

**Tamil Referendum**

**In Great Britain**

30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010

**T**amil

**R**eferendum

**C**ommittee



**Handbook for  
polling station staff**

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# **1 Introduction**

This handbook is designed to assist polling station staff working at the Tamil Referendum in Great Britain. It describes the procedures to be followed and how to deal with any issues that may arise.

All polling station staff should read the contents carefully in advance of polling day.

References are made throughout this handbook to the Returning Officer. In practice, however, it is electoral administrators who are responsible for the day-to-day running of elections. Polling station staff will be given local contact details prior to polling day.

## **2 The election and the polling station team**

### **Tamil Referendum in Great Britain**

A referendum is a direct vote in which an entire electorate is asked to either accept or reject a particular proposal. The measure put to a vote is known as a resolution.

Voters have one vote, and should place a cross (X), in the box for which they wish to vote. If they vote for more than one choice, their ballot paper will not be counted.

### **Roles and responsibilities of the polling station team**

The role of polling station staff is to ensure that voters are able to cast their vote in secret, free from influence and in a calm atmosphere.

#### **Duties of the Presiding Officer**

Presiding Officers are responsible for the conduct of the ballot in the polling stations and they must have a sound knowledge of the voting procedures.

The Presiding Officer's main duties are to:

- comply with any instructions issued by the Returning Officer
- ensure the secrecy and security of the ballot
- organise the layout of the polling station and liaise, if required, with the key-holder of the building
- instruct and supervise the work of Poll Clerks
- open and close the polling station on time
- maintain order in the polling station
- be polite and professional in dealing with voters, agents and others entitled to be present in the polling station
- act impartially at all times
- be responsible and account for all the ballot papers, ballot box(es) and paperwork
- ensure that the proper procedure for voting is followed, including ensuring that the corresponding number list is marked correctly
- ensure that when a ballot paper is issued it bears the official mark and is issued correctly to eligible voters
- deal with special voting procedures as required

- manage the attendance of those entitled to be present in the polling station, e.g. agents, representatives of the Tamil Referendum Monitoring Body (TRMB) and accredited observers, and ensure that they do not interfere with the voting process
- monitor the activities of tellers outside polling places and ensure that they do not interfere with the voting process
- keep the polling place neat and tidy
- ensure that all signs and notices are clear, visible and remain in place throughout the day

Where there is more than one polling station in a building, the Returning Officer may designate one of the Presiding Officers to take an overall responsibility for the polling place.

### **Duties of the Poll Clerk**

Poll Clerks do not have the responsibilities of the Presiding Officer, but they must know all the procedures for voting and how to deal with problems.

The Poll Clerk's main duties are to:

- comply with the instructions of the Returning Officer and the Presiding Officer
- assist with the layout of the polling station and prepare for the opening of the poll
- be polite and professional in dealing with voters, agents and others entitled to be present in the polling station
- act impartially at all times
- check that electors are eligible to vote in the election
- check and mark the elector with election ink stain
- issue ballot papers to voters when directed by the Presiding Officer, ensuring they bear the official mark
- ensure that voters cast their votes in secret
- maintain the secrecy of the ballot at all times
- assist voters in a friendly and professional way
- help with any other polling station duties on the instruction of the Presiding Officer

## **3 Before polling day**

### **Training for polling station staff**

Polling station staff will need to be fully briefed about the election and cannot rely solely on past experience. Neither should polling station staff rely only on this handbook.

Returning Officers will have scheduled training or briefing sessions which they will expect polling station staff to attend.

### **Locating the polling station**

Returning Officers are appointed to conduct the election within an area. They decide how many polling stations are needed and how many Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks are required to staff them.

The Returning Officer will provide information on the location of the polling station when appointments are made. All members of the polling station team should know the location of the polling station before polling day.

The Returning Officer may ask the Presiding Officer to visit the polling station in advance of polling day. Where this is the case, they should arrange a mutually convenient time with the key-holder. At all times access to a polling station prior to polling day should only be with the permission of the key-holder. Be aware of the sensitivities around visiting local authority premises during working hours (particularly educational and social care establishments).

The key-holder will appreciate this and it will enable colleagues to discuss entrance, exit and layout for the polling stations. If possible, it may also be useful to meet up at the polling station with other members of the team before polling day to find out what facilities are available and to discuss what supplies and refreshments may be needed.

The key-holder should open the building no later than one hour prior to the polling station opening time. If the appropriate person will not be available to open the building, Presiding Officers should make arrangements to pick up the keys in advance of polling day. Presiding Officers should ensure that they have all the relevant keys, including any gate keys, and make sure that the key-holder's telephone number and address are readily to hand – just in case anything should go wrong.

Polling station staff should consider how long it will take to get to the polling station on the morning of the election and factor this into their plans for the day. Arriving in good time will

enable staff to ensure that the polling station is set up in an appropriate manner before the polls open.

Polling station staff should ensure that they take sufficient food and drink to last for the whole of polling day, as they will not be able to leave the polling place while the polls are open.

## **Contacting other members of the team**

Returning Officers may provide the Presiding Officer with the contact details for any Poll Clerk(s) on duty at the same polling station.

If so, the Presiding Officer should contact the Poll Clerk(s) before polling day to ensure that they know the location of the polling station and what time to arrive.

## **Delivery or collection of the ballot box(es)**

Unless the ballot box(es) are being delivered directly to the polling station, the Returning Officer will notify Presiding Officers of the arrangements for the collection of the ballot box(es) together with all relevant election materials. Where the ballot box(es) and other election materials are to be collected by the Presiding Officer and then kept at the Presiding Officer's home, great care must be taken to ensure their security at all times. In particular, no election materials should be left unattended in a car.

## **4 Polling day: before the poll opens**

### **Arriving at the polling station**

Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks must arrive at the polling station not later than one hour prior to the polling station opening time. Make sure that sufficient time is allowed to get to the polling station – do not be late. Polling station staff unavoidably detained or unable to attend the polling station must contact the Returning Officer immediately.

Presiding Officers must check that watches or clocks are accurate to ensure that the polling station is opened on time.

Presiding Officers should collect the Poll Clerk's appointment notification and check that they are aware of the requirements of secrecy.

### **What happens if the key-holder does not attend?**

First, try to make contact, either by telephone or by sending a member of the polling station team to their home. Polling station staff should also alert the Returning Officer to the situation. If access cannot be gained, contact the Returning Officer again for further instructions. If necessary, set up a temporary polling station.

There may be sufficient space at the entrance to the building, or even outside it. In exceptional situations, Presiding Officers can use the back of a car. Whatever the situation, voters must be able to vote in secret from the polling station opening time.

Keep any agents and observers in attendance informed of the arrangements you are making.

### **Checking supplies and materials**

Unless supplied by the Returning Officer directly to the polling station, the Presiding Officer will be responsible for the transportation of the ballot box(es) and election materials. The Returning Officer will advise Presiding Officers of the arrangements.

A checklist of polling station supplies will be provided with the ballot box(es) and other polling station materials. If, on checking the contents, any items of equipment or materials listed on the checklist are missing, contact the Returning Officer immediately. Materials should be checked on receipt. Take care when lifting the materials or equipment; they may be heavy.



It is good practice for the Presiding Officer to check the ballot papers are the correct ones for the ward and that there are no obvious errors in the numbering of the papers. The numbers on the back of the ballot papers should be checked against the ballot paper numbers printed on the corresponding number list. This should be checked before polling begins. The ballot papers should be issued in the same order as printed on the corresponding number list. If the numbers do not match, contact the Returning Officer immediately. Do not issue ballot papers on which there are errors or where the printing is unclear.

## **Standards of appearance**

The atmosphere in the polling station should be business-like and friendly, and polling station staff should dress accordingly. However, staff should consider their personal comfort.

Remember that polling station staff are representatives of the Returning Officer and should act impartially at all times. Any badges, slogans or colours that might bring the impartiality of the polling station staff into question must not be worn.

## **Polling station layout**

The first job on arrival will be to set up the polling station, unless this has already been done for you. The layout of the room is important. Poor layout could cause unnecessary confusion and access difficulties.

Caretakers may have arranged the room, particularly if the Returning Officer or Presiding Officer has given them instructions on the layout of the polling station a few days earlier.

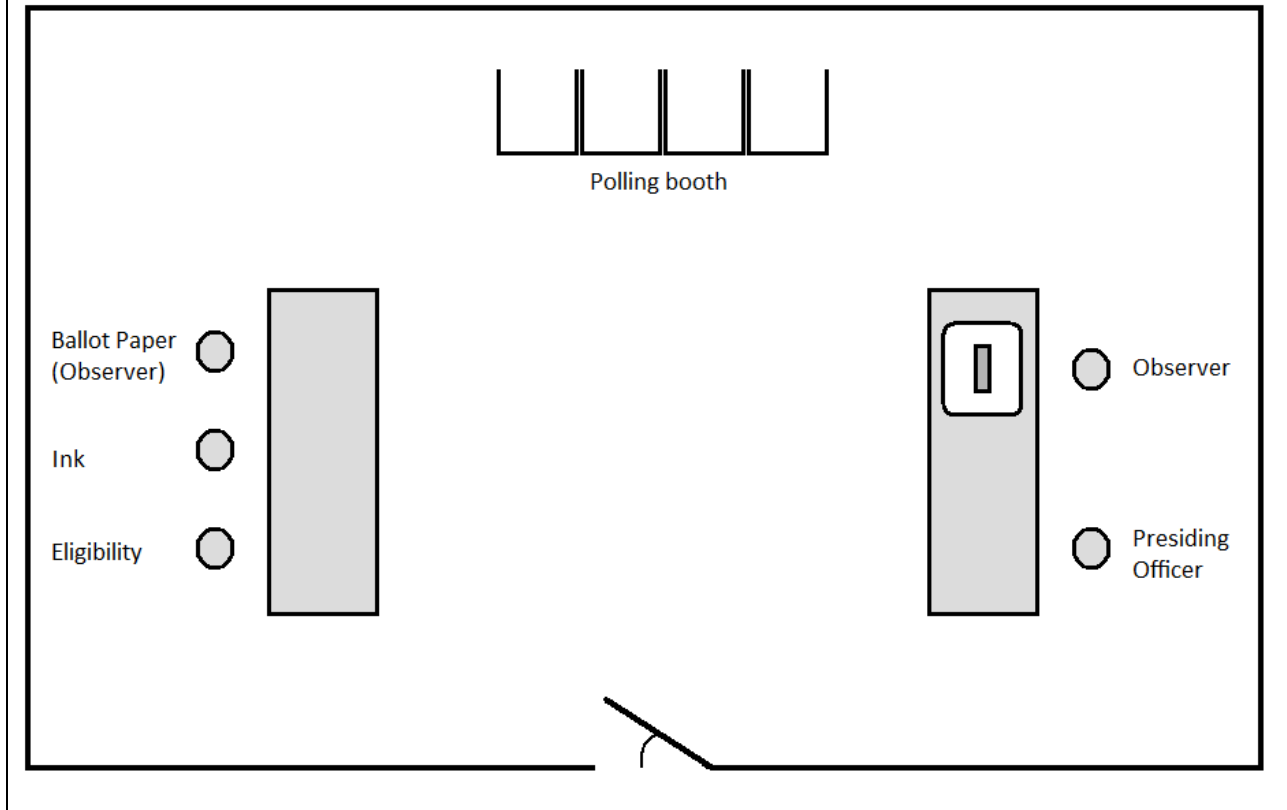
However, it is possible that the polling station staff will have to set up the room or rearrange the furniture. Some polling booths are heavy; be careful when erecting or moving them.

Examples of layouts for both a room where there is one polling station and a room where there is more than one polling station are set out below. These are shown as a guide and may have to be adapted to meet local circumstances.

The ballot box and polling booths should be arranged to ensure that they are accessible to voters, yet fully visible to polling station staff.

Presiding Officers should position themselves and the ballot box in a way that prevents any voter leaving the polling station without passing them.

## Example of a single polling station layout



The layout must work for the voter as well as for the polling station staff. In particular, the needs of voters with a range of disabilities must be considered. For example:

- Is the ballot box accessible for all voters?
- Can a wheelchair user easily get around the polling station and its surrounding areas?
- Is the low-level polling booth in the most appropriate position for wheelchair access?
- Are the notices accessible for all voters?
- Are the polling booths positioned to make the best use of the available light?
- Are the polling agents and observers positioned so that they do not interfere with the proceedings?

In all cases, make sure that polling booths are not placed so that people outside can see how voters are marking their ballot papers.

## Signs and notices

Think what each sign and notice is for when putting it up. Some signs and notices are directional while others provide information for voters. Ensure that they are positioned so that they can be read by all electors, including those in wheelchairs.

The notice 'Guidance for voters' in Tamil and English are to be displayed both inside and outside the polling station. The only notice to be displayed within the polling booth is the one that provides information on how to vote. This will read:

### **GUIDANCE FOR VOTERS**

1. When you are given ballot paper make sure they contain a unique identification number.
2. Take the ballot paper to one of the voting compartments and read them carefully. On the ballot paper mark a cross (X) in the box of the proposition you are voting for. Put no other mark on the ballot paper or your vote may not be counted.
3. Fold the ballot paper in two. Show the unique identification number to the observer, but do not let anyone see your vote. Put the ballot paper in the ballot box and leave the polling station.
4. If by mistake you spoil a ballot paper, show it to the presiding officer and ask for another one.

A large sample copy of the ballot paper must be displayed inside the polling station, ideally in a well-lit location where electors can easily see it before being issued with their ballot papers.

An enlarged hand-held copy of the ballot paper, marked 'sample', will also be supplied by the Returning Officer. This can be given to electors who are partially sighted to take into the polling booth for reference.

Walk the route the voter is expected to follow, checking all signs and notices.

Make sure that there are no party posters or other material that might be construed as supporting the views of a party displayed in or on the premises.

If any such materials are found, they must be removed or covered up.

## **Who may be present in the polling station?**

The law specifically provides for certain persons to be present in polling stations (in addition to polling station staff and voters). These are:

- the Returning Officer and staff
- police officers on duty at the polling place
- representatives of the TRMB
- accredited observers
- persons under the age of 18 who accompany voters
- companions of voters with disabilities

### **The Returning Officer and staff**

Returning Officers and their staff may visit during the course of the day. This may be to carry out duties such as delivering additional equipment, to carry out an inspection of the polling station.

### **Police officers on duty at the polling place**

Police officers may be present on duty in the polling station at any time, although it is the Presiding Officer's duty to maintain order. In many areas, it is now common practice to provide mobile policing support to polling stations.

### **Representatives of the Tamil Referendum Monitoring Body and accredited observers**

Representatives of the Tamil Electoral Monitoring Body and accredited observers are entitled to attend all polling station proceedings.

They do not need to give advance notification of where they intend to observe, but every observer must carry photographic identification and should not be allowed to observe proceedings without this.

The status of individuals seeking to gain entry to polling stations as observers can always be checked with the Returning Officer.

Both TRMB representatives and accredited observers agree to abide by a Code of conduct which includes an agreement that they will not interfere with any proceedings.

Presiding Officers may ask observers to leave the polling station if they are obstructing the conduct of the poll or if they fail to comply with the Code of conduct, and must record any such

incidents and notify the Returning Officer as soon as possible. Any observer removed for misconduct is not entitled to re-enter the polling station for the remainder of the poll.

In the case of overcrowding, Presiding Officers are entitled to limit the number of accredited observers (but not TRMB representatives) present inside a polling station for a specified time – such as for 30 or 60 minutes. However, it is important to note that no officer is entitled to bar all observers from the entire process, only to limit the number of observers present at any one time. Electoral observation is a legitimate and valuable part of the electoral process, and care should be taken not to hinder or obstruct the conduct of the observation.

Presiding Officers should record the details of any accredited observers or TRMB representatives who attend their polling station.

### **Persons under the age of 18 years who accompany voters**

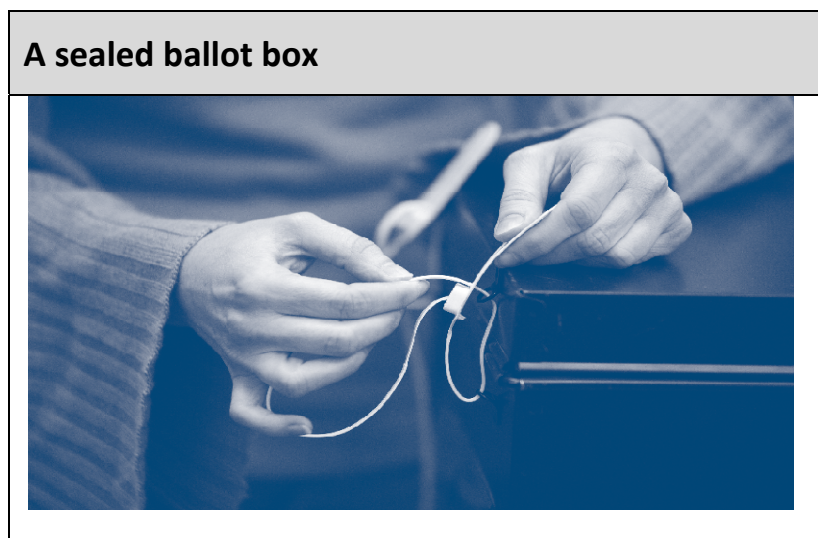
Persons under the age of 18 years may accompany voters into the polling station to observe the voting procedure. Presiding Officers can limit the number of those under 18 allowed in the polling station at any one time if they consider it to be impeding the proceedings in any way.

### **Companions of voters with disabilities**

Certain persons may accompany and assist voters with disabilities in placing their vote.

### **Sealing the ballot box(es)**

The Presiding Officer should close and seal the ballot box(es) a few minutes before the poll opening time and, after having shown to all present that it is empty. Only one ballot box should be in use at any one time, and additional boxes should be stored securely out of sight.



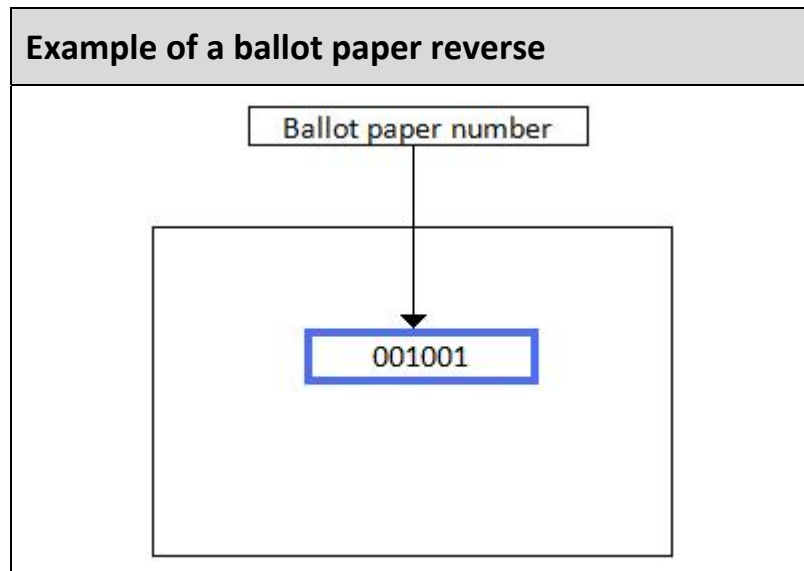
## Some last-minute checks

Just before the polling station is opened, take a few moments to double-check that everything is ready. Make sure that the ballot papers, corresponding number list and other official documentation are safely out of reach of voters.

Ballot papers may be provided loose leaf but will most likely be supplied in books where they can be detached as they are issued. Check that the ballot papers are in the correct numerical sequence and that the numbers match those pre-printed on the corresponding number list.

Ballot papers should be issued in order, commencing with the first number printed on the corresponding number list. This will save a lot of accounting problems at the close of poll.

Check that the ballot pens are fixed securely to the polling booth.



## 5 Polling day: opening and conducting the poll

### Opening the polling station

The polling station must open on time. Do not be late.

There may be a number of electors waiting for the polling station to open. Greet them and invite them inside as soon as the polling station opens.

However, do not issue ballot papers before the poll opening time, i.e. 09:00am on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2010 and 10:00am on Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010.

### Summary of the voting procedure

For the majority of voters who come to the polling station, the process for voting will be straightforward.

#### Stage one – checking the voter

- Greet electors and make sure that they are eligible to vote.
- Mark the electors by placing an election ink stain on the left hand index finger.



## Stage two – issuing the ballot paper

- Write the elector’s gender on the corresponding number list next to the ballot paper number to be issued.
- Hand the ballot paper to the voter.

Example of a corresponding number list

Corresponding Number List  
(To be used in polling stations at the Tamil Referendum)

Date of poll: \_\_\_\_\_

Polling Station: \_\_\_\_\_

Sheet No: \_\_\_\_\_

Ballot Paper Number	Gender	DOB	Town	Voting		
				-	Disability	Special
TRO00000001						
TRO00000002						
TRO00000003						
TRO00000004						
TRO00000005						
TRO00000006						
TRO00000007						
TRO00000008						
TRO00000009						
TRO00000010						
TRO00000011						
TRO00000012						
TRO00000013						
TRO00000014						
TRO00000015						
TRO00000016						
TRO00000017						
TRO00000018						
TRO00000019						
TRO00000020						
TRO00000021						
TRO00000022						
TRO00000023						
TRO00000024						
TRO00000025						

## Stage three – voting

- The voter marks the ballot paper in the privacy of the polling booth.
- Immediately prior to the voter placing the ballot paper in the ballot box, the Presiding Officer should ask the voter to show the ballot paper number and unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper.
- Say ‘goodbye’ and thank the voter as they leave the polling station.



## **Stage one – checking the voter**

In a polling station with a Presiding Officer and only two Poll Clerks, one person should be responsible for eligibility checking of electors, one person should be responsible for marking the left hand index finger with the election ink stain and distributing the ballot papers and the other should be responsible for ensuring that the elector gender is entered correctly in the corresponding number list. The Returning Officer may give guidance on how this work should be allocated, which must then be followed.

Presiding Officer may wish to oversee the process, dealing with voters and any special circumstances. In this case, the two Poll Clerks should share duties and could swap over every so often, on the instruction of the Presiding Officer.

Greet electors as they approach the table.

The Poll Clerk must confirm the elector's eligibility

### **Who can vote at a Tamil Referendum?**

The voter must reside in Great Britain (England, Scotland & Wales) and must be at least 18 years old. In addition they should meet one of the following criteria:

- a) Born in Sri Lanka and has Tamil as the mother tongue.
- b) Has a spouse who was born in Sri Lanka and has Tamil as the mother tongue.
- c) Descendants of (a) and (b) born outside of Sri Lanka.

## **Stage two – issuing the ballot paper**

Ballot papers are numbered and should match the numbers pre-printed on the corresponding number list. Ballot papers must be issued in strict numerical order commencing with the lowest number in the consignment. Otherwise, problems will be experienced at the close of poll when completing the ballot paper account.

If the elector is eligible to vote then the elector must be issued with a ballot paper.

The Poll Clerk (or Presiding Officer) with the ballot papers should:

- allocate the ballot paper
- ensure the ballot paper bears the ballot number
- Hand the ballot paper to the voter

The Poll Clerk (or Presiding Officer) with the corresponding number list must:

- write the elector's gender against the ballot paper number being issued on the corresponding number list

### **What happens if the ballot paper does not bear the unique identifying mark?**

All ballot papers must bear a unique identifying mark on the back. This can take a number of forms, e.g. a printed barcode or a sequence of letters and numbers.

The Returning Officer should notify Presiding Officers at the training session as to what form the unique identifying mark will take. If all the ballot papers are missing the unique identifying mark, the Presiding Officer should notify the Returning Officer immediately. If only some papers are missing the mark, the Presiding Officer should only issue those ballot papers that contain the unique identifying mark and should also notify the Returning Officer.

### **The secrecy of the ballot**

The completed corresponding number list and the used ballot papers are kept separately in an official secure location for a specified period of time before they are destroyed. The used ballot papers and the corresponding number list are only open to examination where there has been an allegation that an election offence has been committed. This is extremely rare.

There are two reasons for numbering the ballot papers:

- To allow the Returning Officer to know exactly how many have been issued to each Presiding Officer – if any false copies were introduced at the polling station or the count, they can be identified.
- To allow an independent body to investigate and audit. There are no other circumstances under which ballot papers can be looked at once they have been sealed in packages. For the above reasons, the ballot is secret and voters should be reassured that their vote will not be traced.

## **Stage three – voting**

Voters must mark the ballot paper in the privacy of the polling booth and then fold the ballot paper so that no one may see the way they have voted. Voters should show the ballot paper number on the back of the ballot paper to the Presiding Officer or Poll Clerk before placing it in the ballot box.

## **What is the procedure if a voter makes a mistake and spoils the ballot paper?**

Sometimes voters do make mistakes, e.g. by making a mark against the 'wrong' proposition. The Presiding Officer must take the spoiled ballot paper and write 'cancelled' on it and the corresponding number list before placing the spoiled ballot paper in the envelope provided. **Do not place the spoiled ballot paper in the ballot box.**

Issue the voter with a replacement ballot paper. Do not forget to write the elector gender, DOB and town of residence against the new ballot paper number on the corresponding number list. If a spoiled ballot paper has been placed in the ballot box, a replacement ballot paper cannot be issued.

At the close of poll, the Presiding Officer will count and then record the number of spoiled ballot papers on the ballot paper account.

## **Providing general assistance to voters**

Polling station staff have a duty to assist voters in the voting process. Remember they are customers: greet them with a smile and take into account any special needs they may have.

Never be off-hand, prejudiced or patronising. Do not become angry or agitated, even when under pressure.

Listen carefully if you are asked a question. If you are unable to answer a voter's questions or concerns, refer them to the Returning Officer.

When giving general assistance, be careful not to lead voters to cast their votes for a specific proposition or to offer an opinion.

There are a number of written instructions available for voters in the polling station. First of all, there are the instructions on the ballot paper itself.

There are also the 'Guidance for voters' posters and the notice displayed inside each polling booth. If any voter asks for assistance it may, in some circumstances, be helpful to read out these instructions to them.

The Presiding Officer should be familiar with what resources are available and provide these when appropriate.

Some voters may still find the instructions unclear. They may ask, for example, to have their favoured proposition pointed out to them. Some might ask where they should place their cross on the ballot paper. In these circumstances, the Presiding Officer should read out the resolution as it appears on the ballot paper.

## Maintenance of the polling place

The Presiding Officer should check the polling station regularly and ensure that voters have unimpeded access at all times.

- Check the signs and notices and replace or repair any that have been defaced or damaged.
- Ensure that the entrance to the polling station, including any ramps, is not blocked.
- Where temporary ramps are being used, ensure that they remain firmly in place.
- Instruct anyone who is campaigning in or around the polling station to stop.
- Make sure that there is sufficient light for voters in the polling booths.
- Make sure that the pens are still in the booths.
- Ensure that nothing has been left in the booths, including ballot papers or information on a resolution.
- Check the ballot box seals and lock.
- Give the ballot box a shake or use a ruler to push the ballot papers down if the box seems full.
- Keep the polling station clean, tidy and free from any hazards, including any passageways leading into the polling station.
- Remove any campaign literature that may have been left in the polling station.

## **6 The close of poll**

### **Procedures**

- Polling must close on time.
- Make sure that the doors to the polling station are closed at exactly at the 8:00pm on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2010 and 6:00pm on Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010.
- Anyone who has been issued with a ballot paper by the closing time must be allowed to vote.
- No one may be issued with a ballot paper after the closing time even if they are inside the polling station and waiting to receive their ballot paper.

The following are permitted to be present at the close of poll:

- the Returning Officer and staff
- police officers on duty in the polling station
- representatives of the TRMB
- accredited observers

After the close of poll, the Presiding Officer must seal the slot of the ballot box(es).

The Poll Clerks, in the meantime, should take down all the signs and tidy the room. If instructed to do so, polling station staff may also be required to dismantle the polling station furniture and return the room to its original state. Take care when moving heavy items.

Observers are also entitled to be present when the paperwork is being completed and when the various packets of documents are sealed.

### **Completing the paperwork**

The Presiding Officer must complete all official forms. Take care when filling in the paperwork. It is far more important to be accurate than fast.

It is quite possible that some of the official forms have not been needed during the day; no ballot papers may have been spoilt. If this is the case, still complete the forms, entering a 'nil' return.

#### **Checklist of official forms to be completed by the Presiding Officer**

- the ballot paper account
- list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions

Completion of the paperwork is easier if all the official forms are laid out with their corresponding envelopes. The front of each of the official envelopes lists the contents. Complete as many of the forms and envelopes as possible during the day, well before the close of poll. Remember to complete all the paperwork even if it seems that there is nothing to report.

### **Checklist of official packets and envelopes and their contents**

- the ballot paper account – keep this with the ballot box(es).
- unused and spoilt ballot papers – if they do not fit, wrap the envelope around them and secure with string or elastic bands.
- the completed corresponding number list(s).
- the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions,.
- The list of voters who have made self-declaration eligibility and the self-declaration forms.

## **The ballot paper account**

The ballot paper account is the most important of all the paperwork and so should be filled in first and with care.

The ballot paper account reconciles the number of ballot papers dealt with by the Presiding Officer. Remember to count the number of ballot papers issued according to the corresponding number list and include this on the ballot paper account. The form relies on the serial numbering of the ballot papers and this is why it is so important to issue ballot papers in numerical order as pre-printed on the corresponding number list rather than randomly during the day.

In many instances the first section of the ballot paper account will have been completed in advance by the Returning Officer. It is the Presiding Officer's duty to complete the remainder of the form.

The ballot paper account must be delivered with the ballot box(es) and other documentation to the count centre as directed – do not lose them or place them by mistake in another envelope or with other election materials as this may cause problems and delays at the verification.

## **The rest of the paperwork**

Presiding Officers should then attend to the rest of the paperwork. Complete and sign the other forms on the checklist. Do not forget to fill in the forms with 'nil' returns if they have not been needed during the day.

## Packing materials at the polling station

In order, pack the materials into their official envelopes and packets as shown on the checklist.

The corresponding number list and the unused ballot papers must be placed separately in the appropriate envelopes.

A number of sacks or bags will have been supplied to transport the paperwork and other election materials to the count centre. Make sure that the items go in the appropriate sacks or bags.

## Transporting election materials to the count centre

The ballot box(es), ballot paper account, sacks or bags containing the official envelopes, and other election stationery and materials must be transported to the count centre.

The Returning Officer will have given instructions regarding the transportation of ballot box(es) to the count centre. You should familiarise yourself with the arrangements.

If the items are to be delivered to the count centre by the Presiding Officer, the Returning Officer will have given instructions on the location of the count centre and the entrance to be used. One of the Poll Clerks may be asked to assist the Presiding Officer if there is too much for one person to carry. **Go to the count centre directly and without delay.** Presiding Officers should contact the Returning Officer immediately if any problems occur that may cause a delay in getting to the count centre.

Sometimes, other arrangements may be made for the delivery of ballot boxes and election materials to the count centre. It may be that the Returning Officer arranges for the materials to be collected from the polling station and taken to the count centre. **Do not leave the ballot boxes unattended at any time.**

Finally, before leaving the polling station, make sure that any waste material is disposed of appropriately and the premises are left tidy. Return any keys to the appropriate person.

## Appendix 1: Polling Station Checklist

Checked

### Entrance, exit and approaches

Is the approach signage clear and are electors able to easily identify where the polling station is?

### Official notices

Is the 'Guidance for Voters' notice displayed and accessible to all voters?

### Polling booths

Are they correctly erected and in such a position so as to make best use of the lights and natural light?

Can the Presiding Officer and Poll Clerks observe them clearly?

Is there a notice displayed in each polling booth providing information on how to vote?

Are the blue pens in each booth available for use?

Is the string attached to the pencils long enough for the size of ballot papers and to accommodate both right- and left-handed voters?

### Ballot box(es)

Is the ballot box placed immediately adjacent to the Presiding Officer?

Are all the ballot boxes correctly sealed?

### Ballot papers

Are the ballot papers the correct ones for the polling station and are they numbered correctly?