



Candidates and agents Briefing

UK Parliamentary general election, 12 December 2019

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Topics

- who's who
- key dates of the election timetable
- qualifications & disqualifications
- nominations
- agents
- postal votes
- candidates' expenses
- contacts

Who's who

- The (Acting) Returning Officer is responsible for running the election. The (Acting) Returning Officer is **Mark Heath**.
- The Electoral Registration Officer is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters lists. The Electoral Registration Officer is **Mark Heath**.

Key dates

Dissolution of Parliament	6 November
Publication of Notice of Election	7 November
Nominations commence	10am on 8 November
Close of nominations and notice of appointment of election agents	4pm on 14 November
Publication of statement of persons nominated, including notice of poll and situation of polling stations	5pm on 14 November (4pm on 15 November where there are objections)
Deadline for applications to register to vote	26 November
Deadline for new postal vote applications/ changes to existing postal or proxy vote arrangements	5pm on 26 November



Key dates

Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm on 4 December
Appointment of polling and counting agents	5 December
Polling day	12 December – 7am to 10pm
Deadline to apply to vote by proxy on grounds of medical emergency or if unexpectedly called away because of employment or service	5pm on 12 December
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	5pm on 12 December
Return of election expenses	+ 35 calendar days from result (if result declared on 13 December, 17 January 2020)



Qualifications

- Candidates must satisfy criteria on the day they are nominated **and** on the day of the poll:
 - be at least 18 years old
 - 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.



Disqualifications 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; or those whose estate has been sequestrated in Scotland and have not been discharged.



Submitting nomination papers

- All candidates must submit by **4pm on 14 November**:
 - their nomination form
 - their home address form
 - their consent to nomination.
- Party candidates will also need to submit by that time:
 - a certificate authorising the use of a party name/registered description on the ballot paper
 - a written request to use one of the party's emblems on the ballot paper.
- Nomination packs are available from the Electoral Commission's website (link on our site).



Submitting nomination papers

- **Take care when completing nomination papers as mistakes may invalidate the nomination!.**
- The nomination form, consent to nomination form and home address form must be delivered **by hand** and cannot be submitted by post, fax or other electronic means.
- Nomination papers should be delivered to:

The (Acting) Returning Officer,
Electoral Services, Room 84,
West Wing Basement, Civic Centre,
Southampton, SO14 7LY.



Submitting nomination papers

- The nomination and home address form may only be delivered by:
 - the candidate
 - the proposer or seconder, or
 - the election agent (if the Acting Returning Officer has previously received notification of their appointment).
- Deposit of £500.



Nomination form

- Include candidate's full name.
- Optional: complete commonly used name box(es) if commonly known by a name other than full name and wish to use this instead.
- 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 Nominating Officer.



Nomination form

- Subscribers: 10 subscribers from the constituency are required (must be registered parliamentary electors).
- Must sign and print their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register that is valid on 1 November 2019. If they are not on that register, they can't subscribe the nomination.
- Only ask subscribers to sign **after** completing the name and description fields on the form.
- Subscribers can only sign **one** nomination form.

Home address form

- Must state home address in full
- Must state if home address is not to be made public and to appear on the ballot paper. If so:
 - give the name of the constituency in which the home address is situated or,
 - if the candidate lives outside the UK, the name of the country in which they reside.



Consent to nomination form

Candidate must sign the consent to confirm:

- they are qualified and not disqualified from standing;
- that they are not a candidate in another constituency

The consent must also include:

- the candidate's date of birth;
- the name, address and signature of a witness



Certificate of authorisation

- Party candidates must have written permission to use the party name/description from the Nominating Officer (or a person appointed to act on their behalf).
- The certificate may:
 - allow the use of the party name or a specific description
 - allow the candidate to choose whether to use the party name or any of the descriptions registered with the Electoral Commission.
- Must be submitted with the other nomination papers by **4pm on 14 November**.



Emblem request form

- Party candidates can ask for an emblem to be printed on the ballot paper.
- Emblem request form must be submitted by **4pm on 14 November**.
- If required, party candidates should be able to supply an electronic version of the emblem to the Acting Returning Officer.



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

- Responsible for the proper management of the election campaign; particularly its financial management.
- Notification of the appointment must reach the ARO by **4pm on 14 November**.
- Candidate will become own election agent by default if none is appointed.



Other agents

- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on the candidate's behalf:
 - Notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents must be given by **5 December**.
 - The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of each session. Confirmation of the dates and times of opening sessions will be provided to election agents.
 - Appointment forms are available from the Electoral Commission's website.

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.
- They 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.**



Access to electoral register / absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once they **officially** become a candidate:
 - earliest, on 6 November if they, or others, have declared themselves a candidate on or before this date
 - on the day after 6 November that they or others have declared themselves a candidate, or they submit nomination papers, whichever is the earliest
- Make **written** request to the ERO – forms are provided in the candidate pack and are also available from the Electoral Commission's website.



Access to electoral register / absent voting lists

- Electoral data may only be used for permitted purposes:
 - to complete the nomination form
 - to help a candidate's campaign
 - to check that donations/loans are permissible



Registration

- A candidate is uniquely placed to encourage people to register to vote.
- They should encourage people to register as soon as possible.
- The deadline for applying to register for this election is **26 November**.
- Registration can be completed online at **<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>**. It only takes a few minutes.



Registration

- When discussing registering to vote with individuals, candidates 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 ERO.



Absent voting

- If encouraging people who don't have a postal (or proxy) vote to apply for one, make sure to explain that they will only qualify for one if they are (or will be) registered.
- The deadlines for applying for an absent vote are:
 - Postal/postal proxy – 5pm on Tuesday 26 November
 - Proxy – 5pm on Wednesday 4 December
- Application forms are available from the elections team or the Electoral Commission's website



Campaigning dos and don'ts

- Do use imprints on all campaign material.
- Do comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners.
- Do 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).



Code of conduct for campaigners

- Campaigners are an essential element of a healthy democracy, but their activities should not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process.
- The (Acting) Returning Officer asks all candidates and agents to agree to abide by the Electoral Commissions 'Code of Conduct for Campaigners'.
- This code of conduct covers all aspects of the electoral process: registration, postal voting, proxy voting and polling stations

Code of conduct for campaigners

- Electoral registration and absent vote applications:
 - Ensure forms conform fully to the requirements of electoral law
 - Include the ERO's address for the return of forms
 - Ensure unaltered applications are sent to ERO **immediately**
 - Make sure electors understand implications of applying for an absent vote.



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 packs from voters
 - Do not encourage postal ballot pack redirection.
- Proxy Voting:
 - Do not encourage electors to appoint a campaigner as proxy.

Spending issues



Candidate spending

- Election expenses during the regulated period are defined as those expenses ‘incurred for the purposes of the candidate’s election’.
- Responsibility of **election agent**.
- Limit on expenses.
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20).
- Forms relating to the return of candidate spending and donations are available from the Electoral Commission’s website.



The spending limit



Regulated period	Fixed amount	Variable amounts (per registered parliamentary elector)
Short campaign	£8,700	6p for a borough or burgh constituency
		9p for a county constituency

- Spending limits
- Variable amounts (per registered parliamentary elector):
 - Southampton Itchen – borough constituency
 - Southampton Test – borough constituency
 - Romsey & Southampton North – county constituency
- (source: Parliamentary Constituencies (England) Order 2007)



The regulated period



Contacts

Contacts

- **Your Details:**
Please notify the office as soon as possible of your contact e-mail and mobile phone details to ensure we can keep you up to date with any information.
- **Elections office – 023 8083 3954**
- **Highways department – 023 8083 2628**

Please note:

It is the duty of the (Acting) Returning Officer and his staff to conduct elections strictly in accordance with the appropriate laws, rules and regulations. It is their responsibility to comply with these at all times and this may occasionally restrict the level of assistance that can be offered.

Contacts

- Royal Mail:
 - www.royalmail.com/specialist-services/candidate-mailing
- Electoral Commission:
 - For enquiries about political parties, candidates or agents, contact:
 - Tel: 0333 103 1928
 - Email: pef@electoralcommission.org.uk
 - Website: www.electoralcommission.org.uk

Questions

Thank you

Please ensure you take your candidate's pack for guidance

NEXT BRIEFING:

10.30 am on 3 December at the Civic Centre

Candidates and agents briefing on the arrangements for
polling day and the verification/count