

Absent Voting Workshop 2007



What are we going to do?

- Focus on the issue and opening of postal votes and touch on new requirements for applications
- Look at how we can best manage the process using project management and risk management techniques
- Look at how the new legislation will impact on the process



Deadlines

- Deadline for receipt of PV applications and changes to existing AV arrangements is Polling Day minus 11
- Deadline for receipt of proxy application is Polling Day minus 6 (note: list of those who can attest extended)
- Late proxy on grounds of unforeseen illness is 5pm on Polling Day

Timetable

- All electors must receive a poll card (inc AV's)
 - When will you issue?
- Consider key constraints on issue of PV
 - When will ballot papers be ready?
 - When will stationery be printed?
 - Remember PV's for last minute registration applications can't be issued until after PD -6

A Postal Vote – The Basics

- An elector receives and returns their ballot paper by post
- The prescribed documentation
 - Outgoing envelope addressed to the voter
 - Envelope A for the marked ballot paper
 - Envelope B for return to the Returning Officer
 - A Postal Vote Statement (different version for waivers)
 - Ballot paper(s)

Getting Organised

- Staff
 - Accommodation
 - Documents
 - Equipment
- Do you know what you need?
 - Have you got enough?
 - Can you get more if required?

Address the following questions

- What volumes are you anticipating?
- Will you be able to cope with the volume?
- Are you going to use a contractor?
- Have you got enough resources?
- Are there enough staff for issue and opening?
- Is accommodation available for issue and opening?

Address the following questions

- What stationery is required?
- How will you deal with Postal Votes at the count?
- How will you deal with the issue of replacement postal ballot papers?
- Combined or single issue?
- Budget?
- What processes will you put in place for dealing with multiple electoral areas

Address the following questions

- When will you issue?
- Will you use a special service for those going overseas?
- How many staff in a team?
- When will you start to open?
- How many opening sessions will you have?
- Will you do a timed test of the issue and opening?

Address the following questions

- Will PV opening be at two locations (Council Offices and Count Centre)?
- If so, do you have the IT kit for Personal Identifier Matching for both locations and method to transfer the data?
- Need to take original PI forms to all PV openings?
- 20% or 100% PI checking

Budgetary Control

- Cost the options
- If outsourcing the whole of the issue, how much relates to the documentation and how much to staffing
- Keep election documents separate
- Election accounts

Practicalities

- What resources will you need to cope with the expected volume?
- Outsource or In-house?
- Selection of contractor
 - Can they cope?
 - Do they have a track record?

What is Risk Management?

- Risks are potential events or outcomes that can adversely impact the successful delivery of a project
- Risk Management is the process by which the likelihood of those potential events occurring is reduced and their impact minimised if they do occur

Types of Risk

- **Time**
 - Legal and logistical deadlines
- **Technology**
 - Hardware and software problems
- **Suppliers**
 - Printers, Royal Mail, transport, infrastructure
- **Staff**
 - Sickness, injury, death, fraud
- **Legal**
 - Challenges, electoral fraud, legislation
- **Environmental**
 - Fire, weather, disease

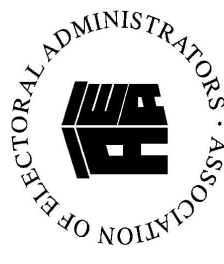
Evaluate The Options

In respect of each of the following

- What are the advantages, disadvantages and risks?
- What quality assurance measures and safeguards will you put in place?
- What lessons have you learned from past experience?
 - 1 Print all documentation in-house
 - 2 Printing undertaken outside but in-house issue
 - 3 Outsource production of postal voting packs for addition of ballot paper in-house
 - 4 Outsource production of postal voting packs including ballot paper
 - A) Delivery back to you?
 - B) Delivery to Royal Mail?

Candidates and Agents

- Absent Voters List – To whom, when, how many
- Postal Ballot papers - notification of time and place of opening – include the requirement of secrecy (48 hours notice)



Lost and Spoilt Ballot Papers

- Spoilt means spoilt
- Return by post or by hand all documentation (where combined issue all sets must be returned)
- Lost previously meant not received but now means 'lost'

Lost and Spoilt Ballot Papers

- Applications for replacement by 5.00 pm on day of poll
- If after 5.00 pm on day before poll - shall only issue if documents returned by hand
- Where postal voter applies in person
 - by 5.00pm day before the poll you may hand replacement to voter
 - after 5.00pm day before the poll you may only hand replacement to voter

Lost and Spoilt Ballot Papers

- Remember
 - Where replacement issued you must extract the original documentation at the opening of pv's if received – this includes the ballot paper.
 - After 5pm on Polling Day a postal voter can be issued with a tendered vote at the Polling Station

Replacement Procedures

- Replacement of 'lost' and spoilt
- Have clear written procedures for staff
 - Follow them without exception
 - Gather evidence
 - possible challenge

Returned Postal Votes

- Elector entitled to know if postal vote received by RO and if on list of provisionally rejected.
- RO discretion re method of request.

Practical Exercise

- Postal Vote Opening and Signature Verification



On Polling Day

- Will you collect postal votes handed in to polling stations during the day or wait for them to be returned to the count?
- Will you have a postal vote opening session during polling day?
- Will you only open postal votes on polling day at the count?
- What about a Royal Mail sweep?

On Polling Day

- Put a system in place to ensure that PV team is opening the electoral areas in the same order as the count staff!
- If collecting - PO must make up a packet and agents affix their seal!



Postal Votes at the Count

- Opening postal votes at the Count
- Give notice to Election Agents
- Have a team or teams available to open postal votes handed in to polling stations
- Having insufficient resources to do this will delay the count
- Make someone responsible for taking opened postal votes and documentation to the count
- Matching incomplete sets