Candidates and agents Briefing

UK Parliamentary general election,
8 June 2017
Topics

• who’s who
• key dates of the election timetable
• qualifications & disqualifications
• nominations
• agents
• postal votes
• the poll
• counting of votes
• candidates' expenses
• contacts
Who’s who

- The Acting Returning Officer is responsible for running the election. The Acting Returning Officer is Tim Clegg
- The Electoral Registration Officer is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters lists. The Electoral Registration Officer is Tim Clegg
- Contact details are provided later
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key dates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publication of Notice of Election</td>
<td>Not after 4pm on 8 May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nominations commence</td>
<td>10am on the day after publication of Notice of Election</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close of nominations and notice of appointment of election agents</td>
<td>4pm on 11 May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publication of statement of persons nominated, including notice of poll and situation of polling stations</td>
<td>5pm on 11 May, or 4pm on 11 May (where objections)</td>
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<td>Key dates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for applications to register to vote</td>
<td>22 May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for new postal vote applications/</td>
<td>5pm on 23 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>changes to existing postal or proxy vote</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>arrangements</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for applications for new proxy votes</td>
<td>5pm on 31 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment of polling and counting agents</td>
<td>1 June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling day</td>
<td>8 June – 7am to 10pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key dates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline to apply to vote by proxy on grounds of medical emergency or if</td>
<td>5pm on 8 June</td>
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<tr>
<td>unexpectedly called away because of employment or service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends</td>
<td>5pm on 8 June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Return of election expenses</td>
<td>+ 35 calendar days from result (if result declared on 8 June, 13 July)</td>
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Qualifications

• Candidates must satisfy criteria on the day they are nominated and on polling day:
  
  o be at least 18 years old
  o either be a British citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a qualifying Commonwealth citizen

• There is no requirement to be a registered elector in the UK.
Disqualifications

Certain people are disqualified from becoming an MP, such as:

- civil servants
- members of police forces
- members of the armed forces
- government-nominated directors of commercial companies
- judges
- members of a foreign legislature (outside the Commonwealth)
- peers who sit and vote in the House of Lords
- those who are subject to a bankruptcy restrictions order or debt relief restrictions order (but not those who are simply bankrupt) in England, Wales or Northern Ireland; or those whose estate has been sequestrated in Scotland and have not been discharged
Submitting nomination papers

• All candidates must submit by **4pm on 11 May**:
  – their nomination form
  – their home address form
  – their consent to nomination

• Party candidates will also need to submit by that time:
  – a certificate authorising the use of a party name/registered description on the ballot paper
  – a written request to use one of the party’s emblems on the ballot paper
Submitting nomination papers

- Take care when completing your nomination papers as mistakes may invalidate your nomination! Complete your nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an informal check.
- The nomination form, consent to nomination form and home address form must be delivered by hand and cannot be submitted by post, fax or other electronic means.
- The nomination and home address form may only be delivered by:
  - you
  - our proposer or seconder, or
  - by your election agent (if the (Acting) Returning Officer has previously received notification of their appointment).
- £500 deposit
Nomination form

• Include your full name
• Optional: complete commonly used name box(es) if commonly known by a name other than full name and wish to use it instead
• Description field – 3 options:
  • leave blank
  • Independent
  • party candidates can use party name or description authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the Nominating Officer.
Nomination form

• Subscribers: 10 subscribers from the constituency are required.

• Must sign and should print their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register that is in force on the last day for publication of notice of election.

• If they are not on that register, they can’t subscribe your nomination.

• Only ask subscribers to sign after completing the name and description fields on the form.
Home address form

• Must state home address in full

• Must state if you do not want your address to be made public and to appear on the ballot paper. If so:

  – give the name of the constituency in which your home address is situated or,
  – if you live outside the UK, the name of the country in which you reside.
Consent to nomination form

Must include:

• Statement you are qualified and not disqualified from standing
• Your date of birth
• Name, address and signature of witness
• Statement you are not a candidate in another constituency
Certificate of authorisation

• Party candidates must have written permission to use the party name/description from the Nominating Officer (or a person appointed to act on their behalf).

• The certificate may:
  – allow the use of the party name or a description
  – allow the candidate to choose whether to use the party name or any of the descriptions registered with the Electoral Commission

• Must be submitted with the other nomination papers by **4pm on 11 May**
Emblem request form

• Party candidates can ask for an emblem to be printed on the ballot paper

• Emblem request form must be submitted by **4pm on 11 May**

• Party candidates should supply an electronic version of the emblem to the (Acting) Returning Officer if required.
Joint candidates

• Nominated by **more than one party**

• May use registered joint descriptions
  - must be supported by certificate of authorisation from each party

• May use one emblem of one of the parties but there are no joint emblems
Election agent

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly its financial management.

- Notification of appointment must reach the RO by 4pm on 11 May. Form is included in nomination pack.

- You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed.
Other agents

- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on your behalf:
  - You must give notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by **1 June**. We will provide forms.
  - The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of each session. We will give 48 hours’ notice by letter.
Free candidate mailing

- All candidates who are validly nominated are entitled to send one election communication, free of charge, to electors across the constituency.
- It must include matters relating to the election only.
- You can choose to send either:
  - one unaddressed election communication of up to 60 grams to every postal address, or
  - one election communication of up to 60 grams addressed to each elector
- contact Royal Mail to make arrangements
Access to electoral register / absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you officially become a candidate:
  - earliest, on **3 May** if you, or others, have declared yourself a candidate on or before this date
  - after **3 May**, once you or others have declared yourself a candidate or you submit your nomination papers, whichever is earliest

- Make written request to the ERO – forms are available from Elections Office.

- You will need to request copies from the Other Authorities (South Staffs – Stafford Constituency, Staffs Moorlands and Newcastle under Lyme – Stone Constituency)
Access to electoral register / absent voting lists

- Only use data for permitted purposes
  - to complete the nomination form
  - to help you campaign
  - to check that donations/loans are permissible
Registration

- As a candidate you are uniquely placed to encourage people to register to vote.
- You should encourage people to register as soon as possible.
- The deadline for applying for the election is **22 May**.
- Individuals can apply to register online at [https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote). It only takes a few minutes.
Registration

• When discussing registering to vote with individuals, you will need to make them aware that they will need:
  – their National Insurance number,
  – date of birth and address to register.

• People who do not have / cannot retrieve their National Insurance Number can still register, but they may need to provide further information. If so, they will be contacted by the ERO.
Absent voting

- If you are encouraging people who don’t have a postal (or proxy) vote to apply for one, make sure you explain that they will only qualify for one in time for the election if they are (or will be) registered in time to vote at the election.
Campaigning dos and don’ts

- Do use imprints on all your campaign material
- Do comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners
- Do make sure outdoor posters are removed 2 weeks after the election
- Do not produce material that looks like a poll card
- Do not pay people to display your adverts (unless they display adverts as part of their normal business).
Campaigners are an essential element of a healthy democracy, but their activities should not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process.

- Electoral registration and absent vote applications:
  - Ensure forms conform fully to the requirements of electoral law.
  - Include the ERO’s address for the return of forms.
  - Ensure unaltered applications are sent to ERO within two working days.
  - Make sure electors understand implications of applying for an absent vote.
  - Do not encourage postal ballot pack redirection.
  - Do not encourage electors to appoint a campaigner as proxy.
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.

• Campaigning outside polling stations:
  – You are allowed to put your 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 to enter.
Polling day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm.
- Office open 6am to 10pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the election
  - for queries relating to election finance issues, contact the Electoral Commission (contact details shown later)
- Voters in the polling station or in a queue outside the polling station at 10pm can apply for a ballot paper.
- Postal votes can be handed into polling stations within the constituency or delivered to the elections office until 10pm.
- 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:
  [insert count centre location/address]

• Candidates, election agents, counting agents and one other person appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend
  – limits to counting agents: number will be confirmed
Spending issues
Candidate spending

• Defined as certain expenses ‘used for the purposes of the candidate’s election’ during the regulated period

• Responsibility of election agent

• Limit on expenses: See next slide

• Must get and keep receipts (over £20)
The spending limit

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Regulated period</th>
<th>Fixed amount</th>
<th>Variable amounts (per registered parliamentary elector)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short campaign</td>
<td>£8,700</td>
<td>9p per registered parliamentary elector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stafford Constituency</td>
<td>Electorate 69,957</td>
<td>Spending Limit £14,996.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Constituency</td>
<td>Electorate 67,994</td>
<td>Spending Limit £14,819.46</td>
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Candidates’ spending returns

- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election
- 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 – 01785 619424

• Electoral Commission contacts

  – For questions on the Commission’s guidance on standing for election, contact www.electoralcommission.org.uk/contact-us/our-offices
  – For questions on election spending, contact 020 7271 0616
Questions
Thank you

Please ensure you take your candidate’s pack for guidance