

F1 SCHEDULE 5

The Local Government Act Referendums (Combination of Polls) Rules

Textual Amendments

- F1** Sch. 5 Pt. 8 Forms substituted (16.1.2023) by [The Voter Identification Regulations 2022 \(S.I. 2022/1382\)](#), regs. 1(3), **50(17)** (with reg. 1(6)(7))

PART 4

Action to be taken Before the Poll

Notice of Poll

12.—(1) The counting officer must publish notice of the poll stating—

- (a) the day and hours fixed for the poll; and
- (b) the question to be asked in the referendum [F1, using the words in the relevant paragraph in Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities (Conduct of Referendums) (England) Regulations 2012].

(2) The notice of the poll must be published no later than the sixth day before the date of the referendum.

(3) The relevant returning or counting officer must, not later than the time of the publication of the notice of the poll, also give public notice of—

- (a) the situation of each polling station; and
- (b) the description of persons entitled to vote there.

(4) The notice published under paragraph (3) must—

- (a) state that the poll at the referendum is to be taken together with the poll at a relevant election or referendum;
- (b) specify the parliamentary constituency F2, F3 ... Assembly constituency, voting area or, as the case may be, the relevant local authority and, in the case of an election to fill a casual vacancy, the electoral area for which the relevant election is held; and
- (c) where any of the polls are to be taken together in part of the electoral area only, specify that part.

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in Sch. 5 rule 12(1)(b) inserted (6.4.2014) by [The Local Authorities \(Conduct of Referendums\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014 \(S.I. 2014/924\)](#), regs. 1(3), **12** (with reg. 1(4))
- F2** For the meaning of “parliamentary constituency”, see section 1 of the [Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 \(c.56\)](#).
- F3** Words in Sch. 5 rule 12(4)(b) revoked (31.12.2020) by [The European Parliamentary Elections Etc. \(Repeal, Revocation, Amendment and Saving Provisions\) \(United Kingdom and Gibraltar\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2018 \(S.I. 2018/1310\)](#), reg. 1, **Sch. 1 Pt. 2** (as amended by S.I. 2019/1389, regs. 1, 2(2))

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Postal ballot papers

13.—(1) The relevant returning or counting officer must, in accordance with regulations made under the 1983 Act ^{F4}, issue to those entitled to vote by post a ballot paper and a postal voting statement in the appropriate form in the Appendix, or a form to like effect, together with such envelopes for their return as may be prescribed by such regulations.

(2) The relevant returning or counting officer must also issue to those entitled to vote by post such information as he or she thinks appropriate about how to obtain—

- (a) translations into languages other than English of any directions to or guidance for voters and proxies sent with the ballot paper;
- (b) a translation into Braille of such directions or guidance;
- (c) graphical representations of such directions or guidance;
- (d) the directions or guidance in any other form (including any audible form).

(3) The postal voting statement must include provision for the form to be signed and for stating the date of birth of the voter or proxy.

(4) In the case of a ballot paper issued to a person at an address in the United Kingdom, the relevant returning or counting officer must ensure that the return of the ballot paper and postal voting statement is free of charge to the voter or proxy.

(5) In paragraphs (1), (2) and (4) for “relevant returning or counting officer” substitute “counting officer” where proceedings on the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers at the referendum are not taken together with such proceedings at one or more relevant elections or referendums.

Textual Amendments

F4 See the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 [S.I. 2001/341](#) as amended by SI 2002/1871, 2006/752 and SI 2006/2910.

Provision of polling stations

14.—(1) The relevant returning or counting officer must provide a sufficient number of polling stations and, subject to the following provisions of this rule, must allot the voters to the polling stations in such manner as he or she thinks most convenient.

(2) The polling stations are the polling places or polling stations (as the case may be) designated for the purposes of the election or referendum for which the relevant returning or counting officer discharges functions which are not combined functions.

(3) In paragraph (2) “combined functions” means functions under regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations or regulation 13(2).

(4) One or more polling stations may be provided in the same room.

(5) The polling station allotted to voters from any parliamentary polling district wholly or partly within the voting area must, in the absence of special circumstances, be in the parliamentary polling place for that district.

(6) The relevant returning or counting officer must provide each polling station with such number of compartments as may be necessary in which the voters and proxies can mark their votes screened from observation.

[^{F5}(7) The counting officer must ensure that each polling station contains an area in which voters and proxies can produce proof of identity in private.]

Textual Amendments

F5 Sch. 5 rule 14(7) inserted (16.1.2023) by [The Voter Identification Regulations 2022 \(S.I. 2022/1382\)](#), regs. 1(3), **50(4)** (with [reg. 1\(6\)\(7\)](#))

Appointment of presiding officers and clerks

15.—(1) The relevant returning or counting officer must appoint and pay a presiding officer to attend at each polling station and such clerks as may be necessary for the purposes of the referendum.

(2) The relevant returning or counting officer may, if he or she thinks fit, preside at a polling station and the provisions of these Rules relating to a presiding officer shall apply to a relevant returning or counting officer so presiding with the necessary modifications as to things to be done by the relevant returning or counting officer to the presiding officer or by the presiding officer to the relevant returning or counting officer.

(3) A presiding officer may do, by the clerks appointed to assist him or her, any act (including the asking of questions) which he or she is required or authorised by these Rules to do at a polling station [^{F6}except—

- (a) order the arrest, exclusion or removal of any person from the polling station,
- (b) refuse to deliver a ballot paper under rule 26(3) or rule 28(1E) (including that rule as applied by rule 29, 30 or 31), or
- (c) resolve doubts over identity as mentioned in rule 28(1F) (including that paragraph as applied by rule 29, 30 or 31).]

Textual Amendments

F6 Words in Sch. 5 rule 15(3) substituted (16.1.2023) by [The Voter Identification Regulations 2022 \(S.I. 2022/1382\)](#), regs. 1(3), **50(5)** (with [reg. 1\(6\)\(7\)](#))

Issue of official poll cards

16.—(1) The counting officer must as soon as practicable after the publication of the notice of referendum send to each voter and proxy an official poll card.

(2) The official poll card must be sent or delivered—

- (a) in the case of a voter, to his or her qualifying address; and
- (b) in the case of a proxy, to his or her address as shown in the list of proxies.

(3) The official poll card must be in the appropriate form in the Appendix, or a form to the like effect, and must set out—

- (a) the name of the council and of the voting area;
- (b) the name of the voter, his or her qualifying address and number on the register;
- (c) the date and hours of the poll and the situation of the voter's polling station;
- (d) such other information as the counting officer thinks appropriate,

and different information may be provided in pursuance of sub-paragraph (d) to different voters or to different descriptions of voter.

(4) In the case of a voter with an anonymous entry, instead of containing the matter mentioned in paragraph (3)(b), the poll card must contain such matter as is specified in the appropriate form in the Appendix.

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(5) In this rule references to a voter—

- (a) mean a person who is registered in the register of local government electors for the voting area in question on the last day for the publication of notice of the referendum; and
- (b) include a person then shown in the register as below voting age if (but only if) it appears from the register that he or she will be of voting age on the day fixed for the poll.

(6) If the counting officer and the returning or counting officer (as the case may be) for each relevant election or referendum think fit, an official poll card issued under this rule may be combined with the official poll card issued at every relevant election or referendum.

Equipment of polling stations

17.—(1) The relevant returning or counting officer must provide each presiding officer with such number of ballot boxes and ballot papers as in the former officer's opinion may be necessary.

(2) The same ballot box may be used for the poll at the referendum and the poll at every relevant election or referendum, if the relevant returning or counting officer thinks fit.

(3) Every ballot box must be so constructed that the ballot papers can be put in it, but cannot be withdrawn from it, without the box being unlocked or, where the box has no lock, the seal being broken.

(4) The relevant returning or counting officer must provide each polling station with—

- (a) materials to enable voters and proxies to mark the ballot papers;
- (b) copies of the register of electors for the voting area or such part of it as contains the names of the voters allotted to the station;
- (c) the parts of any special lists prepared for the referendum corresponding to the register of electors for the voting area or the part of it provided under sub-paragraph (b);
- (d) a list, in the form M2 in the Appendix or a form to like effect, consisting of that part of the list prepared under rule 8 which contains the numbers (but not the other unique identifying marks) corresponding to those on the ballot papers provided to the presiding officer of the polling station.

(5) The reference in paragraph (4)(b) to the copies of the register of electors includes a reference to copies of any notices issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act ^{F7} in respect of alterations to the register.

[^{F8}(5A) The counting officer must provide each polling station with a ballot paper refusal list, in the form in the Appendix or a form to like effect, on which entries are to be made as mentioned in rule 32A (refusal to deliver ballot paper).]

(6) The relevant returning or counting officer must also provide each polling station with—

- (a) at least one large version of each ballot paper which must be printed on the same colour paper as the corresponding ballot paper and displayed inside the polling station for the assistance of voters and proxies who are partially sighted; and

[^{F9}(b) such equipment as it is reasonable to provide for the purposes of enabling, or making it easier for, relevant persons to vote independently in the manner directed by rule 28 (voting procedure), including in relation to voting secretly; and for this purpose “relevant persons” means persons who find it difficult or impossible to vote in that manner because of—

- (i) blindness or partial sight; or
- (ii) another disability.]

[^{F10}(6A) Paragraph (10) of rule 29 of Schedule 1 to the 1983 Act (Parliamentary elections rules: guidance to returning officers) applies for the purposes of paragraph (6)(b) of this rule as it applies for the purposes of that rule, but as if—

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- (a) the reference in that paragraph to the returning officer were a reference to the relevant returning or counting officer, and
 - (b) the reference in that paragraph to paragraph (3A)(b) were a reference to paragraph (6)(b) of this rule.]
- (7) Where notwithstanding paragraph (2) separate ballot boxes are to be used, each ballot box must be clearly marked with—
- (a) the election or referendum to which it relates, as shown on the ballot papers for that election or referendum; and
 - (b) the words “Place the [*specify colour of ballot papers in question*] ballot papers in here”.
- (8) A notice in the form in the Appendix, giving directions for the guidance of voters and proxies in voting, must be printed in conspicuous characters and exhibited inside and outside every polling station.

[^{F11}(8A) A large notice must be displayed inside each polling station containing—

- (a) details of the documents the voter or proxy needs to produce when applying for a ballot paper, namely—
 - (i) in the case of a voter (other than a voter with an anonymous entry) or a proxy, any of the forms of identification for the time being referred to in rule 37(1H) of Schedule 1 to the 1983 Act (parliamentary elections rules);
 - (ii) in the case of a voter with an anonymous entry, the voter’s official poll card and an anonymous elector’s document showing the same electoral number as the electoral number shown on the official poll card; and
- (b) a statement that further proof of identity may be required to resolve any discrepancy between the name of the holder of a form of identification and the name of the voter or proxy that the voter or proxy claims to be.]

(9) The relevant returning or counting officer may also provide copies of the notice mentioned in paragraph (8) in Braille or translated into languages other than English as he or she considers appropriate, provided that these notices are accurate reproductions in Braille or that other language of that notice.

[^{F12}(10) In every compartment of every polling station there must be exhibited the notice—

“*PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

([*Specify colour*] ballot paper)

Vote for ONLY ONE CANDIDATE by putting a cross [X] in the box next to your choice.

^{F13} ...

*[*Specify name of council*] COUNCIL ELECTION

([*Specify colour*] ballot paper)

*[Vote for NO MORE THAN ... CANDIDATES by putting a cross [X] in the box next to EACH of your choices]

*[Vote ONLY ONCE by putting a cross [X] in the box next to your choice].

*ELECTION OF THE MAYOR OF LONDON

([*Specify colour*] ballot paper)

#On the ballot paper for the election of the Mayor, vote ONCE for your first choice and ONCE for your second choice.

*ELECTION OF THE LONDON ASSEMBLY

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#On the constituency members ballot paper [(specify colour)] vote for ONE candidate only.
 #On the London members ballot paper [(specify colour)] vote for ONE party or individual candidate only.
 *REFERENDUM ON HOW [specify name of Council] COUNCIL IS RUN.
 ([Specify colour] ballot paper)
 Vote ONLY ONCE by putting a cross [X] in the box next to your choice.
 *[Specify other] ELECTION/REFERENDUM
 ([Specify colour] ballot paper)
 *[Specify voting instructions in accordance with the legislation governing the election or referendum]
 PUT NO OTHER MARK ON THE BALLOT PAPER OR YOUR VOTE MAY NOT COUNT
 *[PLEASE DO NOT FOLD THE BALLOT PAPERS FOR [specify the election(s) and/or referendum(s) at which the votes are to be counted electronically]. Post them, face downwards, in the [*appropriate] ballot box.]
 *Complete or omit as necessary.
 #Alternatively, insert such information as the GLRO may decide.”]

F14(11)

Textual Amendments	
F7	Section 13B of the 1983 Act was inserted by paragraph 3 of Schedule 2 to the Representation of the People Act 2000 (c.2) and amended by section 11(3) of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c.22). Subsections (3B) and (3D) of section 13B were inserted by section 11(4) of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c.22).
F8	Sch. 5 rule 17(5A) inserted (16.1.2023) by The Voter Identification Regulations 2022 (S.I. 2022/1382), regs. 1(3), 50(6)(a) (with reg. 1(6)(7))
F9	Sch. 5 rule 17(6)(b) substituted (29.12.2022) by The Assistance with Voting for Persons with Disabilities (Amendments) Regulations 2022 (S.I. 2022/1309), regs. 1(3), 8(3)(a)(i) (with reg. 1(4))
F10	Sch. 5 rule 17(6A) inserted (29.12.2022) by The Assistance with Voting for Persons with Disabilities (Amendments) Regulations 2022 (S.I. 2022/1309), regs. 1(3), 8(3)(a)(ii) (with reg. 1(4))
F11	Sch. 5 rule 17(8A) inserted (16.1.2023) by The Voter Identification Regulations 2022 (S.I. 2022/1382), regs. 1(3), 50(6)(b) (with reg. 1(6)(7))
F12	Sch. 5 rule 17(10) substituted (6.4.2014) by The Local Authorities (Conduct of Referendums) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/924), regs. 1(3), 13 (with reg. 1(4))
F13	Words in Sch. 5 rule 17(10) revoked (31.12.2020) by The European Parliamentary Elections Etc. (Repeal, Revocation, Amendment and Saving Provisions) (United Kingdom and Gibraltar) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 2018/1310), reg. 1, Sch. 1 Pt. 2 (as amended by S.I. 2019/1389, regs. 1, 2(2))
F14	Sch. 5 rule 17(11) omitted (29.12.2022) by virtue of The Assistance with Voting for Persons with Disabilities (Amendments) Regulations 2022 (S.I. 2022/1309), regs. 1(3), 8(3)(a)(iii) (with reg. 1(4))

Appointment of counting observers

18.—(1) The counting officer must appoint persons to observe the counting of the votes and the verification of the ballot paper account (“counting observers”).

(2) Where the counting officer is not the relevant returning or counting officer, he or she must give notice in writing of the appointments of counting observers to that officer as soon as is practicable following the appointment.

(3) For the purpose of assisting the counting officer in the discharge of his or her functions under paragraph (1), a petition organiser may nominate persons who in the opinion of the petition organiser are suitable for appointment as counting observers.

(4) A nomination under paragraph (3) must be made by notice in writing to the counting officer not later than the fifth day before the poll (disregarding any day which is to be disregarded by virtue of rule 4) and the notice must contain the address of each nominee.

(5) Subject to paragraph (6), the counting officer must not, without good cause, decline to appoint as a counting observer a person nominated by a petition organiser under paragraph (3).

(6) The counting officer may limit the number of counting observers, so however that—

- (a) the number must be the same in the case of each petition organiser; and
- (b) the number allowed to a petition organiser must not (except in special circumstances) be fewer than the number obtained by dividing the number of clerks employed on the counting by the number of petition organisers.

For the purposes of the calculations required by this paragraph, a counting observer who has been appointed on the nomination of more than one petition organiser is a separate counting observer for each of the petition organisers by whom he or she has been nominated.

(7) Where a counting observer appointed on the nomination of a petition organiser dies or becomes incapable of acting, the petition organiser who made the nomination may nominate another person to be appointed as a counting observer in his or her place by giving notice in writing to the counting officer.

(8) Paragraphs (4) and (5) apply to a nomination under paragraph (7), with the substitution in paragraph (4) for “fifth day” of “final day”.

(9) In the following provisions of these Rules references to counting observers shall be taken as references to counting observers whose appointments have been duly made.

(10) Any notice required to be given by the counting officer to a counting observer appointed on the nomination of a petition organiser may be delivered at, or sent by post to, the address stated in the notice of nomination.

(11) A petition organiser may do any act or thing which any counting observer is authorised to do, or may assist any counting observer appointed on his or her nomination in doing any such act or thing.

(12) Where by these Rules any act or thing is required or authorised to be done in the presence of the counting observers, the non-attendance of any such person at the time and place appointed for the purpose shall not, if the act or thing is otherwise duly done, invalidate the act or thing done.

Appointment of polling observers

19.—(1) The counting officer may appoint persons to attend at polling stations for the purpose of detecting personation (“polling observers”).

(2) Where the counting officer is not the relevant returning or counting officer, he or she must give notice in writing of the appointment to the relevant returning or counting officer.

(3) That notice must state the names and addresses of the persons appointed and must be given not later than the fifth day (disregarding any day specified in rule 4) before the day of the poll.

(4) Not more than four polling observers or polling agents, or such greater number as the relevant returning or counting officer may by notice allow, shall be permitted to attend at any particular polling station and if the number of such polling observers or agents exceeds that number, the relevant returning or counting officer must determine which polling observers or agents are permitted to attend by lot and only the polling observers and agents on whom the lot falls shall be deemed to have been duly appointed.

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(5) In the following provisions of these Rules references to polling observers shall be taken as references to polling observers whose appointments have been duly made.

(6) Where by these Rules any act or thing is required or authorised to be done in the presence of the polling observers, the non-attendance of any such person at the time and place appointed for the purpose shall not, if the act or thing is otherwise duly done, invalidate the act or thing done.

Notification of requirement of secrecy in respect of polling stations

20.—^{F15}(1) The relevant returning or counting officer must make such arrangements as he or she thinks fit to ensure that every person attending at a polling station (otherwise than for the purpose of voting or assisting a voter or proxy with disabilities to vote or as a constable on duty there) has been given a copy in writing of the provisions of subsections (1), (3) and (6) of section 66 of the 1983 Act, as applied by Schedule 4 ^{F16}.

^{F17}(2) In this rule, a reference to a constable includes a person designated as a community support officer under section 38 of the Police Reform Act 2002 (police powers for employees).]

Textual Amendments

- F15** Sch. 5 rule 20 renumbered as Sch. 5 rule 20(1) (6.4.2014) by [The Local Authorities \(Conduct of Referendums\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014 \(S.I. 2014/924\)](#), regs. 1(3), **14** (with reg. 1(4))
- F16** Subsections (1), (2) and (3) of section 66 of the 1983 Act were amended by paragraphs 69, 82, 86(b) and 96 of Schedule 1 to the [Electoral Administration Act 2006 \(c.22\)](#); subsection (6) was amended by paragraph 3 of Schedule 3 to the [Representation of the People Act 1985 \(c.50\)](#).
- F17** [Sch. 5 rule 20\(2\)](#) inserted (6.4.2014) by [The Local Authorities \(Conduct of Referendums\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014 \(S.I. 2014/924\)](#), regs. 1(3), **14** (with reg. 1(4))

Notification of requirement of secrecy in respect of the count

21.—^{F18}(1) The counting officer must make such arrangements as he or she thinks fit to ensure that every person attending at the counting of the votes (other than any constable on duty at the counting) has been given a copy in writing of the provisions of subsections (2) and (6) of section 66 of the 1983 Act, as applied by Schedule 4.

^{F19}(2) In this rule, a reference to a constable includes a person designated as a community support officer under section 38 of the Police Reform Act 2002 (police powers for employees).]

Textual Amendments

- F18** Sch. 5 rule 21 renumbered as Sch. 5 rule 21(1) (6.4.2014) by [The Local Authorities \(Conduct of Referendums\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014 \(S.I. 2014/924\)](#), regs. 1(3), **15** (with reg. 1(4))
- F19** [Sch. 5 rule 21\(2\)](#) inserted (6.4.2014) by [The Local Authorities \(Conduct of Referendums\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014 \(S.I. 2014/924\)](#), regs. 1(3), **15** (with reg. 1(4))

Return of postal ballot papers

22.—(1) Where—

- (a) a postal vote has been returned in respect of a person who is entered on the postal voters list; or
- (b) a proxy postal vote has been returned in respect of a proxy who is entered on the proxy postal voters list,

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the relevant returning or counting officer must mark the list in the manner prescribed by regulations made under the 1983 Act ^{F20}.

(2) In paragraph (1) for “relevant returning or counting officer” substitute “ counting officer ” where proceedings on the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers at the referendum are not taken together with such proceedings at one or more relevant elections or referendums.

(3) Rule 38(5) does not apply for the purpose of determining whether, for the purposes of this rule, a postal vote or a proxy postal vote is returned.

Textual Amendments

F20 See regulation 84A of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 [S.I. 2001/341](#) as amended by [S.I. 2006/2910](#).

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Instrument associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Instrument (including any effects on those provisions):

- Sch. 3 rule 21(1)(ba) inserted by [S.I. 2023/1225 reg. 6\(2\)\(a\)](#)
- Sch. 3 rule 36(3)(e) and word inserted by [S.I. 2023/1225 reg. 6\(2\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#)
- Sch. 3 rule 24 modified (temp.) by [S.I. 2023/1147 Sch. 2 para. 11\(2\)\(3\)](#)
- Sch. 3 rule 36(3)(c) word omitted by [S.I. 2023/1225 reg. 6\(2\)\(b\)\(i\)](#)
- Sch. 3 rule 24(1)(b) words inserted by [S.I. 2023/1147 reg. 15\(3\)\(a\)](#)
- Sch. 3 rule 24 table words omitted by [S.I. 2023/1147 reg. 15\(3\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#)
- Sch. 3 rule 24 table words substituted by [S.I. 2023/1147 reg. 15\(3\)\(b\)\(i\)](#)
- Sch. 3 rule 24(2) words substituted by [S.I. 2023/1147 reg. 15\(3\)\(c\)](#)
- Sch. 5 rule 23(1)(ba) inserted by [S.I. 2023/1225 reg. 6\(4\)\(b\)](#)
- Sch. 5 rule 38(5)(e) and word inserted by [S.I. 2023/1225 reg. 6\(4\)\(c\)\(ii\)](#)
- Sch. 5 rule 26 modified (temp.) by [S.I. 2023/1147 Sch. 2 para. 11\(2\)\(3\)](#)
- Sch. 5 rule 38(5)(c) word omitted by [S.I. 2023/1225 reg. 6\(4\)\(c\)\(i\)](#)
- Sch. 5 rule 26(1)(b) words inserted by [S.I. 2023/1147 reg. 15\(7\)\(a\)](#)
- Sch. 5 rule 26 table words omitted by [S.I. 2023/1147 reg. 15\(7\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#)
- Sch. 5 rule 26 table words substituted by [S.I. 2023/1147 reg. 15\(7\)\(b\)\(i\)](#)
- Sch. 5 rule 26(2) words substituted by [S.I. 2023/1147 reg. 15\(7\)\(c\)](#)
- Sch. 5 rule 17(10) words substituted by [S.I. 2023/1225 reg. 6\(4\)\(a\)](#)