

APPENDIX 3: London Borough of Barnet: Election Issue Report, May 2016

Learning Points

Issue at Barnet	Comment	Action by Bromley (before the EU Referendum)
1. Incorrect/incomplete registers provided to polling stations.	Rigorous and multiple checks must be made at all stages of the process.	Detailed check list has been produced for senior officers responsible for printing the registers in the Election Office to use following printing. A separate check list has been produced for the Presiding Officers to use to enable them to check their separate polling station register.
2. Settings on Xpress (the election management software supplier) had not been checked.	Xpress have been asked to provide clear advice/messaging about the impact of using certain settings. Xpress have agreed to investigate the possibility of removing the specific setting/functionality that enables the printing of the incomplete registers.	Advice has been received from Xpress. Checks have been carried out to our Xpress system to ensure complete registers are printed.
3. Changed logistical arrangements for ballot box collection – room was not big enough.	Returning Officer must provide suitable accommodation for collection so that Presiding Officers can check the contents. Ballot boxes must be collected and checked several days before polling day so there is sufficient time to feedback any issues and sort out in advance of polling day.	Due to timing and priority of Executive meeting on Wednesday 15 June 2016, logistical arrangements for ballot box collection have been changed as Council Chamber not available. New process and procedures have been put in place for collection of ballot boxes and materials from Committee Room 1 reducing possibility of Presiding officer taking wrong ballot box and allowing Presiding Officers to check contents before leaving..

		Vigorous checks have been built into the activities when Team Leaders allocate ballot papers, registers and supporting election materials to the ballot boxes.
4. Presiding Officers did not check the contents of their ballot boxes.	<p>Presiding Officers must check the contents of their ballot boxes.</p> <p>They should check that they have the right number of 'things' in their ballot box and look through things and ensure they are correct (ballot papers, registers etc).</p>	Detailed check list has been produced for Presiding Officers who will be asked to undertake checks at the time of collection and report any issues.
5. Returning Officer was not informed of the issue at once.	<p>Serious issues must be escalated to the Electoral Services Manager, Director of Corporate Services and the Returning Officer.</p> <p>There must be a systemic approach to escalation, robust and clear to all.</p>	Staff in Election Office have been made aware of approach.
6. Issues in relation to communications between the Elections Office, Polling Station Inspectors and Presiding Officers.	The need to be able to give a message out to all Presiding Officers and Polling Station Inspectors quickly is of paramount importance in certain situations.	A group text messaging system has been put in place directly to all Presiding Officers, Polling Station Inspectors, Deputy Returning Officers and Returning Officer simultaneously.
7. Voters who tried to phone the Elections office/Council met recorded messages based on standard scripts which did not address the issues the voters were facing and probably inflamed feelings and/or frustrations.	<p>Callers should go directly to agents (and not an automatic answering and messaging system) from say 6.30am on polling day with a minimum number of agents available to take calls.</p> <p>The ability to quickly change the script/recorded message and provide more 1:1 contact over the phone should be available.</p>	<p>Liberata could not provide out of hours service during the EU Referendum period (including on polling day).</p> <p>Further discussion required with Liberata after the EU Referendum.</p>