

## CANDIDATE SUPPORTERS AT THE POLLING STATION

For the purposes of this guidance:

- ‘Polling place’ means the building in which polling stations are located.
- ‘Polling station’ is defined as the room or area within a polling place where electors cast their votes, which contains the polling booths and ballot box
- The polling station is a self-contained area which only those allowed by law may enter. More than one polling station may be located within a polling place.

Role	What they can do	What they can't do
<p><b>Polling Agent</b></p> <p>Candidates can appoint agents to observe proceedings inside polling stations.</p> <p>They have rights in law to enter the polling station.</p>	<p>They can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be present in the polling station before the opening of the poll to watch the Presiding Officer show the empty ballot box before it is sealed</li> <li>• detect personation and prevent people voting more than once in the election</li> <li>• report to the Election Agent/Sub Agent any improper activities and keep notes, if required, for giving evidence in court</li> <li>• be present when the Presiding Officer marks a ballot paper at the request of an elector</li> <li>• be present at the close of poll when the various packets of documents are sealed</li> <li>• attach their seal to any packets made up by the Presiding Officer at the close of poll, including the ballot box</li> <li>• A polling agent can mark off on their copy of the register of electors, those voters who have applied for ballot papers.</li> <li>• If the polling agent leaves the polling station during the hours of polling, they must leave the marked copy of the register in the polling station to ensure that secrecy requirements are not breached.</li> <li>• In practice, appointed Polling Agents may just call at the Polling station and request turnout figures</li> </ul>	<p>They must not give information to anyone as to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• who has or has not voted</li> <li>• the official mark on the ballot paper</li> </ul> <p>Any person found guilty of breaching the secrecy requirements can face a fine of up to £5,000, or may be imprisoned for up to six months</p>

<p><b>Tellers</b></p> <p>Usually volunteers who stand outside polling places and record the elector numbers of electors who have voted (to relay details to the candidate/agents).</p> <p><b>They do not have legal status.</b></p> <p><b>Voters have the right to refuse them information.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There can only be ONE teller at the polling station for each candidate at any one time</li> <li>• Multiple polling stations with multiple entrances – may have one teller (as above) at each entrance</li> <li>• They must always remain outside the polling station/place</li> <li>• They may wear a rosette as long as it is not oversized (it may display the name of a candidate, a description and an emblem – but not a slogan)</li> <li>• They may only enter the polling station to cast their own vote, to vote as a proxy or to assist a voter with disabilities</li> <li>• They must always comply with the instructions of the Returning Officer and Presiding Officer</li> <li>• They should politely ask voters for their poll card, elector number or name and address as they <b>leave</b> the polling station.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approach voters as they <b>enter</b> the polling station/place</li> <li>• display (other than a rosette - see opposite) billboards, posters, placards or pamphlets sited on walls or around the polling place.</li> <li>• distribute any election material in support of or against any party/candidate</li> <li>• must not be able to see or hear what is happening inside the polling station</li> <li>• must not impede, obstruct or intimidate voters on their way in/out of the polling station/place</li> <li>• <b>demand</b> any information relating to the voter's elector number, name or address</li> <li>• ask voters to re-enter the polling station to ascertain their elector number/retrieve their poll card</li> <li>• attempt to induce, influence or persuade an elector how or whether to vote. They cannot promote particular candidates or political parties</li> <li>• they must not press voters if their initial request for information is declined.</li> <li>• if asked, tellers should explain that they are activists seeking to determine who has actually voted. No impression should be given that any information provided will be used for official purposes or that they are employed by the Returning Officer.</li> <li>• the Presiding Officer may allow tellers to enter the polling place (e.g. stand under porticos and entrances) provided that they adhere to the requirements listed above</li> <li>• Returning Officer staff/Presiding Officers may remind Tellers of this guidance, provide them with a copy if necessary, and advise that it is an offence under electoral law for anyone to impede or interfere with any electors prior to their voting.</li> <li>• Tellers should be advised that if the interference persists the police will be called. The Presiding Officer should monitor the situation and report any further problems to the elections office.</li> <li>• Presiding Officers have the power to keep order in the station and may require any teller who refuses to carry out their instructions to be removed</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Campaigners</b></p> <p>To promote the candidate/party</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaigners should be allowed to put their messages to voters on polling day, <b>including in public spaces outside polling places</b></li> <li>• Polling station staff should not seek to discourage or remove campaigners who are otherwise peacefully communicating with voters, <b>as long as they are not within or impeding access to the grounds of the polling place.</b></li> <li>• Campaigners should keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter.</li> <li>• <b>They are not restricted on what they can wear</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They should not campaign within the grounds of the polling place</li> <li>• If they are located in the vicinity of the polling place – they should not approach voters as they <b>enter</b> the polling place</li> <li>• They should not impede, obstruct or intimidate voters on their way in/out of the polling station/place</li> <li>• No parking of vehicles used for campaign purposes, for example displaying election materials or using loudspeakers, immediately outside entrances to polling stations</li> <li>• If access is obstructed by campaigners, or campaign behaviour is intimidating to voters, Returning Officer’s staff , Presiding Officers and the Police will instruct campaigners to leave</li> </ul>
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