

Appendix 3

Complaints received from voters following elections in May 2010

Written complaints

By Letter (1)

1. A letter was received from a voter who was unable to vote because she was not included in the register of electors. Her name had been removed during the annual canvass because the annual canvass registration form returned from the property indicated that the property was boarded up and empty. The voter had moved into long-term temporary accommodation because of a problem with the residence but had not re-registered at the new address, nor advised the registration officer of the situation. The voter has now applied to be added to the register and the application has been processed.

By email (3)

1. A voter complained that because the polling station for his area is in a council owned building, he is unable to vote because of an injunction against him entering council premises. He has been advised repeatedly that he can enter the polling station to vote but must leave afterwards and is aware of the facility for postal voting.
2. An overseas voter currently registered to vote by post, complained that he was refused a proxy vote and that this would mean that he would not be able to vote since his postal vote would not arrive in time. The statutory deadline to cancel an existing postal vote at this election was 20 April and the deadline to apply for a proxy vote was 27 April. Unfortunately the deadline for cancelling the postal vote was not pointed out to him at the time this office sent his proxy vote application form. His application was received after the deadline to cancel his postal vote and so could not be granted since his postal vote could not now be cancelled. His postal vote was despatched by airmail on 26 April and was received and returned to the Returning Officer before the close of poll. His application for proxy voting has been granted for future elections.
3. A similar situation to the one above except that the overseas voter's enquiry about applying to vote by proxy was not received in this office until 21 April and so after the deadline for the voter to cancel the postal vote which he had previously chosen. The voter wanted his postal vote to be issued by email which is not possible. The voter complains that electronic voting is not available in this country. The voter's postal vote was despatched on 26 April by airmail but he states that, unlike the previous case, it was not received. The postal vote has not been returned to the Returning Officer

By Telephone

In a similar vein to those above - a postal voter who was unhappy that he could not cancel his postal vote and be granted a proxy vote after the 20 April. His postal vote would not have presented any problems except that his holiday had been postponed due to volcanic ash and so he would now be away when his postal vote arrived. The voter said that he would complain in writing but this has not been received up to today's date.

One voter who is a wheelchair user complained that he could not access his polling station via his usual route because a gate was padlocked. He was able to get into the station and vote but by a longer and more inconvenient but accessible route. On investigation it transpired that the caretaker had originally forgotten to unlock the gate. The Presiding Officer had him unlock it as soon as this voter made her aware. We will be visiting the polling station before the next election to review its accessibility arrangements.

A voter telephoned to complain that he was not on the register of electors – this was because in accordance with the RPA 1983, his name had been deleted after non-response in two consecutive years to the electoral registration canvass. A letter had been sent to the property in January warning that names had been deleted and enclosing an application form to allow any residents to apply to register. The voter said that he would complain in writing but this has not been received. An application form to register has been sent.

We did receive several telephone calls from postal voters who said that they had not received their parliamentary ballot papers and had only got local ones. On further questioning it transpired that many of these were because the voters did not recognise the parliamentary ballot paper since it did not contain the names of Gordon Brown, Nick Clegg or David Cameron.

I am also aware of a telephone call from a voter who said he hadn't received his voting papers but claimed to have registered last year. He gave no details but said he would complain in writing – this has not been received up to today's date.