

Voter ID – May 2023

FAQ's

From May 2023, voters across England will need to show photo ID to vote in person in a polling station, following new requirements introduced by the Elections Act. A new form of free ID, the Voter Authority Certificate, will be available for those who do not have another type of accepted ID.

This document answers frequently asked questions on how voter ID will be implemented for the first time. There is more information on the Electoral Commission's website at electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID.

At which elections will there be a requirement to show photo ID?

From May, voters will need to show photo ID before voting in local council elections in England, police and crime commissioner elections in England and Wales, and in any parliamentary by-elections. From 5 October 2023, voters will need photo ID at UK parliamentary general elections.

It will not be required at local elections in Scotland or Wales, or elections to Scottish Parliament or Senedd. The requirement already exists in Northern Ireland.

Which forms of ID are acceptable?

Accepted forms of ID include:

- 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
- A driving licence issued by the UK, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state
- Some concessionary travel pass, such as an Older Person's Bus Pass or an Oyster 60+ card

People will be able to use expired photo ID if they are still recognisable from the photo. There is more information on the Electoral Commission's website on all the accepted types of ID at electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID.

Why isn't [other form of ID] accepted?

The law specifies the types of documents that are accepted forms of ID. These have been decided by the UK Government.

If needed: The UK Government has provided more information about which forms of ID are accepted and which are not, along with the criteria considered. You can find [that on gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

What will happen if a voter goes to the polling station with no accepted identification?

If a voter turns up at a polling station with no accepted photo identification, they will not be issued with a ballot paper and will need to return with an accepted form of photo identification.

What if a voter doesn't want to show ID to vote?

If a voter would prefer not to show ID at a polling station, they can apply to vote by post or proxy. Photo ID isn't required to apply or vote by post or proxy. Though, their proxy will be required to show their photo ID at the polling station.

For the May 2023 elections, the deadline for applying for a postal vote is 18 April 2023, and the deadline for proxy is 25 April 2023.

What are you doing about those without ID?

We are working to ensure that anyone without an accepted form of ID is aware of the free ID available and understands how to apply for it.

The Electoral Commission is running a national public awareness campaign, which we are supporting through engagement with our network of local residents, members and service users.

What will the Voter Authority Certificate/ free ID application process look like?

Voters can apply for free voter ID online at voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk/ or by completing and posting a paper form to their local council's electoral services team. Some local authorities may accept applications in person. Voters will need to provide a photograph, their date of birth and National Insurance number as part of the application.

Anyone who needs voter ID to vote in the May 2023 elections, must apply by 5pm on Tuesday 25 April.

What information is included on the Voter Authority Certificate/ free ID?

The free ID will show a voter's full name and photograph, the issuing local council, an appropriate identifier (reference including numbers and letters allocated by the council), the date of issue and a recommended renewal date.

How does this impact voting by post or proxy?

Voters will not need to show photo ID in order to apply by post or proxy. Although the proxy will need to show their photo ID at the polling station.

For the May 2023 elections, the deadline to apply for a postal vote is 18 April and the deadline for proxy is 25 April.

Will voter ID disenfranchise people?

We are working to ensure people are aware of the change, understand which forms of ID are accepted, and for those without, how and when to apply for free ID. Our aim is to support those who wish to vote to do so successfully and with confidence.