

Count Centre Admissions Policy Elections May 2008

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Count Centre Admissions Policy – Elections 2008

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to protect the health, safety and dignity of everyone working in and visiting Count Centres, and to reduce the risk of disruption to the election processes and activities that are taking place on Friday 2nd May 2008.

The specific security arrangements in force at each of the Count Centres and at City Hall may differ between locations.

The co-operation of everyone with this policy is appreciated.

2. Allowing time for the Entry Accreditation and Security Process

Please allow sufficient time to pass through the entry accreditation and security process, it is suggested that 20 minutes is allowed, however, this may change dependant on the security measures in force on the day and the number of people queuing for entry.

3. Entry Accreditation and Access

Count Centres are not open to the public. Access to the Count Centres on 2nd May is by advance notification only and conditional upon complying with this Admissions Policy. For the purpose of entry accreditation one form of personal photo-identity will be required, eg. photo-driving license, passport, alternatively two non-photo identity documents, such as a bank card and utility bill, will be accepted as proof of identity.

Access to the building will not be permitted; if a person is not in possession of a valid entry badge or is not on the Constituency Returning Officers or London Elects accreditation lists, and a person's identity cannot be established by production of personal identification as mentioned above. In the event of any queries staff will be available to deal with any issues or questions arising over entry accreditation.

Visitors or staff must not attempt to gain access to areas of the Count Centres to which they are not authorised, nor should any attempts be made to defeat security arrangements. All pass holders will have access to toilet facilities.

4. Search Policy

As part of the health and safety arrangements for the 2008 Elections admission to the Count Centres for all staff and visitors is conditional upon agreeing to go through the search procedures and complying with all security arrangements and instructions that are in place.

All visitors and staff wishing to enter the Count Centres will be subject to a security search of both their person and any bags or carried items, including folding bicycles. The search aims to ensure that no prohibited items are either deliberately or accidentally brought into the building.

Please note that at some of all of the venues visitors and staff may also be required to place their outer garments, hats, shoes and belts through x-ray scanners, and laptop

computers will need to be removed from their cases. Wheelchairs will also be subject to search.

Where x-ray scanners are in use, it will assist the search process if people are ready to remove metal objects carried on their person (with the exception of very small items of jewellery) and place them in the trays provided.

The following items are prohibited from being brought into Court Centres;

- Offensives weapons eg. knives, tasers, etc.
- Imitation or toy weapons, including toy hand grenades and guns
- Items that could be readily converted into weapons
- Component parts of weapons
- Flares or fireworks
- Party poppers and party canons
- Alcohol
- Lasers, including presentation laser pointers
- Strobe lights and high intensity torches
- Hazardous materials eg. CS gas, pepper spray, gas canisters, acids and alkalis
- Spray paints or cans of paint
- Powders that are not personal prescription medicines or for cosmetic purposes
- Illegal drugs
- Pointed Scissors
- Pointed tweezers
- Knitting Needles
- Syringes (unless required for personal medical use)
- Placards and Banners
- Mobile phone jamming devices
- Items that could cause loud audible disruption e. whistles, megaphones, sirens, air horns, large radios/cd players
- Covert surveillance equipment
- Climbing and abseiling equipment
- Tools eg. pliers, screwdrivers, wire cutters, saws, etc.
- Any items considered to be suspicious by security staff that the owner can not provide a reasonable explanation for possessing

At the discretion of the Security Officer, visitors and staff found in possession of prohibited items may be refused entry to the venue, or will only be admitted if they are prepared to surrender the items to Security, for which a receipt will be issued. Any confiscated items can be collected from Security, on production of the receipt on departure from the building, with the exception of illegal items, which will be passed to the Police.

At the discretion of the Security Officer, visitors and staff deliberately trying to conceal prohibited items or being obstructive may be refused entry.

Party rosettes, designed to be worn on the person, are permitted.

5. Conduct of Staff

Staff at the Count Centres will behave in a professional and courteous manner.

6. Visitor's Behaviour

Visitors to Count Centres are respectfully requested to behave in a considerate and courteous manner at all times and comply with official instructions given by Security Officers, Local Authority and London Elects Staff. Visitors must not disrupt the activities that are taking place at the Count Centres.

The intimidation of Security Officers or other members of Staff will not be tolerated and neither will; aggressive behaviour, offensive, threatening or abusive language or gestures. Anyone displaying these behaviours or not complying with official instructions will be asked to leave the Count Centre immediately. Visitors are also advised not to make comments to security staff that could be interpreted as a potential threat.

7. Secrecy at the Count

Any individual entering the count should be aware of the secrecy of the ballot and must abide by section 66 of the Representation of the People Act. No one is allowed to find out how someone voted.

Anyone found guilty of breaching section 66 may face a fine of up to £5,000 or may be imprisoned for up to six months.

Every person attending at the verification of the ballot paper accounts or the counting of the votes shall maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of voting and shall not:

- (a) Ascertain, or attempt to ascertain, at the counting of the votes the number on the back of any ballot paper.
- (b) Communicate any information obtained at the verification of the ballot paper accounts or the counting of the votes as to the way in which any vote is given on any particular ballot paper.

No person attending at the verification of the ballot paper accounts shall express to any person an opinion based on information obtained at that verification as to the likely result of the election.

8. Children

Young people under the age of eighteen will not be permitted access to the Count Centres. Security staff may ask for proof of age if the visitor does not look eighteen years of age or over.

9. Animals

The only animals permitted access to Count Centres are assistance dogs wearing the appropriate identification and police or security search dogs.

10. Leaving and re-entering Count Centres

Anyone who leaves a Count Centre, even for a few minutes, and wishes to re-enter will be required to go back through the entry accreditation and security process.

11. Photography and Filming

No unauthorised photography or filming is permitted inside the Count Centres. Additionally, in cases where photography or filming has been authorised the Constituency Returning Officers may, at any time, order it to be stopped.

12. Mobile Devices

On entry into the Count Centres mobile devices (phones, Blackberries etc) must be turned to silent mode and their use must not cause disturbance to staff working on the count.

13. Changes to Security Arrangements

Please note in the interests of everyone's health and safety, security arrangements are subject to review, extension and change on and during the course of the day(s).

THANK-YOU FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND CO-OPERATION