



The Scottish Independence Referendum 18 September 2014

**Information for Campaigners on the
referendum process**

Translations and other formats

This document can be made available in certain alternative formats. For further information, contact Ros Wilson at ros.wilson@edinburgh.gov.uk, Telephone 0131 469 3820.

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[Office of the Chief Counting Officer](#)

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1 Introduction

This guidance has been prepared by the Chief Counting Officer (CCO) to provide useful information for campaigners on the conduct of the Scottish Independence Referendum to be held on **Thursday 18 September 2014**. This information will be supplemented by local information provided to referendum agents and campaigners by Counting Officers (COs) and their teams.

The Chief Counting Officer's vision for the conduct of the referendum is that:-

- there should be no barriers to any voter taking part
- voters must have the same experience wherever they are in Scotland
- the referendum will be administered efficiently; and
- the referendum will produce results that are accepted as accurate

As campaigners, you play an active role in ensuring that the referendum is conducted fairly and transparently and in accordance with the above principles. The information in this document will help you fulfil this role, but does not stand in isolation. It must be read alongside the specific guidance for campaigners issued by the Electoral Commission which will help you to understand your particular responsibilities and legal obligations. Further information can be found in [Referendum campaign dos and don'ts](#) which has been prepared jointly by the Chief Counting Officer and the Electoral Commission.

You can see the full guidance suite from the Commission [here](#)

In particular, it is essential that all campaigners follow the Commission's [Code of conduct for campaigners: postal voting, proxy voting and polling stations](#) which helps them avoid situations where their honesty or integrity could be questioned. You need to ensure that anyone campaigning on your behalf is aware of their legal obligations in this regard.

The Electoral Commission also produces a campaigner newsletter to which you can subscribe free of charge.

To subscribe, contact scotreferendum@electoralcommission.org.uk

2 Who's who at the referendum

The Chief Counting Officer

The Chief Counting Officer (CCO) for the referendum is Mary Pitcaithly OBE, Convener of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland and Chief Executive and Counting Officer of Falkirk Council. She is responsible for ensuring the proper and effective conduct of the referendum nationally, including the conduct of the poll and the counting of the votes. She will collate the total number of votes cast in all 32 Scottish councils and will declare the national result.

The CCO has appointed Sue Bruce, Chief Executive and Counting Officer of Edinburgh City Council as the Deputy Chief Counting Officer (DCCO).

Counting Officers

The referendum will be organised on the basis of local authority boundaries. The CCO has appointed a Counting Officer (CO) for each council in Scotland. The CO is responsible for running the poll and the count in their council area.

Their duties include managing the polling places, employing and training polling staff, printing the ballot papers to be used locally, issuing poll cards and postal votes to voters, opening and processing postal votes, organising and staffing the local count and declaring the local totals.

Electoral Registration Officers

Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) are responsible for preparing, maintaining and updating the electoral register and the lists of postal and proxy voters. For the referendum, they have the responsibility of preparing the register of young voters and merging this with the electoral register to form the polling list which will be used in polling stations on the day of the referendum.

The Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission is a national organisation which acts as the independent elections watchdog and regulates party and campaign finance. The Commission gave advice to the Scottish Government on how the referendum question should be worded.

At the referendum, the Commission is responsible for

- giving advice to the Chief Counting Officer
- registering campaigners
- regulating campaign spending and donations
- designating lead campaign groups
- increasing public awareness about the referendum and how to take part in it; and
- reporting on the conduct of the referendum.

You can find out more about the Commission's role in the referendum and access its complete range of information for campaigners [here](#).

Campaigners, permitted participants and designated organisations

Campaigners

Campaigners play a key role in the referendum. Anyone can campaign but if you intend to spend more than £10,000 in support of your campaign during the referendum period which starts on 30 May 2014, you must register with the Electoral Commission unless you are working together with a designated organisation as set out in the Commission's guidance.

Permitted participants

Registered campaigners are called permitted participants and are listed on a register maintained by the Commission.

Permitted participants have a higher spending limit than non-registered campaigners and have the right to appoint referendum agents, to obtain copies of the full, latest version of the electoral register on providing a [written request to the local ERO](#) and to nominate representatives to attend postal vote opening sessions, polling stations and the verification and counting of votes.

Designated Organisations

Permitted participants had the opportunity to apply to the Commission to be appointed as the designated organisation - the lead campaigner - for each of the two outcomes in the referendum. The application period closed on 16 April 2014.

Yes Scotland and Better Together were designated as the lead campaigners for the respective outcomes. These two campaign organisations will now have access to specific benefits set out in law during the regulated 'referendum period' which begins on 30 May.

These include a spending limit of £1.5 million, a free delivery of campaign material to voters, referendum broadcasts and the [use of public rooms](#).

The responsible person

Permitted participants must register someone as a “responsible person”. This person will be responsible for making sure that the permitted participant complies with rules on spending and donations under the [Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013](#).

Referendum agents

Permitted participants can appoint a referendum agent in each council area to liaise with the local Counting Officer and ERO on their behalf. Your local Counting Officer will be able to supply you with a form of appointment for a referendum agent. You are not obliged to use a form for this purpose. The appointment must, however, be made in writing by the responsible person mentioned above and must provide the name and address of the permitted participant and of the agent. This written appointment must be delivered to the appropriate Counting Officer by the deadline **of noon on Thursday 14 August 2014**.

Counting Officers must publish a notice of appointment of referendum agents as soon as they can after the deadline for their appointment.

If you revoke the appointment of your referendum agent or if your agent dies, and if you have already formally appointed polling or counting agents, you must appoint another referendum agent as soon as practicable by advising the relevant Counting Officer in writing of the name and address of the permitted participant and of the replacement agent.

If changes are made to these appointments, the Counting Officer will amend the notice of appointment of referendum agents accordingly.

3 Key dates and legal deadlines

To fulfil your role fully, you will need to be aware of the key dates and legal deadlines that apply at the referendum. These include

Appointment of local referendum agents	by noon on Thursday 14 August 2014
Voter registration	midnight on Tuesday 2 September 2014
Applications for postal votes	5pm on Wednesday 3 September 2014
Applications for ordinary proxy votes	5pm on Wednesday 3 September 2014
Applications to change the method by which people vote	5pm on Wednesday 3 September 2014
Appointment of postal ballot agents	by time set to start opening session
Appointment of polling and counting agents	midnight on Thursday 11 September 2014
Applications for emergency proxies	by 5pm on referendum day - 18 September 2014 ¹

¹ Applications for emergency proxies which are received by Wednesday 10 September 2014 do not require attestation (counter-signature by an appropriate person).

However, applications received on or after Thursday 11 September will require attestation. See Section 5 page 9 – Emergency proxies

4 Electoral Registration

The register of electors

The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) for each council area maintains the electoral register for that area. The deadline for registering to vote at the referendum is midnight on Tuesday 2 September 2014. Application forms for registration and related information can be obtained from your local ERO or from www.aboutmyvote.co.uk.

The register of young voters

The Scottish Independence Referendum is the first national electoral event at which young people aged 16 and 17 will be able to vote. This means that special arrangements have had to be made to make sure that all 16 and 17 year olds are registered.

Some young voters already appear on the electoral register. They are called “attainers”, which means they will attain voting age during the life of the register. Young voters who are not already listed as attainers will appear on the register of young voters prepared by the ERO for each council area. To protect the identities of the young people on the register, it is completely confidential and is not available for viewing, supply or purchase.

The Polling List

For the referendum, the ERO will merge the register of electors with the register of young voters and this will form the polling list which will be used in polling stations. In contrast to the electoral register, there will be no dates of birth against certain entries as all the voters appearing on the register will be of voting age. The full polling list will be made available only to Counting Officers for use at the referendum. The designated organisations will be eligible to receive one edited copy of the polling list with voter numbers and anonymous entries removed.

Obtaining copies of the electoral register

Permitted participants are eligible to receive one free copy of the full, latest version of the local government electoral register, the lists of people voting by post or by proxy and any updates to the register or to those lists. To obtain these documents, they must make separate written application to each ERO specifying which documents they require, whether they also require any updates and whether they require a printed copy or a version in data form. The ERO will be able to supply a form for this purpose or you can find a form to make your request(s) [here](#). The ERO will check applications against the list of permitted participants to confirm eligibility. You should note that, while permitted participants are entitled to receive the local government electoral register, they are not entitled to receive the register of young voters which is confidential to the Electoral Registration Office.

Permitted participants are not eligible to receive copies of the edited polling list unless they have been appointed as designated organisations.

Obtaining copies of the edited polling list

Only the designated organisations are eligible also to receive one free copy of the edited polling list, with voter numbers and anonymous entries removed. To obtain the documents, they must make separate written application to each ERO as above. The ERO will be able to provide them with a form for this purpose or you can find a form to make your request(s) [here](#).

Restrictions on the use of registration documents

Permitted participants and designated organisations must only use the registration documents with which they have been supplied for:-

- purposes in connection with their referendum campaign; and
- purposes of complying with the controls on donations and regulated transactions set out in [Schedule 4 of the Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013](#)

Persons employed by them or assisting them in their campaign must not

- supply a copy of the registration documents to any person
- disclose any information in them that is not also contained in the edited version of the register of local government electors, or
- make use of any such information other than in the context of the campaign.

Destruction of registration documents

All registration documents provided to permitted participants and designated organisations must be securely destroyed no later than one year after the date of the referendum unless otherwise ordered by the Court of Session or a sheriff principal.

Failure to destroy the documents within this timescale is a criminal offence punishable on conviction by a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale (currently £5,000).

5 Campaign Publicity

Councils are responsible for agreeing the rules on outdoor display of campaign materials in their areas, particularly the display of materials on street furniture such as lampposts and road signs. This means that the rules vary from one council area to another. It is possible that in some areas no posters will be allowed, while other councils will have specific instructions on where posters may be permitted, the earliest date they can be posted and how soon they must be taken down after the referendum is over. The referendum office for each council area will be able to provide you with details of the local rules.

All campaign material, including electronic material, must bear an imprint showing who is responsible for its production. Printed material must show the name and address of the printer and the promoter. If the promoter is acting on behalf of a group or organisation, the materials must also include its name and address. On documents like posters, which are single-sided, the imprint must appear on the front, while on multi-sided documents it must appear on the first or last page. Electronic material such as websites and emails should include the name and address of the promoter and of any organisation on whose behalf it has been produced.

You must not produce any campaign material that looks like the poll cards sent to voters by Counting Officers and you must not pay people to display campaign advertising material unless they display adverts as part of their normal business.

For more detailed information on use of imprints, see [Referendum campaign dos and don'ts](#) which has been prepared jointly by the Chief Counting Officer and the Electoral Commission.

6 Use of public meeting rooms

Persons authorised by the designated organisations are entitled to use publicly maintained accommodation for public meetings in support of their campaigns during the period of 28 days prior to the referendum.

Use of the accommodation is to be free of charge except for expenses involved in preparing, heating, lighting and servicing the accommodation or in rectifying any damage done to it.

Accommodation to be used includes rooms in schools maintained by education authorities as well as meeting rooms in Scotland which are maintained by the Scottish Ministers, any other part of the Scottish administration and any Scottish public authority with mixed functions or no reserved functions (within the meaning of [the Scotland Act 1998](#)).

The term “meeting room” is defined as any room which it is the practice to let for public meetings and the term “room” is defined as including a hall, gallery or gymnasium.

The right to use these rooms can only be exercised at reasonable times and on reasonable notice. Use of school premises must not interfere with the hours during which they are used for educational purposes and the use of meeting rooms must not interfere with the purposes of the person maintaining them or with any prior agreement for letting them.

Any arrangement for the use of a room in school premises is to be made with the relevant education authority and any question as to the rooms which can be used, the times when they can be used or the notice which is reasonable are to be determined by the Scottish Ministers.

Any person authorised by a designated organisation is entitled to inspect any council’s lists of its premises covered by this requirement or to copy such a list in terms of [paragraph 6 of Schedule 5 of the Representation of the People Act 1983](#).

7 Absent voters

Absent voters are voters who have opted to cast their votes by post or by proxy (by nominating another person to vote on their behalf).

In all their dealings with absent votes, campaigners must ensure that they and their agents follow the Commission's [Code of conduct for campaigners: postal voting, proxy voting and polling stations](#) to help them understand the need for security and avoid any situations where their honesty or integrity could be questioned.

Postal voters

Any registered elector is eligible to vote by post. To do so, they need to complete an application form obtained from their local ERO or by downloading it from www.aboutmyvote.co.uk and returning it to the ERO by the deadline of **5pm on Wednesday 3 September 2014**.

Permitted participants are entitled to receive lists of postal voters and updates to those lists from the ERO. This is dealt with in Section 4 above ([Obtaining copies of the electoral register](#)).

Issue and opening of postal votes

Counting Officers are responsible for issuing postal votes for their council area and for receiving, storing and opening and checking them. Campaigners are not permitted to observe the issue of postal votes.

Referendum agents are entitled to attend postal vote opening sessions or to appoint someone to attend in their place. They can also appoint one or more postal ballot agents to attend. The Counting Officer must give at least 48 hours' notice of the time at which each of the opening sessions will take place and will specify how many postal ballot agents each referendum agent may appoint to attend each session. This will be the same number for each referendum agent.

Referendum agents must then notify Counting Officers of the names of those who will be attending the opening sessions. Counting Officers may be able to provide you with a form to use for this purpose, but you do not need to use an official form. It is sufficient to provide written notice of the appointment(s) no later than the time fixed for the opening session.

All persons attending opening sessions will be notified of the requirement of secrecy and will have to sign to confirm they have been so notified. Referendum agents and their postal ballot agents present at the opening of postal votes must observe the requirement of secrecy and must follow the instructions of the Counting Officer. Failure to observe the requirement of secrecy is a criminal offence punishable by law and liable on summary

conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to a fine of up to level 5 on the standard scale – currently £5,000 – or both.

At the opening sessions, the Counting Officer's team will open the postal voters' envelopes, will make the appropriate checks and will verify the signatures and dates of birth on the postal voting statements against computerised records prepared by the ERO. The ballot envelopes will be opened and the number of papers returned will be counted. However postal ballot agents must be aware that the papers will be handled face down and that they will not be able to see how people have voted. Once the postal ballots have been opened and checked, they will be resealed in a ballot box which will be securely stored and delivered to the Count centre on the night of the referendum.

The last opening of postal votes on referendum day will be after the close of poll, to deal with any postal votes handed in at polling stations and is likely to be at the Count Centre. Counting Officers will notify referendum agents accordingly.

Proxy voters

Voters who cannot attend the polling place in person on referendum day and for whom postal voting is unsuitable can apply to the ERO to appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf. They will need to supply a reason for their application.

The deadline for applying for an ordinary proxy vote is **5pm on Wednesday 3 September 2014**.

Proxies must themselves be entitled to vote in the referendum. A person is not entitled to vote as proxy in the referendum on behalf of more than two others of whom that person is not the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild.

If the voter who has appointed the proxy arrives at the polling station to vote before the proxy has voted, they may do so. If the proxy then appears to vote on their behalf, they cannot do so. If, however, the proxy has opted to vote by post, the voter is unable to vote in person at the polling station.

Emergency Proxies

For the referendum, the law allows for emergency proxies to be appointed after the cut-off date of **5pm on 3 September 2014** where the applicant cannot reasonably be expected to vote in person at the polling station allotted because:

- of a disability suffered after that date
- of an unavoidable absence from the voter's qualifying address on referendum day - an absence of which the voter only became aware after the cut-off date; or
- of reasons relating to the voter's occupation, service or employment, of which the voter only became aware after the cut-off date.

In these cases, an emergency proxy vote may be granted by the ERO up until **5pm on the day of the referendum - 18 September 2014.**

- Attestation (i.e. a signature provided in confirmation of the applicant's circumstances) is not required unless the application is made on or after the fifth day before the date of the referendum (**Thursday 11 September 2014**) in which case the application must be attested by an appropriate person, namely:
 - where the applicant is an employee, by the applicant's employer or by another employee to whom the employer has delegated this function: or
 - where the applicant is not an employee, by a person who is aged 18 or over, knows the applicant and is not related to them.

8 The poll

Hours of poll

The poll will take place between the hours of **7am and 10pm on Thursday 18 September 2014.**

Polling Places and Polling Stations

A polling place is the building in which voting takes place. A polling station is the particular location within the polling place where voters cast their votes. In this way, a polling place can be made up of one or more polling stations.

Each council is responsible for designating the polling places in its area. Counting Officers are responsible for deciding how many polling stations are needed in each polling place and for allocating the voters to those stations.

Your local referendum office will be able to supply you with a list of polling places for the referendum. This will also appear as part of the Notice of Referendum which will be posted throughout Scotland on **Wednesday 13 August 2014.**

Polling Agents

Referendum agents are entitled to appoint polling agents to attend the polling places and stations on referendum day. Counting Officers will be able to provide you with a form for this purpose. However, you do not have to use a form, so long as you provide the Counting Officer with notice in writing

- of the name and address of each person appointed and
- of which polling stations the agent may attend

by the deadline of midnight on **Thursday 11 September 2014.**

It is suggested, for maximum flexibility, that you appoint each polling agent to attend at all or any polling stations in the council area.

The main purpose of polling agents is to detect personation (the offence of impersonating a voter for the purposes of illegally obtaining a vote). This being the case, polling agents are permitted to remain in the polling station during the poll. However, they must not compromise the secrecy of voting or impede voters in casting their votes.

If they are marking the names of voters off on a copy of the electoral register/polling list while they are in the polling station, they are not allowed to remove that register/list from the polling station during the hours of the poll.

Your polling agents must have acknowledged receipt of the Requirement of Secrecy and must adhere to the Commission's [Code of conduct for campaigners: postal voting, proxy voting and polling stations](#). They should follow the instructions of the Presiding Officers in charge of the stations.

Tellers

You may appoint tellers to act on your behalf at the poll. Tellers are volunteers for campaigners who stand outside polling places and record the electoral numbers of voters who have voted. They can play a useful role by identifying electors who have not yet voted and by relaying this information to you. Your supporters, in turn, can then try to persuade the people who have not yet voted to go to the poll, which may help to increase turnout.

You should note, however, that tellers have no legal status and that voters are under no obligation to give them any information. Further information on tellers can be found in [Dos and Don'ts for Campaigners](#) prepared by the CCO and the Commission. You should make sure that every teller acting on your behalf receives a copy of the guidance for tellers and is aware of its contents.

You should note that policy on the activity of tellers may vary from council to council, so you should follow any instructions issued by the Counting Officer in this regard.

When the polls open

Referendum and polling agents are entitled to be present in the polling station shortly before the opening of the poll at 7am to witness the sealing of the empty ballot box by the Presiding Officer. Agents are not permitted to add their seals to the box at this stage.

At the close of poll

Referendum and polling agents are entitled to be present in polling stations at the close of poll to witness the sealing of the ballot box by the Presiding Officer and, if they so wish, to affix their seals to the ballot box.

9 The count

There will be a separate count event for each council area. Each council's totals (the total number of votes cast for each outcome and the total number of votes rejected) will be forwarded to the Chief Counting Officer at the national count collation centre at Ingliston in Edinburgh. The CCO will collate the totals from all 32 councils to produce a single national result.

Referendum agents are entitled to appoint counting agents to attend the verification and counting of the votes locally. The Counting Officer will fix the maximum number of counting agents that each referendum agent can appoint, taking into consideration the capacity of the count venue. The maximum number allowed to each referendum agent must be the same.

Counting Officers will be able to provide you with a form to nominate your counting agents. However, you do not have to use a form, so long as you provide the Counting Officer with notice in writing of the name and address of each person appointed by the deadline of **Thursday 11 September 2014**.

You must ensure all persons attending the count on your behalf have acknowledged receipt of the requirement of secrecy. You should also make them aware that it is an offence to photograph ballot papers. You must ensure that your agents follow the instructions of the Counting Officer in relation to the use of mobile phones, tablets and photographic devices at the count.

The Count is made up of three distinct processes – the opening and verification of the last postal votes, the verification of votes cast at polling stations and the count itself.

Processing Postal Votes

The remaining unopened postal votes will be processed and verified and the numbers in the postal ballot boxes confirmed before these are included with the votes to be counted.

You should note that postal votes may be handed in at polling stations up until the close of poll and some will accordingly be delivered at the same time as the ballot boxes. In addition Royal Mail will sweep the main sorting offices for undelivered postal votes and deliver them to the relevant Counting Officer before the start of the count. As a result, the postal vote opening process will continue throughout the verification period until all the postal votes have been processed.

Verification of votes cast at polling stations

There are two stages to this verification. In the first stage, the ballot paper accounts received from polling stations will be checked against the number of ballot papers returned as unused, the number of spoilt votes and the tendered votes list for each station. Then, in

the second stage of verification, the ballot boxes will be emptied and the number of ballot papers in each box compared against the number recorded in the ballot paper account.

The total number of processed postal votes will be added to the number of verified votes from the ballot boxes to obtain the total number of votes cast in the council area.

When the verification is complete, the Counting Officer will notify the Chief Counting Officer of the number of ballot papers verified for counting. Referendum agents are entitled to receive a copy of a verification statement from their local Counting Officer which will detail the number of ballot papers returned for each box and the total number of papers to be entered into the count.

The Count

During the count, the ballot papers are separated according to the outcome the voter has selected. At this stage, the counting assistants will pick out any ballot papers which are doubtful and which will require adjudication by the Counting Officer or authorised Depute.

Counting agents will have the opportunity to see any ballot papers that the Counting Officer or Depute intends to reject. Rejected papers are stamped as “Rejected”. The Counting Officer’s decision is final, but if a counting agent objects to the rejection of any paper, the Counting Officer will stamp it as “Rejection Objected To”.

At the end of counting, the Counting Officer will transmit the provisional totals for the area to the Chief Counting Officer in Edinburgh. The Chief Counting Officer will authorise the Counting Officer to consult with the referendum agents. It is at this stage that referendum agents could request a recount.

Recounts

Counting Officers may have the votes re-counted if they consider it appropriate to do so. While they will consider any request for a recount they may refuse if, in their opinion, the request is unreasonable.

It should be emphasised that if campaigners have a doubt about the count they need to make their concerns clear at the local count as each local count will be dealt with as a separate event. There is no provision for a national recount.

The Chief Counting Officer may direct a recount in any Council area if, in her opinion, the accuracy of the result as reported to her is in question, for example, by reason of a discrepancy between the verification and count figures which has not been satisfactorily explained.

Certification and declaration

Once the count (including any recount) is complete, the Counting Officer will seek the Chief Counting Officer’s approval to certify the local totals and to make the declaration. Once the

certification and declaration have been made, the Counting Officer will permit the counting teams to leave and will close the count centre.

The national result

The Chief Counting Officer will collate the totals from the 32 councils and will calculate the national result. She will then make the national declaration.

10 After the declaration of the result

Once the count is over and the local declaration is complete, the Counting Officer will arrange for the referendum materials to be delivered to the Proper Officer of the council for storage.

Retention and public inspection of papers

The Proper Officer of each council must retain the referendum papers which have been transferred for a period of one year. Those papers, except for ballot papers, completed corresponding number lists and certificates of employment, will be made available for public inspection at such times and in such a way that the Proper Officer determines.

Persons inspecting the marked copies of the Polling List must not make copies nor record any details contained in them except by hand-written notes. Any person who makes a copy of a marked copy of the Polling List or records anything contained in it other than by hand-written notes commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale (currently £5,000).

The Chief Counting Officer must retain the certifications of results both at a local and national level for a period of one year and must make them available for inspection at such times and in such a manner as she may determine.

Provision of marked copies of the polling and other lists

Designated Organisations may request Counting Officers to supply them with:-

- the marked copy of the polling list
- the marked copy of any notice setting out an alteration in the register of electors issued under Section 13B (3B) or (3D) or 13BB(4) of the 1983 Act
- the marked copy of the postal voters list
- the marked copy of the list of proxies, and
- the marked copy of the proxy postal voters list

These requests must

- be made in writing
- specify the documents requested
- state whether a printed copy or a copy in data form is required; and
- state the purposes for which the documents will be used and why the supply of the unmarked copies would not be adequate for those purposes

Before supplying the documents, Counting Officers must be satisfied that the organisation needs to see the marks on the documents to achieve the purpose for which they are requested and must have received payment of the appropriate fee.

The fee for these copies is £10 plus

- (a) for a copy in printed form, £2 for each 1,000 entries (or remaining part of 1,000 entries) covered by the request,
- (b) for a copy in data form, £1 for each 1,000 entries (or remaining part of 1,000 entries) covered by the request.

You should note that Counting Officers are legally obliged to supply this data only in the form in which they hold it and a request for a copy of the whole or the same part of a document in both printed and data form may be treated as two separate requests.

Challenging the result of the referendum

The number of ballot papers counted or votes cast at the referendum, as certified by a Counting Officer or the Chief Counting Officer, can only be challenged by a petition for judicial review.

The applicant would have to demonstrate to the Court of Session that he/she has a sufficient interest in the outcome of the referendum and it is for the court to determine whether the petitioner has this sufficient interest.

The petition for judicial review must be lodged within six weeks of the final certification of the result by the Counting Officer or Chief Counting Officer (depending whose certification is being challenged).

The petitioner would have to challenge a particular decision, act or omission that he/she claims was unlawful and led to an incorrect certification.

If the Court of Session rules that a particular decision, act or omission was unlawful, it may order the certification to be set aside, or, in some cases, the Court may declare the correct result.

Submitting accounts to the Electoral Commission

Where permitted participants have spent £250,000 or under on their campaign, they must submit their completed accounts to the Electoral Commission by **Thursday 18 December 2014**.

Permitted participants who have spent more than £250,000 must submit their audited accounts by **Wednesday 18 March 2015**.

The Commission will retain these expense returns for public inspection for a period of two years from the date of receipt.

11 Key contacts

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