



Candidates and agents Briefing

UK Parliamentary general election, 12 December 2019

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Topics

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- key dates
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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

Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm on 4 December
Appointment of 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)



Other agents

- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings 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
 - limits to postal voting agents: 1 per party or independent candidate at each session
 - Appointment forms have been provided to candidates and agents (further copies are available from the Electoral Commission's website).



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.



Code of conduct for campaigners

- Campaigning outside polling stations:
 - Candidates are allowed to put their messages to voters on polling day, including in public spaces outside polling places
 - Keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters unimpeded access to enter
 - Ensure that ‘tellers’ comply with the Electoral Commission’s guidance.

Polling day and the count



Polling day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm.
- Office open 6.30 am to 10.00 pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the election
 - for queries relating to election finance issues, contact the Electoral Commission.
- Postal votes should be delivered to the elections office before 10pm.
- Any postal votes taken to polling stations must be handed in to a station within the relevant constituency.



Polling Day

- Voters in the polling station or in a queue outside the polling station at 10pm can apply for a ballot paper.
- A person in a queue at a polling station at 10pm waiting to hand in postal vote can do so after 10pm.



Counting of votes

- The count will be held in:
 - The O2 Guildhall, Civic Centre, Southampton.
Access via the Civic Centre entrance
ONLY
- Count centre will open to candidates and agents from 9.30pm on Thursday evening.
- Candidates (plus 1 guest), election agents and counting agents are entitled to attend
 - Allocation of counting agents:
 - Southampton, Itchen – 8 per candidate
 - Southampton, Test – 7 per candidate.



The Electoral Commission

Counting of votes (cont.)

- Access is via the main entrance to the Civic Centre ONLY.
- Security arrangements.
- LiveNation have agreed to open the south-side bar (for soft drinks only).

Election expenses



Candidate spending

- Election expenses during the regulated period are defined as those ‘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

Southampton Itchen – Borough – electorate 68,147

Southampton Test – Borough – electorate 65,839



The regulated period





Candidates' spending returns

- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election (**17 January 2020** for result declared on Friday 13 December).
- Returns made public by **(Acting) Returning Officer**.
- Sample of returns may be reviewed by the **Electoral Commission**.
- Failure to submit an expenses return is a criminal offence enforceable by the police.
- No spending will be reimbursed.

Contacts

Contacts

- 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

- 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