The
Electoral
Commission

Performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers

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Contents

1 Overview

Background

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 gave the Electoral Commission powers to set and monitor performance standards for electoral services. Under these provisions, the Commission may:

- determine and publish standards of performance for relevant electoral officers in Great Britain (Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), Returning Officers and Counting Officers)

- direct relevant officers to provide the Commission with reports regarding their performance against the published standards

- publish its assessment of the level of performance by relevant officers against the published standards

Under changes introduced by the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020, before determining standards which relate to Welsh elections, the Commission is required to send a copy to the Welsh Ministers, who must lay them before the Senedd.

Along with the guidance and resources provided by the Commission, the performance standards form part of a package which supports EROs with planning for and delivering well-run electoral registration services across Great Britain.

The Commission first introduced performance standards for EROs in July 2008 with the key objective of delivering a greater consistency of practice across Great Britain. A revised framework was introduced in 2013 to support the transition to individual electoral registration (IER) and then again in 2016, following the introduction of IER.

The reforms to the annual canvass introduced in 2020 provided an appropriate and timely opportunity to develop a new performance standards framework. However, the new framework is sufficiently flexible to be able to adapt to further changes as electoral registration in and across Great Britain continues to evolve.

The performance standards

The standards are focussed on the outcomes that should be delivered, rather than the processes that are followed, with the objective of helping EROs and their teams to understand the impact of their electoral registration activities. This should help EROs to make informed decisions on what activities are undertaken, how these activities are carried out and how their limited resources can be deployed efficiently and effectively.

What do the standards comprise of?

An outcome

This states the broad goal that EROs should be seeking to achieve. The performance standards set out three broad goals that EROs should be seeking to achieve:

- Electoral registers are as accurate and complete as possible, ensuring that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so
- Absent voting is accessible, ensuring that everyone who is eligible and wants an absent vote is included on the relevant absent vote list
- Stakeholders and electors have confidence in the secure management of the electoral registers

What inputs are needed?

This sets out the resources that will need to be put into the service to enable the necessary activities to be delivered.

What activities are being undertaken?

This does not provide an exhaustive list of activities, but instead summarises the headline activities that EROs are likely to need to undertake to be able to meet the outcome in each case. Our guidance and resources for EROs are designed to support them in determining the specific activities that will need to be carried out in their particular circumstances.

What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities?

This highlights the data and qualitative information which will help to demonstrate the impact of the activities and which should form the basis of how EROs and the Commission can determine the success of their work. Again this is not an exhaustive list and the information listed may be supplemented by additional data or information that the ERO feels is relevant to their performance.

What difference is being made?

This summarises the combined effects that the activities should have and which, taken together, would contribute to the delivery of the overall outcome.

How can we determine the success of our work?

This sets out measures that will help to demonstrate what difference the work is making. In some cases the difference will not be straightforward to quantify or otherwise measure, and so an aggregation of several measures may be relied upon to demonstrate what the work is achieving.

The following pages set out the performance standards for EROs.

Performance standards for EROs

Outcome: Electoral registers are as accurate and complete as possible, ensuring that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so				
What inputs are needed?	**What activities are being undertaken?**		**What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities?**	**What difference is being made?**	**How can we determine the success of our work?**
ERO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities – management and oversight of delivery of the electoral registration service, including the statutory functions of the ERO, and stakeholder engagement	Identification of those not registered, including hard to reach groups	Using available data and information sources, identify those not registered, including hard to reach groups Develop and maintain a public engagement strategy, ensuring planned activities are tailored to meet the needs of different groups of electors	• Analysis of the scope and usefulness of data and information • Ward level analysis of the registration area • Identification of priority areas to target registration activity • Evaluation of communications channels and approaches, including cost / benefit analysis of previous activity, supporting development of engagement strategy and activities	The demographics of the registration area and the needs of groups of electors within it are understood, enabling services to be targeted and designed to meet the needs of residents	• Performance against the KPIs/objectives set out in your registration plans • Evaluation of public engagement activities undertaken, including of changes made to the register as a result of the activity
Planning – maintaining a plan for registration throughout the year, ensuring it is kept under review and evaluation is undertaken, with lessons learnt fed back in, and a risk and issues register, identifying any risks to the effective delivery of your registration plan and corresponding mitigating actions	Undertaking year-round registration activity	Maintain the property database Contact potential eligible electors, including carrying out work to target hard to reach groups Ensure those no longer entitled to be registered are identified and removed Develop and implement processes to identify and address potential integrity issues Manage special category electors	• Number of properties with UPRN/as a percentage of properties • Analysis of any issues reported with the allocation of properties to polling districts to reflect relevant electoral boundaries • The accuracy and usability of data sources used • Analysis of response rates by channel, to understand impact of different approaches • Number of ITRs sent (by channel) • Number of ITRs followed up • Number of ITRs not responded to after the reminder and personal visit stages • Number of electors whose identity has not been verified and have yet to provide documentary evidence • Number of registration applications received • Number of additions to the register • Number of reviews of registration and number of deletions as a result • Number of deletions not as a result of a review, by type • Number of registration applications referred to the police • Number of renewals sent • Number of special category elector applications (both new and renewals) processed, from different elector groups (overseas, service etc.) • Number of special category electors renewed	Barriers to registration are minimised, enabling all eligible individuals, including those from different elector groups, to register Potential new electors are identified and are given every opportunity to register to vote Changes in the registration status of individuals are captured and applied to the register in a timely manner	• Changes in levels of registration within and across the registration area, both generally and within identified under-registered groups • An assessment of levels of additions and deletions, during the canvass and throughout the year. • A year-on-year analysis of additions and deletions
Resources – identification and allocation of budget and staffing for electoral registration activities					
Training – identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff	Administering the canvass	Using available data and information, identify the most appropriate method to canvass properties in your area Make arrangements to deliver the planned canvass activities	• The accuracy and usability of local data sources used • Results of data matching (national and local) • Number of households intended for each route • Analysis of available communications channels (e-communications, telephone, mail, etc.), to inform contact with individual properties • Number of households canvassed, by route and channel	Elections are effectively supported by the register	• Assessment of the numbers of eligible electors who tried to vote on polling day but were unable to do so as a result of not being registered to vote

Outcome: Electoral registers are as accurate and complete as possible, ensuring that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so					
		Undertake the planned canvass activities	• Number of communications sent, by route and channel • Number of responses by route and channel • Assessment of success of canvass communication channels used • Number of canvassers recruited and trained • Evaluation of canvasser performance		

Outcome: Absent voting is accessible, ensuring that everyone who is eligible and wants an absent vote is included on the relevant absent vote list				
What inputs are needed?	**What activities are being undertaken?**		**What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities?**	**What difference is being made?**	**How can we determine the success of our work?**
ERO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities – management and oversight of delivery of the absent voting function, including the statutory responsibilities of the ERO, and stakeholder engagement **Planning – maintaining a plan throughout the year, including arrangements for managing the absent voting process, and a risk and issues register, identifying any risks to the effective delivery of your plan and corresponding mitigating actions.** **Resources – identification and allocation of budget and staffing for absent voting activities** **Training – identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff**	Supporting electors to engage with the absent voting process	Develop and implement a communications plan to ensure that electors are aware of the absent vote options available to them Ensure that all electors can access the absent vote process	• Evaluation of information made available to electors on the absent voting process to help them understand the options available to them • Number of absent vote applications from different elector groups (overseas, service etc.), by type (postal or proxy) • Number and type of complaints received about ability to access the absent vote process from different elector groups (ordinary, overseas, service etc.)	Electors are able to make an informed decision on what voting method is best for them Barriers to absent voting are minimised, enabling all eligible individuals, including those from different elector groups, to apply Changes to voting arrangements are captured and applied in a timely manner The integrity of absent voting records and lists is maintained	• Performance against the KPIs/objectives set out in your plans • Analysis of complaints and feedback received about ability to access the absent voting process • Assessment of the numbers and types of errors in the absent voter lists
	Administering absent vote processes	Process new applications Process requested changes to absent voting preferences Maintain absent vote records and lists Develop and implement processes to identify and address potential integrity issues	• Number of absent vote applications received by type (postal or proxy) • Number of absent vote applications rejected • Number of absent vote confirmations sent • Number of changes to voting arrangements processed • Number of absent vote refresh notices sent, followed up and responses processed • Number of postal vote applications for postal votes to be redirected to one address • Number of postal applications from one address • Number of proxy applications from one address • Number of emergency proxy applications by type • Number of applications referred to the police for investigation		

Outcome: Stakeholders and electors have confidence in the secure management of the electoral registers				
What inputs are needed?	**What activities are being undertaken?**		**What information is needed to understand the impact of our activities?**	**What difference is being made?**	**How can we determine the success of our work?**
ERO understanding and delivery of role and responsibilities – management and oversight of delivery of the electoral registers, including the statutory functions of the ERO, and stakeholder engagement **Planning – maintaining a plan throughout the year, including details of the publication and supply of the register and arrangements for managing the security of systems, and a risk and issues register, identifying any risks to the effective delivery of your plan and corresponding mitigating actions** **Resources – identification and allocation of budget and staffing for electoral registration activities** **Training – identification and delivery of training to meet the needs of both permanent and temporary staff**	Publication and supply of the electoral register	Maintain record of those who are entitled to receive the electoral register Securely supply the electoral register to recipients Timely and accurate supply of electoral registers to the Returning Officer to support the conduct of elections	• Evaluation of arrangements for publication of the revised register and monthly updates to the register • Evaluation of arrangements for supplying the register to those entitled to receive it • Number of requests received, number of requests approved and when supplied • Audit trails showing how and when data has been transferred • Evaluation of methods for transferring data • Processes to ensure cyber security • Timing of provision of the registers • Information provided to recipients on appropriate use of the register	Everyone who is entitled to be supplied with the register receives data on time and in an appropriate format Electors have confidence in how their data is compiled, accessed and used Personal data is processed lawfully and transparently	• Performance against the KPIs/objectives set out in your plans • Analysis of complaints received from register recipients in relation to the provision of registers • Analysis of complaints from electors about how their data is processed