

10 questions to ask before appointing an Independent Scrutineer to manage your ballot, election or proxy vote...

Q1: What is the history of your organisation?

ERS: As part of the Electoral Reform Society, Electoral Reform Services (ERS) has been helping other organisations with their voting since 1898. Our relationship with some clients extends back over a century.

Q2: What is your current electoral experience?

ERS: Each year ERS manages approximately 2000 electoral projects for about 1000 different clients. This makes us the most experienced ballot manager in the UK (and probably the world). Our clients can tap into our unique wealth of experience, receiving authoritative guidance on good electoral practice and in depth knowledge of electoral legislation and all the various voting methods.

Q3: Which parts of the balloting process do you depend on third parties to deliver?

ERS: None. All work is undertaken in-house at our own purpose built Election Centre. From there we take care of all aspects of your election from the project management, the data processing, the design and security printing of the ballot material to the despatch from our on-site mailing house. This complete control means ERS can guarantee security, reliability and a rapid response. It also helps us to invest in the latest specialist equipment to produce election materials cost-effectively.

Q4: Do you offer voting by post, internet, telephone and text?

ERS: Yes. We have been conducting postal ballots for more than one hundred years, but we have also been the leading provider of secure e-voting solutions in the UK since 2000. Our internet, telephone and text voting platforms are now used by millions of people each year to vote or register to vote. They offer proven resistance to hacking and attacks and have been tested and approved by government authorities, financial institutions, professional firms and educational establishments.

Q5: Who recognises your authority in electoral matters?

ERS: In the UK our authority to run ballots and elections is recognised by parliament through statutory instruments that specify us as a suitably qualified Independent Scrutineer. We work for over 250 local authorities and assist all the major political parties with their leadership elections. Overseas, the Electoral Reform Group was granted consultative status by the United Nations in 1984 and has given democratic assistance and advice in over 90 countries.

Q6: Who would manage my ballot? Do I need to repeat instructions each time I have an election or will I be assigned a regular contact?

ERS: At the start of the project you will be assigned a Project Manager who will be fully trained and experienced with your balloting requirements. He or she will guide you through the entire process from start to finish, meaning you will only have one point of contact. For repeat elections you simply need to re-contact your project manager or any member of the business development team. Alternatively, a growing number of clients are making sure all their election and by-election requirements are covered for up to three years in a single contract with ERS - please ask us for details.

Q7: What are your security procedures like?

ERS: Security is of prime importance to ERS. We regularly manage highly sensitive votes for political parties, government agencies, trade unions, local authorities, hospitals, schools and financial institutions. The procedures which we employ are tried and tested and externally reviewed. They cover everything from printing through to data security, where we have all of the up-to-date encryption methods in place to ensure a smooth and secure transfer.



Q8: Do you insist on a particular voting system?

ERS: No. We administer ballots according to our clients' constitutions. If clients want advice about different methods, we will provide it. Our in-house vote counting software also allows us to count votes accurately and rapidly regardless of what voting system is used.

Q9: Beyond our immediate election needs, can you help us recruit, manage, learn about and motivate our electorate?

ERS: Our Membership Engagement Services and Research divisions offer a range of value added services. These include surveys, candidate or representative training, election communications and membership databases, recruitment and profiling.

Q10: What do your clients say about you?

ERS: Here are some of the comments our clients have recently made about ERS. You can find more at our website: www.electoralreform.co.uk

"Good value for money" The Audit Commission

"I was very pleased with the quality and efficiency of the service. ERS met our performance expectations and an additional bonus was the 21% growth in voter turnout." Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply

"The service was exceptional. We have used ERS twice already and would consider you again on cost as well as efficiency grounds." Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

"Very knowledgeable and helpful staff... a very smooth and pain-free election" Citigroup

"Our online turnout was excellent ...ERS felt like a safe pair of hands. We will certainly be using you next year." Ecology Building Society

"The elections were concluded with the usual smoothness we expect from ERS" Communications Workers Union

"Thank you. Your knowledge and understanding have been of great help in ensuring a successful project" Sheffield City Council

"Everything ran very smoothly and I am very grateful for your project manager's efficiency and helpfulness." Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)

'I was very satisfied with the service which was prompt and efficient. I would give you 5 out of 5 - a score I very rarely give.' Bunzl plc

"Service was excellent as always." Amber Valley Housing

"I would like to thank you for all your work and support during the process... We look forward to working with you again in the future." London Borough of Hackney

"Excellent service, highly professional throughout, good value for money" North Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust

"Very good service" The Green Party

"I would recommend your service to others" Honeywell

