

The
Electoral
Commission

Voter ID - Your Guide

Everything you need
to know for the elections
on 2 May 2024 in
England and Wales

The Electoral Commission

On Thursday 2 May 2024, local elections are taking place in various parts of England. There will also be Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales.



At these elections you will need to bring photo identification (ID) to be able to vote at a polling station.

This booklet will explain registering to vote and which forms of photo ID you can use to vote. It also explains how to apply for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate, if you need one.



How do I register to vote?

If you want to vote you must first be registered to vote. If you have registered before, you only need to register again if you have moved house or changed your name. The need to register to vote, and how you register, has not been changed by the introduction of the voter ID requirement.

4 How do I register to vote?



To vote in the elections on 2 May 2024 you must be registered to vote by **11:59pm on Tuesday 16 April 2024.**

You can register to vote in these elections if you are either of the following:

- a British, Irish or qualifying Commonwealth citizen living in the UK
- an EU citizen living in the UK.

Even though you can register to vote from the age of 14 in Wales, you can't vote in Police and Crime Commissioner elections (which take place in England and Wales only), until you are 18 years old.

If you are unsure whether you are eligible to register to vote, or which elections you can vote in, contact your local council.



Visit **electoralcommission.org.uk/voter**, or call our helpline on 0800 328 0280 to find contact details for your local council.

To register to vote:



Visit **gov.uk/register-to-vote**, or complete a paper application form, which you can download at **gov.uk/government/collections/register-to-vote-paper-forms**

It's important to make sure your details are up to date on the electoral register. You do not need to provide your gender when registering to vote.



I am a member of a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller community.

If you live in permanent housing or have been staying at a site for a substantive length of time you can register at that address.

If not, you should register without a fixed address. To do this you will need to fill in a form titled 'Electoral registration form for someone with no fixed or permanent address' and give details of where you spend most of your time.



I am currently homeless.

If you are living in temporary accommodation, such as a hostel, you may be able to register at that address, as long as you don't have a permanent address somewhere else.

If you are homeless or do not have a fixed address you can still register to vote by filling in a form titled 'Electoral registration form for someone with no fixed or permanent address'.

Your local homelessness service may be able to help you to register to vote.

If you need help registering to vote, or want to request an application form, contact your local council.



Download the 'Electoral registration form for someone with no fixed or permanent address' at [gov.uk/ government/ publications/voter-registration-forms-paper-versions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/voter-registration-forms-paper-versions)



To find the contact details for your local council visit [electoralcommission.org.uk/voter](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voter) or call our helpline on **0800 328 0280**.



Which elections require photo ID?

Voters in England, Scotland and Wales now need to show photo ID when voting in person at some elections.

This requirement was proposed by the UK Government, who stated it was intended to “ensure that elections are better protected from the potential for voter fraud”, and became law when UK Parliament passed the Elections Act 2022.

Photo ID is required for...



- UK Parliament general elections
- UK Parliament by-elections
- and recall petitions
- Local council elections and by-elections
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections.

England



- UK Parliament general elections
- UK Parliament by-elections
- and recall petitions.

Scotland

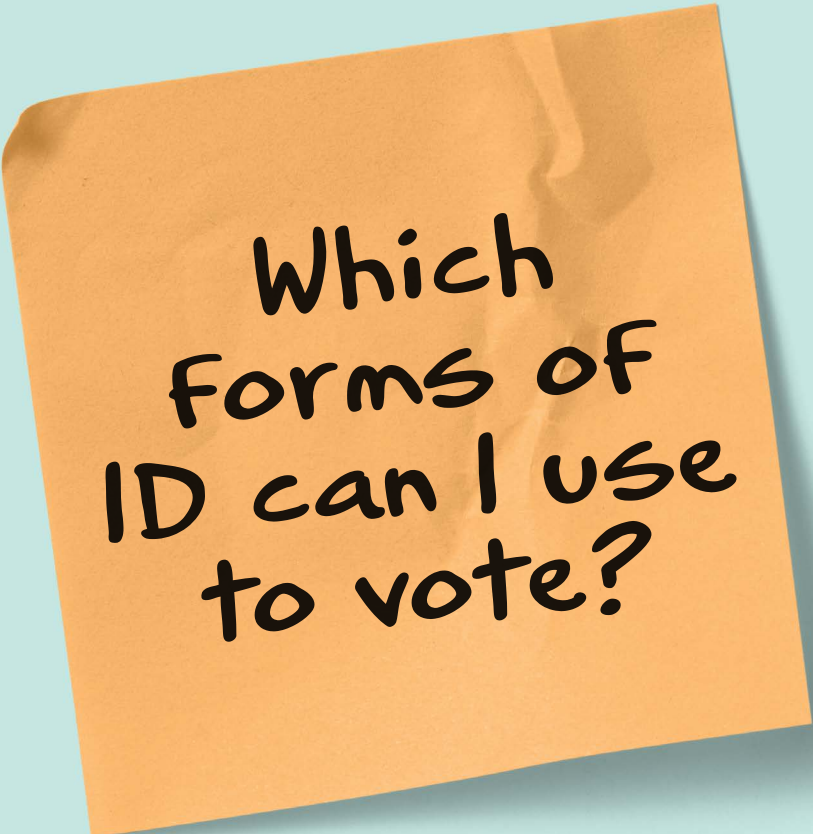


- UK Parliament general elections
- UK Parliament by-elections
- and recall petitions
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections.

Wales

Photo ID is not required for...

Scottish Parliament and Senedd elections, or local elections and by-elections in Scotland and Wales.



Which
forms of
ID can I use
to vote?

A wide range of forms of photo ID will be accepted when voting at a polling station.

You will only need to show one form of photo ID, but it needs to be the original version and not a photocopy. It must be a hard copy, not a digital version like you might find in an app.

Accepted forms of photo ID



International travel

Passport



Local travel

Certain concessionary travel cards



Driving

Driving licence (including provisional licence)

Blue badge



Proof of age

Identity card with PASS mark
(Proof of Age Standards Scheme)



Other government-issued documents

Biometric immigration document

Defence identity card

National identity card

Name on your photo ID



The name on your photo ID should be the same name you used to register to vote.

Gender

You do not need to show photo ID that includes a gender marker.

Expired photo ID

If you have a form of accepted photo ID which has expired or is out of date, you can still use it to vote at a polling station if it is still a good enough likeness for staff at the polling station to be able to identify you.

What to do if you don't have an accepted form of photo ID

If you want to vote at a polling station but don't have an accepted form of photo ID, you should apply for a Voter Authority Certificate.



For more information about which forms of ID will be accepted visit electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID or call our helpline on **0800 328 0280**.



Applying for a Voter Authority Certificate



The deadline to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate for use at the elections on 2 May 2024 is **5pm on Wednesday 24 April 2024.**

If you want to vote in person at a polling station, but:

- you don't have an accepted form of photo ID;
- feel worried about using an existing form of photo ID which has a gender marker;
- are not sure whether you still look like the photo on your ID;
- the name on your photo ID does not match the name that you registered to vote with.

You can apply for free voter ID known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

You need to be registered to vote before you apply for a Voter Authority Certificate. When you register to vote, you'll be asked whether you have photo ID or if you want to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate.

There are three ways to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate – online, by post or in person.

Apply online



Applications can be completed online at **voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk**

Apply by post

You can apply by completing a paper application form and sending this to your local council. The form is available in English and a range of accessible formats.




The form can be downloaded at **gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-voter-authority-certificate-by-post-if-youre-living-in-the-uk**

Apply in person

You may also be able to apply in person at your local council.



Visit **electoralcommission.org.uk/voter** or call our helpline on **0800 328 0280** to find contact details for your local council. They can help you apply for a Voter Authority Certificate, or request an application form.



What will I need to
apply for a Voter
Authority Certificate?

When applying for a Voter Authority Certificate, you will need to provide your:

- Name**
- Address**
- Date of birth**
- National Insurance number**

If you don't know your National Insurance number, or don't have one, you can still apply. Your local council will contact you to request alternative proof of your identity. If you can't provide documents to prove your identity, you can also arrange for someone who knows you to provide an attestation to support your application. Your local council can provide more information about the requirements of an attestation.

You do not need to provide your gender when applying for a Voter Authority Certificate, but you need to apply using the same name you used to register to vote.

Photograph requirements



You will also need to submit a photo with your application. The requirements for the photo are similar to the requirements for a passport photo.

If you need help taking your photo, your local council may be able to help you. They may provide an area at their office to take photos of applicants. Additional support may be available, however, this will vary between areas so you or the voter should contact their local council to find out what support they can provide.

What happens next

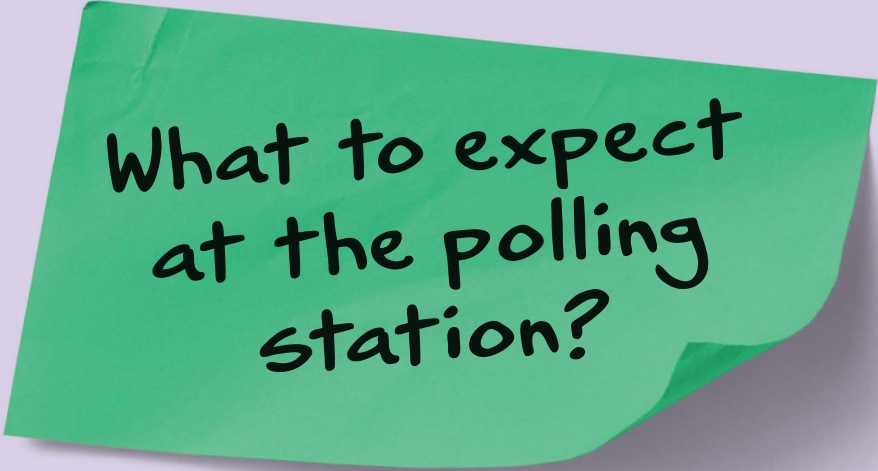
When you complete the application form, you'll be asked whether you would like to receive the instructions in large print, braille or easy read. Your local council will process your application and send your Voter Authority Certificate to you in the post, along with instructions on how to use it. If you have any questions about the application process you can contact your local council. Find their contact details by entering your postcode at

electoralcommission.org.uk/voter

Voter Authority Certificates have a tactile marking comprising four raised dots in the top left corner, to help you identify it. Voter Authority Certificates do not have an expiry date, but you should renew your Voter Authority Certificate after 10 years.



Find out more about the requirements at **electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID** or call our helpline on **0800 328 0280**.



What to expect at the polling station?

Polling stations will be open from 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM on election day. Around two weeks before polling day, information on where polling stations will be published on the Electoral Commission website. The address of the polling station will also be on the voter's poll card, which they will receive in the post.

There will be signs outside and inside the polling station to show people where to go. When you arrive at the polling station, a member of staff will:

1. Ask you for your name and address so they can find you on the electoral register;
2. Ask for your photo ID, and check if it is acceptable; and
3. Give you your ballot paper and direct you to complete it at a polling booth as usual.

Staff at the polling station are there to help, and all staff will receive training on how to check photo ID sensitively.

Staff will not be checking the gender marker, address or nationality on your photo ID.

Councils are responsible for ensuring that elections are well run and that voters feel comfortable casting their vote. As part of their planning, they will have thought about what arrangements are necessary to help make polling stations safe places.

Privacy

A private area will be available so that you can choose to have your photo ID checked in private if you like. This might be a separate room, or an area separated by a privacy screen.

You can request that a female member of staff checks your photo ID. This request will be granted if possible.

If you wear a face covering such as a veil, there should be a mirror available to allow you to replace it immediately once your photo ID has been checked.

If you wear a face covering for medical reasons and would prefer not to remove it indoors, polling station staff may be able to check your photo ID outside. If you have any concerns you can contact your local council.



If you have concerns about how your photo ID will be checked, please contact your local council to understand what local arrangements will be in place to support you to vote. You can find their contact details by entering your postcode at electoralcommission.org.uk/voter

Support at the polling station

Assistive equipment



All voters have the right to vote independently and in secret. Some assistive equipment will be available at the polling station to help people to do so.

Contact your local council to find out what assistive equipment will be available and request any additional equipment you feel you need.

The council will decide whether or not the requested equipment can be provided.

Other forms of support

Staff at the polling station are there to help, if you need help at any point, just ask.

The Presiding Officer can help you cast your vote if you would find this useful.

If you are disabled or feel you cannot vote at a polling station without assistance, you can bring someone with you to help.

Your companion must be over the age of 18. They will not need to show photo ID.

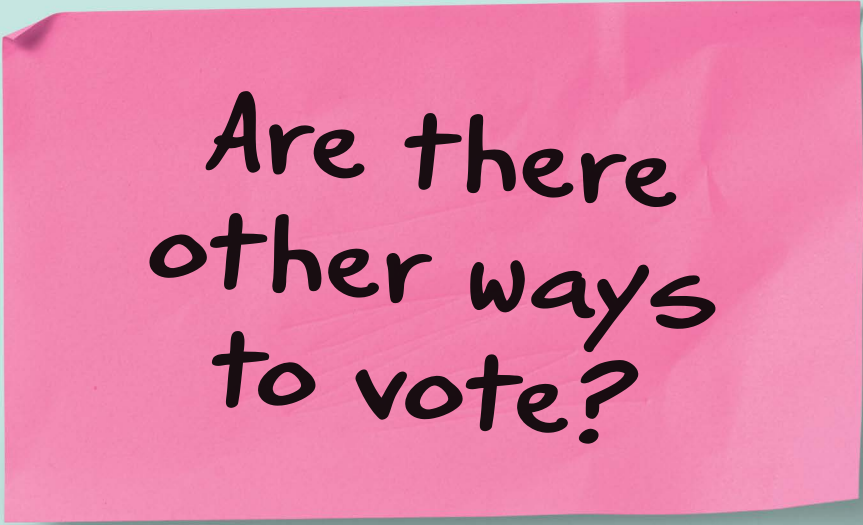
If a companion will be supporting you in the polling booth, you should inform the polling staff when you arrive. Your companion will be allowed to enter the polling booth to help you vote.



You can find contact details for your local council by calling our helpline on **0800 328 0280** or by entering your postcode at **electoralcommission.org.uk/voter**

What should I do if I experience issues at the polling station?

If you experience any issues when you go to vote or want to give feedback about your experience, you should contact your local council.



Are there
other ways
to vote?

If you won't be able to make it to the polling station on polling day, or you don't want to vote in person, there are other ways you can vote.

Voting by post



You **don't** need to provide photo ID to vote by post.



The deadline to apply to vote by post at the elections on 2 May 2024 is **5pm on Wednesday 17 April 2024.**

You will receive your ballot paper in the post. Follow the instructions to complete and return your ballot paper, ensuring you leave enough time for it to arrive at your local council by **10pm on Thursday 2 May 2024.** If you can't post your postal vote pack in time, you can hand it to staff at your polling station, or to your local council office, on polling day.

Voting by proxy

(allowing someone you trust to vote on your behalf)



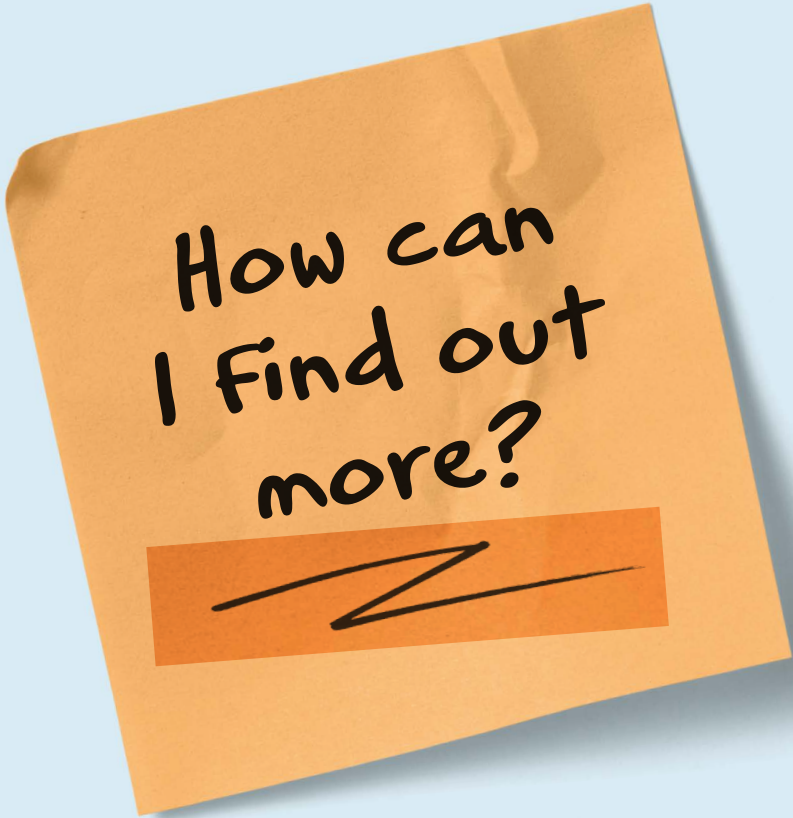
The deadline to apply to vote by proxy at the elections on 2 May 2024 is **5pm on Wednesday 24 April 2024.**

The person you choose to vote on your behalf will need to go to your polling station to vote and will need to show their own photo ID to be able to cast your vote. They will not need to show your photo ID when voting on your behalf.

If an emergency occurs after the deadline to apply for a proxy vote, meaning you cannot go to the polling station or polling place in person, you can apply for an emergency proxy up to **5pm on Thursday 2 May 2024.**



For more information or to get a postal or proxy application form, visit **electoralcommission.org.uk/voter** or call our helpline on **0800 328 0280.**



If you have any questions or would like to obtain this information in an accessible format, go to electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID, or call our helpline on **0800 328 0280**.

This booklet has been produced by the Electoral Commission.

The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK. We work to promote public confidence in the democratic process and ensure its integrity.



The deadline to register to vote in the elections on 2 May 2024 is **11:59pm on Tuesday 16 April 2024.**



The headline to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate for the elections on 2 May 2024 is **5pm on Wednesday 24 April 2024.**

For more information on:

- Registering to vote
- Which elections require photo ID
- What photo ID will be accepted when voting
- How to apply for free voter ID.



electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID



0800 328 0280

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My election to-do list

- Have I registered to vote?
- Do I have photo ID?
- If not, have I applied
for free voter ID?
- Have I voted?



For more information

Visit electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID

Call our helpline on **0800 328 0280**.