

ES7 Develop a polling scheme for elections/referendums

Unit Summary

What is the unit about?

The development of a polling scheme that meets statutory requirements is a key responsibility of Returning Officers. This unit describes the competences involved, and includes the need to: identify polling venues and allocate the electorate to these venues, devise a scheme, and keep it under review. The importance of considering access, security and safety issues is highlighted.

Who is the unit for?

This unit is appropriate to the work of Returning Officers and the Electoral Administrators with responsibility for developing polling schemes.

Links with other units

This unit links with the following units:

- ES13 – Manage polling day arrangements
- ES14 – Facilitate voting at polling stations
- 3/18 – Support the efficient use of resources
- 4/23 – Manage the use of physical resources
- F1 - Manage a project
- A52 – Manage internal communication and consultation processes

Scope of the unit

You will need to plan for the deployment of the following **resources**:

- Staff
- Equipment
- Materials

You will need to comply with the following **criteria**:

- Established boundaries
- Accessibility
- Security
- Safety

You will need to make the polling scheme available to the following **key stakeholders**:

- Colleagues within the organisation
- Political parties
- Owners/managers of venues
- The Electoral Commission
- Access groups

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Outcomes of Effective Performance

Developing a polling scheme

You must be able to:

1. assess and confirm the suitability of polling venues against needs
2. negotiate and agree the use of polling venues with the relevant individuals and/or organisations
3. develop plans that provide for replacement and/or emergency and/or temporary polling venues should the need arise
4. allocate the electorate to each polling venue, and take the appropriate action when the allocation is deemed inappropriate
5. plan for the effective and timely deployment of all necessary **resources** at polling venues
6. devise a polling scheme that complies with established **criteria**, and clearly and accurately records all necessary information
7. assess the risks associated with implementing the polling scheme, and take the appropriate action to minimise risks
8. make available the polling scheme to all **key stakeholders**
9. publicise the contents of the polling scheme to electors
10. keep the polling scheme under constant review, ensuring that it is fit-for-purpose when an election or referendum is announced

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand the following:

Legislation, policy and practice

- K1. relevant legislation, codes of practice and guidance relating to developing a polling scheme, and in particular those relating to equal opportunities, access and discrimination
- K2. your organisational policies and procedures relating to developing a polling scheme
- K3. polling districts and established boundaries in the geographical area to which the polling scheme applies

Developing a polling scheme

- K4. the required characteristics and locations of polling venues, and how to assess possible options against these needs
- K5. how to negotiate the use of polling venues, and the importance of balancing competing demands
- K6. the importance of developing plans that provide for replacement and/or emergency and/or temporary polling venues
- K7. how to allocate the electorate to polling venues, and the importance of assessing this allocation to ensure that it is appropriate
- K8. the resources required at polling venues and how to plan for their effective and timely deployment
- K9. the importance of developing a scheme that complies with established criteria (such as boundaries, accessibility)
- K10. the information that must be included within a polling scheme and how to record it in a clear and accurate way
- K11. how to assess and minimise the risks associated with the implementing the scheme; the importance of considering risk at the planning stage
- K12. those to whom the scheme should be made available
- K13. effective methods for publicising the contents of the polling scheme to electors
- K14. the importance of keeping the scheme under review, and ensuring that is fit-for-purpose