or take any completed ballot paper or postal ballot packs from voters.**

Wherever practical, you should encourage voters to post or deliver the completed postal ballot pack themselves. If you are approached or asked for help by a voter who is unable to post their completed postal ballot pack or make any other arrangements for it to be returned in time, you should contact the Returning Officer to ask them to arrange for it to be collected. The Returning Officer may agree that it would be in the voter's best interest for you to deliver the completed postal ballot pack to the relevant office or polling station, if there are no feasible alternative options.

## 3 Campaigning outside polling places

### **3.1 Campaigners should be allowed to put their messages to voters on polling day, including in public spaces outside polling places.**

Polling station staff and police officers should not seek to discourage or remove campaigners who are otherwise peacefully communicating with voters, as long as they are not within or impeding access to the grounds of the polling place. You should be careful, however, to ensure that your approach is proportionate and should recognise that groups of supporters may be perceived as intimidating by voters. 3.2 Campaigners should keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter.

The Presiding Officer is responsible for maintaining order in the polling place, and you may be asked to move by polling station staff or police officers if you are impeding access by voters to a polling place.

## 4 Complaints and allegations about electoral fraud

### **4.1 Campaigners should be prepared to give the police a statement and substantiate any allegations of electoral fraud they make.**

The police will investigate allegations where someone is prepared to provide evidence or a statement in support of the complaint, but unsubstantiated claims about electoral fraud have the potential to damage confidence in the integrity of the electoral process. You should ensure you are confident that evidence can be provided to the police before considering whether it is appropriate to publicise any specific allegation.

### **4.2 Campaigners who are concerned or think that electoral fraud may have taken place should raise the matter with their election agent or local party, or with the relevant Electoral Registration Officer or Returning Officer for the area.**

They may be able to explain whether or not an election-related crime has been committed, and refer it to the police if appropriate or provide details of the police contact for the relevant area so that campaigners can report their allegation. Concerns about breaches of the political finance rules should be raised directly with the Electoral Commission.

### **4.3 Any campaigner who has actual evidence that an electoral offence has been committed should report it directly and without delay to the police.**

If appropriate, the police will investigate the matter. Every police force has designated a Single Point of Contact (known as a SPOC) to lead on election matters and who will deal directly with the matter or give advice to local police officers. The Electoral Commission can help provide contact details for local police force SPOCs.

## Tellers do's and don'ts

Tellers are usually volunteers for candidates. They stand outside polling stations or polling places and record the electoral number of electors who have voted. By identifying electors who have not voted and relaying this information to the candidate or their supporters, tellers play an important role in elections and referendums. The candidate or their supporters may then contact the voters who have not yet been to vote during polling day and encourage them to vote.

There should be no more than one teller at a polling station for each candidate at any time. Where a polling place contains more than one polling station with separate entrances, it may be appropriate for there to be tellers at each entrance, but no more than one per candidate.

**Tellers have no legal status and voters have the right to refuse to give them any information.** The Returning Officer or their staff may provide further guidance on the activities of tellers.

### Tellers must

- always remain outside the polling station
- only enter the polling station to cast their own vote, to vote as a proxy or to assist a disabled voter
- always comply with the instructions of the Returning Officer and Presiding Officer

### Tellers must not

- be able to see or hear what is happening inside the polling station
- impede, obstruct or intimidate voters on their way in or out of the polling station
- demand any information relating to a voter's elector number, name or address
- ask voters to re-enter the polling station to ascertain their elector number
- have discussions with voters that may give rise to allegations of undue influence (e.g. voting intentions or party affiliations)
- display any campaign material in support of or against any particular political party or candidate other than a rosette or badge

### Tellers may

- approach voters for information as they enter or leave the polling station
- display a coloured rosette or badge displaying the name of the candidate, party and/or emblem or description; the rosette/badge should not bear a slogan and must not be oversized