



Annual Conference 2024



Hilton Birmingham Metropole
Sunday 14 January to
Tuesday 16 January 2024

Conference Overview



2023 saw the most fundamental change in voting processes in a generation with the introduction of voter ID. However, this was only the beginning.

Postal vote handling, accessibility, EU voting and candidacy rights, overseas electors, online absent votes, postal vote reapplication processes, new UK parliamentary boundaries, a snap UK general election are all on the horizon.

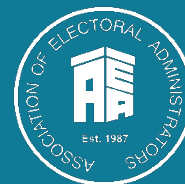
Managing this ongoing change is all set against a backdrop of continuing to deliver scheduled (and unscheduled) elections, ongoing work to maintain the completeness and accuracy of the electoral register and ongoing local resource challenges.

Conference 2024 will support you to meet these challenges with a focus on:

- Hearing from the sector about tranche two Election Act changes;
- Preparing to deliver a UK Parliamentary general election;
- Polling station processes and the burden on Presiding Officers;
- The new fees and charges regime

This will be done through a combination of plenary sessions, facilitated discussions and practical workshops. You will also have the opportunity to speak with colleagues from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Electoral Commission.

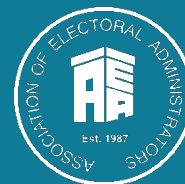
Conference programme



Sunday 14 January 2024

Time	Session Title	Session Overview
From 14:30	Registration	Delegate packs and badges ready to collect.
16:00 - 17:30	Exhibition	Join our commercial partners who are ready to ensure you have all you need to face the demands of 2024.
15:30 - 16:30	Fringe Event - Come and say 'Hi!'	AEA staff will be on hand to welcome you to Conference. We will answer any questions you have about the event, electoral matters or anything else on your mind. If you have never been to Conference before, or are attending alone, we will be a friendly welcoming face to help you ease you in.
16:30 - 17:25	Fringe Event - Flexible Voting	Electoral Commission representatives will be on hand to discuss their work looking at the practical implications of flexible voting options - including advance voting, mobile voting, voting hubs and voting elsewhere/anywhere.
16:30 - 17:25	Closed Meeting - PARO authorities	With PCC elections taking place in less than four months, this closed session is an opportunity for PARO authorities to hear about support available from the AEA, DLUHC and EC. It will also give you the chance to speak with fellow administrators and build a network to help you manage your PCC polls.
17:30 - 17:45	Annual General Meeting	Our Annual General Meeting will take place ahead of our first Conference session.
17:45 - 18:45	Conference Opener - History of elections - how the hell did we end up here?	ITR, OAVA, NPR, IER, CNL, BID, LLPG, HEF - all acronyms you use almost daily. Imagine a world where no one has heard of them and the biggest election stress is having the dexterity to change the pins in a stamping instrument ("a what?" we hear some of you cry). This session takes a light-hearted look back through the ages at just how much the electoral world has changed and asks: "How the hell did we end up here?!"

Conference programme



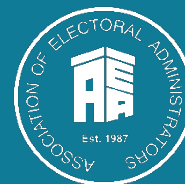
Monday 15 January 2024		
Time	Session Title	Session Overview
08:30	Exhibition	Join our exhibitors today from 8:30 until 16:45
9:15 - 10:30	Delivering the Elections Act in 2024	There is so much still to come with tranche two of the Elections Act only just beginning. In this session, DLUHC and EC officials will look at all elements of the Elections Act, including lessons we can learn from May 2023. This will include technical demonstrations of the ERO portal.
10:30 - 11:00	Keynote Speech	The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State with responsibility for elections policy and the Electoral Integrity Programme implementation will deliver the Conference Keynote Speech. This will be followed by a question and answer session.
11:00 - 11:30	Coffee	Your opportunity to visit exhibitors and network with colleagues from across Great Britain.
11:30 - 13:00	Workshops and Breakout Plenary	<p>There will be two workshops and one breakout plenary. You will attend all three during Conference.</p> <p>Workshop 1 - Postal Vote Handling</p> <p>You need to start planning how you will implement new rules on handling postal votes at relevant polls in England, Scotland and Wales from 2 May 2024.</p> <p>This workshop will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give you an overview of the postal vote handling provisions • Help you think about a range of scenarios which your election staff may face – both at council offices and polling stations • Get you thinking about the range of complex demands on Presiding Officers, and how to support them • Give you resources to support your planning back at the office <p>Workshop 2 - Declaration Electors and the next general election</p> <p>With huge changes coming to Overseas Electors, this workshop takes stock of where we are for all Declaration Electors.</p>

Conference programme



		<p>It will focus on who can be declaration electors, what has changed due to the Elections Act and what you need to do in preparation for the next general election.</p> <p>With a range of interactive elements, this workshop will test even the most experienced administrators' knowledge of all categories of other electors.</p> <p>Breakout Plenary - Preparing for the Parliamentary</p> <p>For the first time, we will run a breakout plenary to pull together all key stakeholders with a part to play in delivering the next UK Parliamentary general election.</p> <p>Speakers from DLUHC, the EC and AEA will take you through the resources available to EROs and ROs and how they can help you be ready for the dissolution of Parliament.</p>
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch	
13:00 - 14:00	Fringe Event - Meet the BBC	BBC election specialists Tim Burke and Julia Walker will be available for a chat if you want to know more about the BBC's plans for general election coverage. Drop in and discuss any questions you have about what the BBC will be looking for to cover the poll, including any local challenges you can foresee.
14:00 - 14:45	Guidance and Legislation - Navigating the Labyrinth	Our member support team will be on stage to help you confidently find answers in the increasingly complex landscape of electoral law.
14:45 - 15:15	Tea	Another chance to speak with suppliers. There will also be a breakout room available for conversations, catching up with AEA friends and checking in with the office.
15:15 - 16:45	Workshops and Breakout Plenary	Workshops 1 and 2 and 'Preparing for the Parliamentary' breakout plenary.
16:45 - 17:30	Fringe Event - Electoral Administration in Wales	Mike Kay from the Welsh Government will look at electoral reform in Wales and consider the challenges devolved programmes of change bring for the country's administrators.

Conference programme



Tuesday 16 January 2024

Time	Session Title	Session Overview
08:30	Exhibition	Join our exhibitors today from 8:30 until 13:30
9:15 - 10:00	Case Study - Delivering the Whole Council Approach	Many members feel our profession is on its knees. The scale and duration of change has fundamentally altered members' ability to deliver democracy. The time has come for EROs and ROs to look more widely at how electoral services is delivered. This session examines the transformation one council has been through, how it delivered polls in 2023 and what it has learned to inform elections and registration delivery going forward.
10:00 - 10:30	Democracy Club	For the first time in May 2023, Democracy Club had 100% coverage of all polling stations on its polling station finder. This session looks at how Democracy Club has evolved since its inception in 2010 and plans to continue to support voters.
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee	The exhibition remains open on our final day.
11:00 - 12:30	Workshops and Breakout Plenary	Workshops 1 and 2 and 'Preparing for the Parliamentary' breakout plenary.
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 - 14:45	Fees and Charges - changes for 2024	<p>DLUHC officials will take you through the new fees and charges guidance for UK Parliamentary and Police and Crime Commissioner elections.</p> <p>After a thorough review of current arrangements, the UK Government is making major changes to bring greater consistency and speed up the claims process.</p> <p>The session will outline the new form completion system that should be in place for the 2024 PCC polls. This online system is being developed to make it easier for ROs to submit accounts and provide supporting evidence.</p> <p>You will be able to ask any questions you have on the new approach and raise any concerns.</p>
14:45 - 15:00	Close of Conference	Our Chief Executive will summarise the last few days and look at what members can expect in the coming year.

Conference booking



Conference opens from 15:30 on Sunday 14 January and closes at 15:00 on Tuesday 16 January.

Delegate Fees (excluding VAT)

£675 including two nights bed and breakfast accommodation, refreshments, lunches and dinners, to include our annual dinner as well as all Conference documentation.

The cost of attending Conference excluding accommodation, is **£500**.

To attend for either Monday or Tuesday only costs **£250** per day.

Non-members pay a surcharge of **£175** in addition to the fees outlined above.

[Membership forms are available from our website](#)

Venue

Conference will be held at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole.

Car parking is available and charged locally.

We have secured 450 bedrooms at the hotel that will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

You will be personally responsible for paying for any extra hotel costs such as newspapers, telephone calls, or any damage caused during your stay.

Cancellation

If you cannot attend, a substitute may attend in your place. Otherwise, the following charges will be payable:

Less than four weeks before Conference – 100%

Less than six weeks before Conference – 60%

More than six weeks before Conference – £50

It may be necessary for reasons beyond our control to reschedule or cancel the event. If this happens, you will receive a refund or credit where applicable.

Partners

For Partner rates, see separate sheet.

Separate payment is required for partners. A separate invoice will be issued.

Special Requirements

If you have any special dietary needs or need any help due to disabilities or health issues, please complete the relevant parts of the booking form.

How to Register

Please complete the booking form and send it to aea@sunderland.gov.uk

Applications close on 15 December 2023.

Delegates will receive a booking confirmation when their application form is processed.