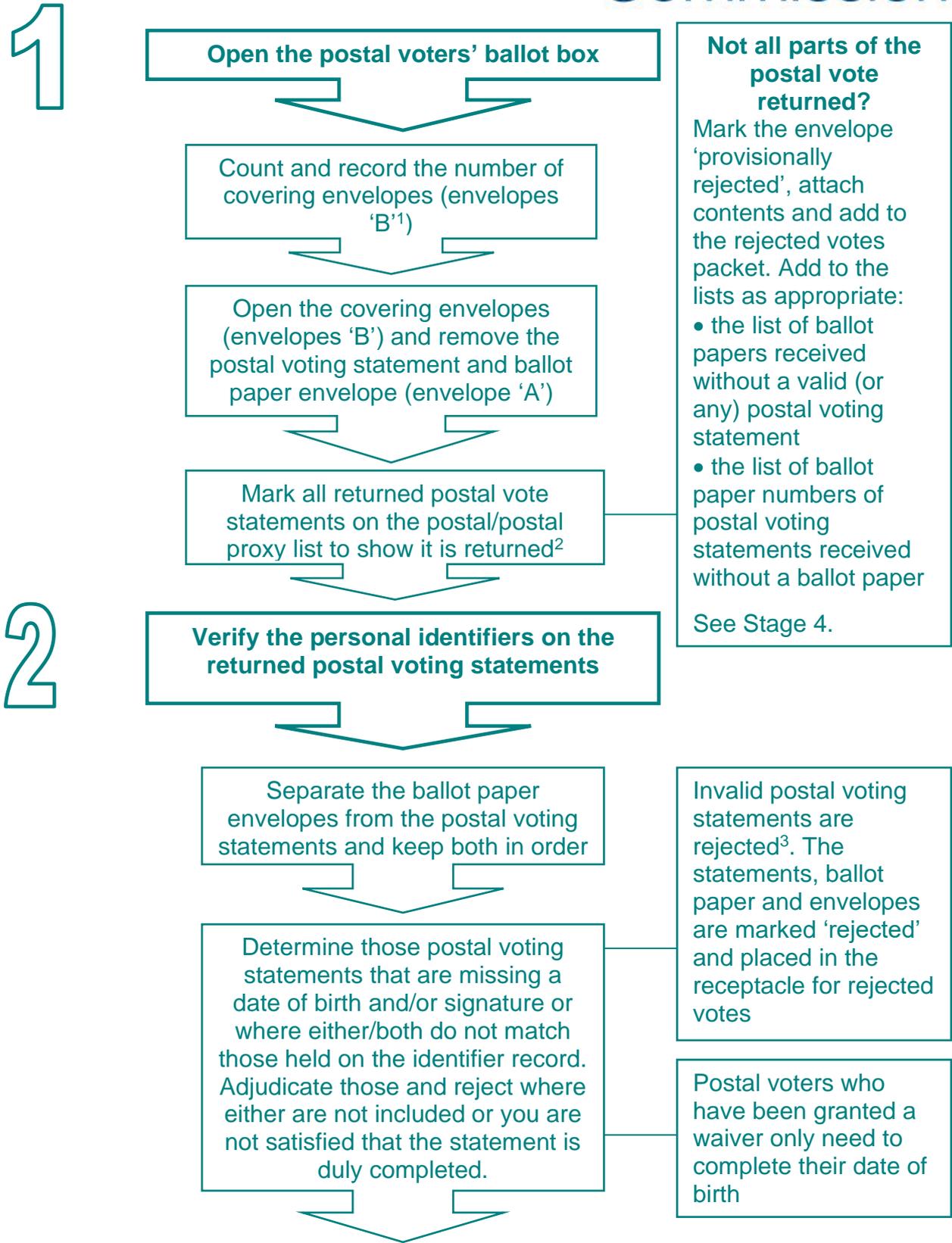


The Electoral Commission

Postal vote opening procedure



1. 'Envelopes B' includes where the relevant items are returned other than in the official envelope B
 2. Regardless of whether it has been duly completed.
 3. If there is an objection to a rejection by a candidate, election agents or postal voting agent, the postal voting statement must be marked 'rejection objected to'. Accredited observers and representatives of the Commission cannot make objections.

3

Check the number on the postal voting statement matches the number on the ballot paper envelope (envelope 'A'). After matching, package up the postal voting statements and seal the packet.

No match?
Open the envelope. If the ballot paper matches the statement, it is valid and should go in the postal ballot box. Non-matching ones should be provisionally rejected (see below)

Opening the postal ballot paper envelopes (envelopes 'A')

Open the ballot paper envelopes (envelopes 'A') and remove the ballot papers, ensuring they are kept face down at all times

No ballot paper inside the envelope?
• Mark 'provisionally rejected' and put in the receptacle for rejected ballot paper envelopes. Add to the list of ballot paper numbers of postal voting statements received without a ballot paper

Check the number on the ballot paper envelope (envelope 'A') against the number on the back of the ballot paper

No match?
The ballot paper should be attached to the envelope, marked 'provisionally rejected' and put in the receptacle for rejected votes. Add to both the list of ballot papers received without a valid postal voting statement and the list of ballot paper numbers of postal voting statements received without a ballot paper

Keep the ballot papers face down at all times. Don't look or allow others to look at the votes marked on the ballot papers. Place ballot papers in the postal ballot box or appropriate receptacle and proceed to Stage 5.

4

Matching up separated documents

Check the two rejection lists against all ballot papers/postal voting statements that have been returned separately from their corresponding postal voting statement/ballot paper and, if possible, match them up. Record any successful match on the lists.

The two lists must be taken to the final opening of postal votes to carry out any final matching

Place the ballot papers that are no longer to be treated as provisionally rejected in the postal ballot box or appropriate receptacle and place the accompanying postal voting statements in the appropriate receptacle.

5

Sealing the postal ballot box

Count and record the total number of ballot papers, keeping the ballot papers face down at all times

The actual votes are not counted at this stage

Place the ballot papers in the postal ballot box, which must be sealed at the end of each opening session and stored securely

Complete postal vote ballot paper account