

ES8 Commence the election/referendum process

Unit Summary

What is the unit about?

This unit covers the important activities that take place just prior to, and at, the initiation of an election or referendum. It includes providing a range of information and advice to interested parties regarding the options and implications of the potential event, before moving on to describe the competences required to commence the election/referendum process in accordance with statutory requirements. *Note that administering the nominations process and briefing candidates etc is covered within other units.*

Who is the unit for?

This unit is appropriate to the work of Returning Officers, Acting Returning Officers, Deputy Returning Officers, Chief Electoral Officers (in Northern Ireland), Chief Counting Officers, Counting Officers, and those to whom authority for this activity has been delegated.

Links with other units

This unit links with the following unit:

- ES19 – Establish, maintain and develop effective working relationships with stakeholders in electoral services

Scope of the unit

This unit covers the following types of **event**:

- UK Parliamentary elections
- European Parliamentary elections
- Local government elections
- Mayor of London and London Assembly elections
- Mayoral elections
- Welsh Assembly elections
- Scottish Parliamentary elections
- Northern Ireland Assembly elections
- Referendums at local, regional and national level
- Other issue-based voting events e.g. Parish Polls, Community Polls

The following types of **advice** may be given:

- General
- Procedural

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Outcomes of Effective Performance

Planning and preparation

You must be able to:

1. provide clear and accurate information and **advice** to interested parties prior to commencing the election/referendum process regarding:
 - different options and approaches
 - planning and preparing for an **event**
 - timing
 - processes, procedures and responsibilities

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You must be able to:

2. arrange for the receipt of the request where appropriate
3. verify the basis of initiating an **event** where appropriate
4. publish statutory notices of the **event** within prescribed timescales and in accordance with the relevant regulations
5. provide clear and accurate **advice** on the conduct of the **event** where this is required or requested by others
6. oversee the nominations process where the **event** entails the fielding of candidates, and validate and publish the final list of candidates involved
7. ensure that all relevant parties receive complete and timely information and guidance about the conduct of the **event** and their role and responsibilities
8. assess the risks associated with conduct of the planned **event**, and make recommendations for minimising or managing these risks to the appropriate people
9. initiate and oversee the production of all relevant **event** documentation
10. ensure that all necessary contractual arrangements are in place
11. consider the need to appoint Deputies with full or specific powers, taking any necessary action to delegate responsibilities

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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 commencing the election/referendum process
- K2. your organisational policies and procedures relating to commencing the election/referendum process
- K3. your role, responsibilities and authority relating to commencing the election/referendum process
- K4. the role, responsibility and authority of others relating to commencing the election/referendum process

Planning and preparation

- K5. the types of information and advice that might be given to interested parties prior to commencing elections/referendums; the importance of providing this in a clear and accurate manner

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- K6. the approach to be taken when commencing different types of event
- K7. how to arrange for the receipt of the request; the circumstances in which this is not necessary (e.g. issue-based voting events)
- K8. how to verify the basis for commencing an event (e.g. verifying decisions made at a parish meeting; verifying evidence that the required conditions have been met to initiate a mayoral referendum)
- K9. the timescales within which statutory notices of events must be published
- K10. the types of general and procedural advice that might be required or requested by others regarding the conduct of the event; the importance of providing this in a clear and accurate manner
- K11. how to oversee the nominations process; the importance of ensuring that the correct procedures are followed by others
- K12. how to validate and publish the final statement of persons nominated
- K13. the types of information and guidance that may be required regarding the conduct of the event and individual roles and responsibilities; the importance of ensuring that this is provided in a complete and timely manner
- K14. the range of risks associated with conducting events; how to assess and manage/minimise these risks; the importance of conducting a risk assessment
- K15. the types of documentation required for different events; how to initiate and oversee the production of relevant documentation
- K16. the importance of ensuring that all necessary contractual arrangements are in place
- K17. how to identify the need to appoint Deputies with full or specific powers; the actions necessary to delegate responsibilities