

Voter ID and UK General Elections



Why do I need Voter ID?

There is a new rule that requires voters to show photo ID when they vote at polling stations. This only applies to UK General Elections, and you will not need photo ID for Scottish Parliament elections or local Council elections.



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UK General Election

At a UK general election people can vote for who they want to be their MP. The person elected will represent their constituency in the House of Commons for up to 5 years.

The next UK general election is on **Thursday 4th July 2024**.

You can find out which candidates are standing in your constituency on your Council's website and on local noticeboards or in newspapers. The MP you currently have may not be standing again for election.

When you go to your polling place you will be given a ballot paper with the list of candidates and you will mark an 'X' next to the candidate of your choice. The candidate that receives the most amount of votes will be elected. This is called the First Past the Post system (FPTP).

To be able to vote in a general election you must be:

- Over the age of 18 on election day
- Registered to vote
- A British, Irish or qualifying Commonwealth citizen
- Resident at an address in the UK or living abroad and registered as an overseas voter
- Not legally excluded from voting

You'll be sent a poll card just before the election telling you when to vote and at which polling station. You can only vote at the polling station location on your card.

What is voter ID and do I already have one?

For UK General Elections you will now need photo ID to be able to vote so it's important to know whether the ID you might already have will be accepted. There are many forms of ID that are acceptable, the most common forms of ID are:

- **Passport**

This can be a passport issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory, an EEA state or a Commonwealth country (including an Irish Passport Card).

- **Driving Licence**

Driving licence issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state (this includes a provisional driving licence) or a Blue Badge.

- **Scottish National Entitlement Card**

This is a card issued for the purpose of concessionary travel (including a 60+, disabled or under 22s bus pass).

- **Other government issued documents**

Biometric immigration document, Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card), National identity card issued by an EEA state or Electoral Identity Card issued in Northern Ireland.

You will only need to show **one** form of photo ID. It needs to be the **original** version and not a photocopy. You can use out of date photo ID to vote as long as the photo still looks like you. The name on your ID should be the same name you used when you registered to vote.

What if I don't have voter ID?

If you don't have one of the accepted forms of Photo ID, you can apply for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate. This is if you:

- Don't have an accepted form of photo ID
- Aren't sure whether your photo ID still looks like you

You can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate on the UK Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate>.

You can also apply by post by completing a paper application form and sending it to your Electoral Registration Officer. You can download the form online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-voter-authority-certificate-by-post-if-youre-living-in-the-uk>.

You can also apply in person at your local Electoral Registration Office. You can find out where this is online: <https://electoralcommission.org.uk/voter> or you can call the helpline on 0800 328 0280 to find contact details for your Electoral Registration Officer.

When you apply you will need to provide:

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

How to register to vote

To be able to get a Voter Authority Certificate you must first be registered to vote.

You can register to vote on the UK Government website:
<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>.

You can use the register to vote service to:

- Get on the electoral register so you can vote in elections
- Update your name, address or nationality by registering again with your new details (if you live in the UK)

The deadline to register to vote is **18 June**.

If you are unsure whether you are eligible to register to vote, or which elections you can vote in, you can contact your local Electoral Registration Officer (ERO).

You can do this by going online to:

electoralcommission.org.uk/voter, or you call the helpline on 0800 328 0280 to find contact details for your Electoral Registration Officer.

If you are currently homeless or don't have a permanent or fixed address you are still able to register to vote by filling in the form "Electoral registration form for someone with no fixed or permanent address". You can get this form online or posted to you by the Electoral Registration Office:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-to-vote-if-you-havent-got-a-fixed-or-permanent-address>.

Changing the address on your driving licence

If you have recently moved address then you will need to update your driving licence.

You can do this for free online on the DVLA website:
<https://www.gov.uk/change-address-driving-licence>.

Before you begin you will need your passport number, your National Insurance number and your current driving licence.

You can change the address on either your full driving licence or your provisional driving licence.

Once you have completed the online process you must cut your licence in half and post it to the DVLA. You can still drive while you are awaiting your new licence to arrive in post.

You can still use out of date photo ID, like an expired driving licence, to vote as long as the photo looks like you. The name on your ID should be the same you used to register to vote.



Useful words to know

MP:

This is short for Member of Parliament. MPs are elected to represent their constituents in the House of Commons.

Election:

This is when people can vote for who they want to run the country or region. There are elections for your MP, MSP and Councillor, elections fall on Thursdays.

Constituency:

There are 57 constituency areas in Scotland for the UK Parliament. There are 73 areas across Scotland called 'Scottish Parliament constituencies'.

Constituent:

A constituent is someone who lives in a constituency, each constituency differs in its total number of constituents.

Polling place/station:

This is where you can go and vote in person. Polling places are usually primary schools or community halls.

Ballot Paper:

This is the sheet of paper you are given when you enter a polling place where you cast your vote. For each type of election there will be a different type of ballot paper. You will either put a number next to the candidate you wish to vote for or you will mark a cross.

Useful words to know

Proxy Vote:

This is when you allow someone else to vote on your behalf. This might be a trusted friend or family member. To use proxy voting you will need to complete an application form and send it to your local electoral registration office by **26th June**.

Postal vote:

You can vote by post if you don't want to or cannot vote in person at a polling station. You can apply online or by post for a postal vote and you must apply by **19th June**.

Manifesto:

Before an election a political party will publish a manifesto. This will contain a set of policies that the party stands for and would like to introduce if they are elected into Government.

First Past the Post:

MPs are voted into the UK Parliament through an election system called First Past the Post (FPTP). The candidate with the most votes, wins and the candidate only needs one more vote than another to win.

Candidate:

Someone standing in an election to become an MP, MSP or Councillor. Candidates may be part of a political party or they may stand independently.



Connecting Equalities is a Scottish Government funded project for Equalities and Human Rights. We work alongside diverse groups of older people connecting their everyday experiences to rights and equalities to help shape what matters to them for a good life.

To read more about the project and see our other resources check out our website:
<https://otbds.org/projects/connecting-equalities/>

