

### SCHEDULE 3

#### ABSENT VOTING

##### **Requirement to provide fresh signatures at five yearly intervals**

**14.**—(1) The ERO shall every year by 31st January send every person who remains an absent voter and whose signature held on the personal identifiers record is more than five years old a notice in writing—

- (a) requiring the absent voter to provide a fresh signature; and
- (b) informing the absent voter of the date (six weeks from the date of sending the notice) on which the absent voter would cease to be entitled to vote by post or by proxy in the event of a failure or refusal to provide a fresh signature.

(2) The notice must be sent by the ERO to the current or last known address of the absent voter.

(3) The ERO must, if the absent voter has not responded to the notice within three weeks from the date on which the notice was sent, as soon as practicable send a copy of the notice to the absent voter.

(4) Where a notice or copy of a notice is sent by post, the ERO may use—

- (a) a universal postal service provider; or
- (b) a commercial delivery firm,

and postage shall be prepaid.

(5) A notice or copy of a notice sent to an absent voter in accordance with sub-paragraph (1) or (3) must be accompanied by a pre-addressed reply envelope and, in the case of any notice or copy of a notice sent to an address in the United Kingdom, return postage must be prepaid.

(6) The ERO must, no later than the date specified in the notice sent to the absent voter in accordance with sub-paragraph (1), determine whether the absent voter has failed or refused to provide a fresh signature.

(7) Where the ERO determines that the absent voter has failed or refused to provide a fresh signature the ERO must from the date specified in the notice sent to the absent voter in accordance with sub-paragraph (1) remove that person's entry from the records kept under article 8(4) or 11(5) and from the postal voters list, list of proxies or proxy postal voters list (as the case may be).

(8) Where an ERO removes an absent voter's entry in the circumstances to which sub-paragraph (7) refers—

- (a) the ERO shall inform the absent voter of the location of the polling station to which the absent voter has been allotted or is likely to be allotted under rule 35 of the Scottish Parliamentary Election Rules, unless that voter is not likely to be allotted to a polling station;
- (b) paragraph 10(4) and sub-paragraph (9) shall apply as if the ERO were refusing an application under article 8, 9, 10 or 11; and
- (c) in the case of an entry removed from the proxy postal voters list, the ERO must also notify the elector who appointed the proxy whose entry has been removed.

(9) The ERO shall include in the notice to be sent to an absent voter regarding the absent voter's removal from the records kept under article 8(4) or 11(5) and (as the case may be) from the postal voters list, the list of proxies or the proxy postal voters list, information—

- (a) explaining the effect of such removal; and
- (b) reminding the absent voter that the absent voter may make a fresh application under article 8, 9, 10 or 11 to vote by post or by proxy (as the case may be).