

Policing elections - Guidance overview

This page is from APP, the official source of professional practice for policing.

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Electoral malpractice is rare but can attract considerable media attention and undermine public confidence in the electoral process. Public confidence can also be affected by the perception that an initial response to allegations or complaints of electoral malpractice is ineffective.

Authorised professional practice (APP) on policing elections is designed to support police officers and, in particular, **force election single points of contact (SPOCs)**, who are required to contribute to planning the police response to elections and prevent and detect electoral malpractice. The content will assist their work with electoral registration officers, returning officers and counting officers to minimise the potential for malpractice in the electoral process.

APP on policing elections will also alert forces to issues that may arise in the run-up to polling day, on polling day itself and at related events.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life's report on **Intimidation in Public Life** highlights the prevalence of harassment, abuse and intimidation experienced by parliamentary candidates during the 2017 general election. The police service has a responsibility to support victims and investigate allegations and offences related to this type of intimidation. **Chief officers** are responsible for ensuring that processes, structures and resource are in place to mitigate intimidation of candidates and to investigate any allegations or offences. All these factors will need to be considered when carrying out a **threat assessment**. Products for candidates and campaigners have also been developed in response to the recommendations made in the Committee on Standards in Public Life's report.

For further information, see **Candidates and campaigners**.

APP on policing elections applies to police forces in England and Wales only. **Relevant guidance for Police Scotland is available here**.

Associated reference material is available here.

A [Welsh language version of the APP](#) and [associated reference material](#) has been produced by the Electoral Commission.

Tags

Elections