

# Timetable for the Scottish Parliamentary election on Thursday 7 May 2026

*Under the [Scottish Elections \(Reform\) Act 2020](#), an ordinary general election to the Scottish Parliament is required to **be held no later than Thursday 7 May 2026**. The date of the poll [may be brought forward by up to 4 weeks, or delayed by up to 8 weeks](#), by the monarch, on proposal by the Presiding Officer.*

*New legislation may affect the times and dates set out below.*

The days which are disregarded in calculating the timetable are Saturday, Sunday, bank holidays and any day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning. The timetable may change in the event of days being appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.

| <b>Event</b>                               | <b>Working days before poll (deadline if not midnight)</b>                            | <b>Date (deadline if not midnight)</b>   |
|--|---|--|
| Publication of notice of election          | Not later than 28 days and not earlier than 35 days                                   | Between Monday 16 March and Wednesday 25 March   |
| Delivery of nomination papers              | From the day after the publication of the notice of election until the 23rd day (4pm) | Not later than 4pm on any working day after publication of notice of election until 4pm on Wednesday 1 April |
| Deadline for delivery of nomination papers | 23 days (4pm)   | 4pm on Wednesday 1 April   |

| Event  | Working days before poll (deadline if not midnight)  | Date (deadline if not midnight)   |
|--|--|---|
| Deadline for withdrawals of nomination                         | 23 days (4pm)  | 4pm on Wednesday 1 April  |
| Making objections to nomination papers                         | <p>During the hours allowed for delivery of nomination papers on the last day for their delivery and the hour following.</p> <p>No objection may be made in the afternoon of the last day except to a nomination paper delivered within 24 hours of the last time for its delivery</p> | <p>Objections can only be made on Wednesday 1 April (until 5pm).</p> <p>Until 12 noon on Wednesday 1 April objections can be made to all delivered nominations</p> <p>Between 12 noon and 5pm on Wednesday 1 April objections can only be made to nominations delivered after 4pm on Tuesday 31 March</p> |
| Deadline for the notification of appointment of election agent | 23 days (4pm)  | 4pm on Wednesday 1 April  |

| Event   | Working days before poll (deadline if not midnight)   | Date (deadline if not midnight)   |
|---|---|---|
| Publication of statement of persons nominated, including notice of poll and situation of polling stations               | <p>If no objections: on 23 days (at 5pm)</p> <p>If objection(s) are made: Not before objection(s) are disposed of but not later than 24 hours after the last time for delivery of nomination papers</p> | <p>If no objections: at 5pm on Wednesday 1 April</p> <p>Objection(s) made: not before objection(s) are disposed of but not later than 4pm on Thursday 2 April</p> |
| Publication of first interim election notice of alteration  | 23 days <sup>i</sup>  | Wednesday 1 April   |
| Deadline for receiving applications for registration  | 12 days   | Monday 20 April   |
| Deadline for receiving new postal vote and postal proxy applications, and for changes to existing postal or proxy votes | 11 days (5pm)   | 5pm on Tuesday 21 April   |
| Deadline for receiving new applications to vote by proxy (not postal proxy or emergency proxies)                        | 6 days (5pm)  | 5pm on Tuesday 28 April   |

| <b>Event</b>  | <b>Working days before poll (deadline if not midnight)</b> | <b>Date (deadline if not midnight)</b>                    |
|---|--|---|
| Publication of second interim election notice of alteration             | Between 22 days and 6 days                                 | Between Thursday 2 April and Tuesday 28 April (inclusive) |
| Publication of final election notice of alteration                      | 5 days   | Wednesday 29 April  |
| Deadline for notification of appointment of polling and counting agents | 5 days   | Wednesday 29 April  |
| Deadline for notification of appointment of sub-agents                  | 2 days   | Tuesday 5 May   |
| <b>Polling day</b>  | <b>0 (7am to 10pm)</b>                                     | <b>7am to 10pm on Thursday 7 May</b>                      |
| Last time for re-issue of spoilt or lost postal votes                   | 0 (5pm)  | 5pm on Thursday 7 May                                     |
| Deadline for emergency proxy applications                               | 0 (5pm)  | 5pm on Thursday 7 May                                     |
| Last time to alter the register due to clerical error or court appeal   | 0 (9pm)  | 9pm on Thursday 7 May                                     |

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<sup>i</sup> Calculated in accordance with RPA 1983

See also document “ARRANGEMENTS IN FORCE AT THE POLL” for West Dunbartonshire

**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL  
ELECTIONS  
GUIDELINES ON DISPLAY OF CAMPAIGN POSTERS AND USE OF CAR PARKS**

**DISPLAY OF CAMPAIGN POSTERS**

Commencing from the last date for the publication of the Notice of Election, and until Election Day, the Council will not object to the fixing of election posters to items of street furniture such as lighting columns, subject to the following conditions:-

- a) Election Agents' names and addresses must be advised to the appropriate Area Roads Operations Office prior to the display of election material.
- b) All posters must be backed by some form of board or card of adequate stiffness and tied with cord of sufficient strength. They must not be attached to street furniture using glue or any form of adhesive.
- c) Placing posters must not inconvenience the travelling public in terms of obscuring signs that are essential for the direction of traffic and safety. The mounting height of posters must not be less than eight feet (2.4m) above ground level.
- d) Posters must not, in any circumstances, be attached to any traffic signal post or control box, or to street furniture in central reservations and pedestrian refuge islands. For structural and electrical safety reasons, ladders should not be placed against lighting columns – free standing step-ladders or other means of access should be used.
- e) Only one poster per candidate or two posters back to back, is allowed on each item of street furniture.
- f) All posters must be removed within 48 hours after polling day.
- g) Permission is granted on the understanding that those concerned indemnify the Council against any third party claim arising from the attachment.

**USE OF COUNCIL CAR PARKS BY CARAVANS ETC.**

Caravans may be sited in Council car parks, should space be available, for a period not exceeding 14 days immediately prior to polling day subject to the following conditions:-

- a) Where a car park is a free car park, no charge is made but, where a car park is fee-paying, the appropriate charge is levied.
- b) The caravan should not be used for sleeping accommodation between the hours of 11.00pm and 7.00am.
- c) To minimise the disturbance to residential areas located adjacent to car parks, the use of loud speakers is prohibited in connection with the use of a caravan in a Council car park.
- d) The total cost associated with the provision and removal of such caravans and other units will be borne by the promoting organisation.
- e) All associated signs and posters must be removed with 48 hours after polling day.

**AMENITY SERVICES CONTACTS**

[roadsandinfrastructure@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:roadsandinfrastructure@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

(01546) 604756



**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**  
**SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS**

**7 MAY 2026**

**USEFUL WEBSITES, ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

**West Dunbartonshire Council election website –**

<http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/voting-and-elections/>

The Council's community web portal contains election information including past results.

The postal address is  
Election Office  
West Dunbartonshire Council  
Municipal Buildings  
College Street,  
DUMBARTON  
G82 1NH  
Telephone: 01389 737643

**Please note that on 17 March 2026 West Dunbartonshire Council will be introducing a new telephone system. During this period, the Election Office can be contacted on 07557 175 961. Full service on the above Election Office number, (01389 737643), will resume on 18 March 2026. The Election Office email [address \(elections@west-dunbarton.gov.uk\)](mailto:elections@west-dunbarton.gov.uk) will be available at all times.**

**Electoral Registration Officer** [www.saa.gov.uk/dab-vjb/electoral-registration/](http://www.saa.gov.uk/dab-vjb/electoral-registration/)

This site is operated by our local Electoral Registration Officer at the Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute Valuation Joint Board. It features application forms for postal and proxy voting together with relevant information on electoral registration. The postal addresses are:

| <b>East and West Dunbartonshire area:</b>   | <b>Lomond North and Helensburgh area:</b>  |
|---|--|
| Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute<br>Valuation Joint Board<br>235 Dumbarton Road,<br>Clydebank<br>G81 4XJ<br>Phone: 0141 562 1200<br><br>Email: <a href="mailto:ero-wdc@dab-vjb.gov.uk">ero-wdc@dab-vjb.gov.uk</a> | Dunbartonshire and Argyll and Bute<br>Valuation Joint Board<br>Kilbrannan House,<br>Bolgam Street<br>Campbeltown<br>PA28 6JY<br>Phone: 01586 555300<br>Email: <a href="mailto:ero-abc@dab-vjb.gov.uk">ero-abc@dab-vjb.gov.uk</a> |

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**The Electoral Commission**

[www.electoralcommission.org.uk/](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/)

The Electoral Commission operates a number of useful sites. This is its main site.

The following two sites are also sponsored by the Commission.

**Advice on how to register to vote**

<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

This site has information on registering to vote and on elections across the UK.

**Ordnance Survey**

[www.election-maps.co.uk/](http://www.election-maps.co.uk/)

This site provides access to maps of constituencies and wards. It is activated by post code information.

**Legislation -**

[www.legislation.gov.uk/](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)

This site can be used to access legislation. It incorporates the HMSO (Her Majesty's Stationery Office) service.

## Timetable for Opening of the Postal Votes – Scottish Parliamentary Election 2026

| Location  | Sessions    |
|---|-------------|
| <b>Bridge Training Room, Church Street, Dumbarton G82 1QL</b>                                 | <b>1-14</b> |
| <b>Count Centre, Clydebank Leisure Centre, Queens Quay, Aurora Ave,<br/>Clydebank G81 1BF</b> | <b>15</b>   |

| Date                                  | Times                       | Description                                |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2026    | 09:15 – 12:45 13:15 – 16:45 | Opening Session 1 Dumbarton                |
| Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> April 2026   | 09:15 – 12:45 13:15 – 16:45 | Opening Session 2 Clydebank and Milngavie  |
| Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2026 | 09:15 – 12:45 13:15 – 16:45 | Opening Session 3 Dumbarton                |
| Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2026  | 09:15 – 12:45 13:15 – 16:45 | Opening Session 4 Clydebank and Milngavie  |
| Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> April 2026    | 09:15 – 12:45 13:15 – 16:45 | Opening Session 5 Dumbarton                |
| Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2026    | 09:15 – 12:45 13:15 – 16:45 | Opening Session 6 Clydebank and Milngavie  |
| Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> April 2026   | 09:15 – 12:45 13:15 – 16:45 | Opening Session 7 Dumbarton                |
| Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> April 2026 | 09:15 – 12:45 13:15 – 16:45 | Opening Session 8 Clydebank and Milngavie  |
| Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2026  | 09:15 – 12:45 13:15 – 16:45 | Opening Session 9 Dumbarton                |
| Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2026       | 09:15 – 12:45 13:15 – 16:45 | Opening Session 10 Clydebank and Milngavie |
| Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2026      | 09:15 – 12:45 13:15 – 16:45 | Opening Session 11 Dumbarton               |
| Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2026    | 09:15 – 12:45 13:15 – 16:45 | Opening Session 12 Clydebank and Milngavie |
| Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2026     | 09:15 – 11:00               | Opening Session 13 Dumbarton               |
| Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2026     | 11:00 – 12:45               | Opening Session 14 Clydebank and Milngavie |
| Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2026     | 20:00 – 23:30               | Opening Session 15                         |

## SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION – 7 MAY 2026

### ARRANGEMENTS IN FORCE AT THE POLL

#### 1. Conduct of Election

Any matters relating to the conduct of the poll at the polling stations and to the conduct of the Count should be referred to the Returning Officer for the Clydebank and Milngavie and Dumbarton Constituencies, namely:-

Peter Hessett  
(Constituency) Returning Officer  
Election Office  
Municipal buildings  
College Street,  
Dumbarton  
G82 1NH

Tel. 01389 737643  
e-mail : [elections@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:elections@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

#### 2. ADMISSION PASSES

All candidates, election agents, polling agents and counting agents must have received notification, in writing, of the requirement of secrecy, and must hold the appropriate admission passes or similar authority from the Returning Officer, otherwise admission to the polling stations or the count respectively will not be allowed.

#### 3. OBSERVERS

Observers accredited by the Electoral Commission or by the Returning Officer are entitled to visit the polling places to observe the conduct of the poll. Such observers will have ID which they must show to the Presiding Officer. Observers must not interfere with the conduct of the poll, nor hinder electors from casting their votes. The Presiding Officer may limit the number of observers present at any one time in the polling station, if he/she has concerns that the poll is being impeded or there is a health and safety risk. Training will be given to polling staff on this issue.

#### 4. FLY POSTING

Flyposting is defined as “the display of advertising material on buildings and street furniture without the consent of the owner” and it is illegal. In West Dunbartonshire Council election posters or campaign materials are not permitted to be erected on

any land or property within the Council's control. In addition, the Roads (Scotland) Act makes it an offence to place anything on a public road without the consent of the Roads Authority. Therefore, election posters and campaign materials must not be attached to any street furniture such as lighting columns, bus shelters, road signs etc within the limits of the public road. This includes footways, traffic islands and road verges or other Council property such as bins. The basis for this prohibition is:

- The posters can be a hazard to road users by potentially causing distraction;
- There are health and safety issues in the erection and removal of the posters in proximity of the road network and due to working at height;
- Obstruction of the footway during the erection and removal of election materials can limit access for pedestrians; and
- Litter resulting from posters and cable ties. In addition, the prohibition of election posters and cable ties will contribute to a reduction in our carbon footprint through a reduction in waste, transport costs and production emissions.

Any poster displayed will be treated as illegal fly posting and the offending Candidate/Agent may face prosecution in terms of Section 100 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984. This carries a maximum fine of £1000 per offence. If any candidate and/or election agents, wishes to report election posters on council street furniture, please contact the Roads Section on 01389 737542. However, such calls should not be frivolous or vexatious. The Council reserves the right to recover costs from candidates, agents and parties for action taken to enforce compliance with the rules. Costs may include the cost of removing posters. Costs may also include staff time contacting candidates to resolve a breach. These examples are not exhaustive, and it will be the prerogative of the Chief Executive, or the appropriate Chief Officer, to determine what costs require to be recovered by the Council.

**Posters should never be placed in any Polling Station or associated land, nor should they be placed on the outside railings or wall of any Polling Station or associated land.**

Please note that separate rules apply to flyposting on street furniture in **Argyll and Bute Council and East Dunbartonshire Council** areas and copies of this guidance has been made available to all election agents.

## **5. CANVASSING**

Canvassing or the offering of literature within the polling place is not allowed. For this purpose, the polling place shall include not only the school or other buildings used for polling, but also any grounds or buildings attached or pertaining thereto or otherwise as may be determined by the Returning Officer.

## **6. ADMISSION OF AGENTS TO POLLING STATIONS**

Accredited agents shall be allowed into the polling station only for the purposes prescribed by law (the polling station is the room where the voting is actually taking place). As a concession an accredited agent for each candidate/party is permitted within the curtilage of the polling place but not within the building other than for the purposes prescribed by law. Not more than one polling agent shall be admitted at the same time to a polling station on behalf of the same candidate. Persons seeking to check the identity of voters for the purpose of a canvass (tellers) shall not be allowed to do so within the polling place.

## **7. INFORMATION FOR VOTERS**

While election agents and polling agents can assist in the direction of the voters, a duty is placed on the Presiding Officer where there is more than one polling station, to see that the information as to the appropriate room in which each voter has to vote is clearly displayed near the entrance of the polling place. Election agents and polling agents who do assist in directing voters are required to ensure that no canvassing takes place in these circumstances.

## **8. ROSETTES**

The following arrangements will apply:-

### **1. The Polling Station:** (for this purpose the polling station is the room in which the actual voting takes place)

- a) No polling agent on duty within a polling station for the purpose of detecting personation shall be allowed to wear a rosette or other means of party/candidate identification.
- b) Election agents or polling agents making a brief visit to a polling station for permitted purposes or any person entering the polling station to vote (i) personally or (ii) to assist another person to vote as determined by statute, are permitted to wear rosettes of lapel size only.

### **2. The Polling Place**

Election agents and polling agents are permitted to wear rosettes or a discreet badge in the polling place outwith the polling stations as defined above.

### 3. **Style of Rosettes**

Rosettes must be of lapel size only. The appropriateness of the size or style of rosettes or badges will be a matter for decision by the Returning Officer or Presiding Officer. No other form of candidate/party identification will be permitted in or at the polling place e.g. tee-shirts, banners, posters, umbrellas etc.

### 9. **VEHICLES**

Cars and other vehicles displaying party or campaign advertising are not normally allowed within the polling place gates, but where they are admitted for reasons of safety or distance from the street, advertising material should **not** be displayed. Normally, where it is necessary for a vehicle transporting persons with mobility difficulties to the poll to bring that person to the door of the polling place and the vehicle displays a party or campaign material, then that vehicle should **not** be allowed to wait in a conspicuous place while the person is voting.

### 10. **VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES**

Presiding Officers are reminded of the needs of voters with disabilities and should assist such voters if requested (including helping voters to and from the polling booth) while at all times observing the voters' right to secrecy. Voters with disabilities may also be accompanied to and from the entrance to the polling place. The polling clerk or information officer can assist here. Presiding Officers are instructed that the polling station must **NEVER** be left unattended at any time.

### 11. **VOTING INFORMATION**

Although there is no specific entitlement for polling agents to be informed of the number of persons who have voted, Presiding Officers will be permitted to advise candidates or agents of the approximate number of persons that have voted from time to time throughout the day. The Presiding Officer must ensure that meeting requests for such information does not interfere with his/her official duties. Information about whether a particular **person** has or has not voted shall **not** be given for the purpose of a canvass although such information may be necessary in a case where an agent has raised a question of personation.

## **12. PRESS AND MEDIA**

The press and media are not admitted to polling places. To gain entry to the Count, Press and media representatives must have received accreditation from the Returning Officer or Electoral Commission. Accredited press and media representatives will be allowed within the premises where the counting of the votes is taking place provided they have received notification of the requirement of secrecy and have given undertakings not to approach the counting tables, or in the case of television or photography, not to focus on tables in close-up.

## **13. ADMISSION TO OBSERVE CHECKING OF UNUSED VOTES**

As part of the verification process, Returning Officers are required to check the unused ballot papers received after the close of poll against the totals shown on the ballot paper accounts. It is intended that this will take place within the Clydebank Leisure Centre, Queens Quay, Clydebank on Thursday, 7 May 2026 commencing at 10 p.m. approx. i.e. as soon as the first ballot boxes are received.

Entry will be restricted to candidates, election agents and counting agents, accredited observers, count staff and any other person whom the Returning Officer is prepared to admit at his discretion. The public will not be admitted at any time. Anyone wishing to observe this process must bring their Count Admission Pass to the venue.

## **14. ADMISSION TO COUNT**

The Count will be held in the Sports Hall, Clydebank Leisure Centre, Queens Quay, Clydebank at 9 a.m. on Friday, 8 May 2026.

Entry will be restricted to candidates, election agents and counting agents, accredited observers, count staff and any other person whom the Returning Officer is prepared to admit at his discretion. The public will not be admitted at any time. Anyone wishing to observe this process must bring their Count Admission Pass to the venue.

## **15. POSTAL VOTES**

The majority of postal votes will be received prior to the day of the poll and will be opened to allow personal identifiers to be checked. The opening sessions will be held in the Bridge Training Room, Council Offices, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton. On the day of the poll, those postal votes which are received at the polling stations and via a Royal Mail sweep of the mail centre will be opened and checked in the Clydebank Leisure Centre, Queen's Quay, Clydebank, from 8 p.m. onwards.

Election agents will receive a note of the planned postal vote opening sessions and will be able to nominate agents to attend and observe this process. A copy of the relevant form is included in the nomination pack.

**Peter Hessett**  
**Constituency Returning Officer**  
**16 March 2026**

*Note: A copy of these arrangements will be issued to all election agents and polling station staff.*

# Code of Conduct for Campaigners at Scottish Parliament, Senedd Cymru, Scottish council and Welsh local elections

## 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: <https://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 relevant 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 at:
- Elections to the Scottish Parliament
- Scottish council elections
- Referendums held under Scottish Parliament legislation

- Elections to Senedd Cymru
- Welsh local elections
- Referendums held under Senedd Cymru legislation

## **Other elections and referendums in Great Britain**

This code does NOT apply to any other polls. The code of conduct for campaigners for other types of elections and referendums in Great Britain can be found here and covers:

- Elections to the UK Parliament (in England, Scotland and Wales)
- UK parliamentary by-elections
- Local elections in England
- Local referendums in England
- Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections and Police Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) elections in England and Wales

## **Meaning of the term "campaigner"**

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.

## Electoral registration and absent vote applications

**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. They can encourage voters to use the [online electoral registration service](#), or they can provide voters with paper application forms. Electoral Registration Officers should support you by providing you with a reasonable number of registration and absent vote application forms on request.

## Registration and absent vote forms should conform to electoral law

**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/government/publications/register-to-vote-if-youre-living-in-the-uk](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-to-vote-if-youre-living-in-the-uk) and absent vote application forms from [www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/apply-vote-post](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/apply-vote-post).

## ERO's address should be preferred return address

**Campaigners should ensure that the local Electoral Registration Officer's address is clearly provided as the preferred return address.**

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.

## Campaigners should send completed forms unaltered to ERO

**Campaigners should send on unaltered any completed registration or absent vote application 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.

## Implications of applying to vote by post or proxy

**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

**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

**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 suspicion that campaigners may be seeking to place undue pressure on electors, electors should not be encouraged to appoint a campaigner as their proxy.

## Postal voting ballot papers

**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.

## Campaigners should never observe voters completing their ballot paper.

**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.

## Campaigners should never handle completed ballot packs

**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.

## Campaigning outside polling places

**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.

## Access to polling places

**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.

## Complaints and allegations about electoral fraud

**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.

## Raising concerns about electoral fraud

**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.

## Reporting offences to the police

**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.