

VOTER ID Q&A

What's changing?

The Elections Act 2022 requires registered voters to show an accepted form of photo ID before they can vote in person at their polling station.

If a voter is unable to show an accepted form of photo ID when they go to their polling station, they will not be able to vote.

I didn't need to show a photo ID to vote before, so why do I need one to vote now?

Because the law has changed. Requiring voters to prove their identity removes the potential for someone to impersonate another voter and to commit voter fraud by using their vote. The intention is to increase confidence in the voting process.

What types of ID can I bring with me?

Examples of acceptable types of photo ID include,

- Passport
- Driving licence (including provisional license)
- Blue badge
- Certain concessionary travel cards
- Identity card with PASS mark (Proof of Age Standards Scheme)
- Biometric Immigration document
- Defence identity card
- Certain national identity cards

[View a full list of acceptable forms of ID](#)

My photo ID is expired, do I need to renew it before I can use it to vote?

You can still use an expired photo ID, like a passport, so long as it is clear, and you can be identified from the photo.

I don't have any of the accepted/approved photo IDs listed, what do I do?

If you don't have any of the approved types of photo IDs, you can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate. You can then use the Voter Authority Certificate as a photo ID to vote.

What is a Voter Authority Certificate?

A Voter Authority Certificate is photo ID that can be used for the sole purpose of being able to vote at a polling station in the UK.

How can I get a Voter Authority Certificate?

To apply for a Voter Authority Certificate, visit <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate>. You will need to provide proof of your identity, check what [information you will need to provide](#) to apply.

Please make sure that you are registered to vote before you apply for a Voter Authority Certificate. If you're not sure, email electoral.services@croydon.gov.uk or call 0300 373 0595.

If you are not registered, you need to register to vote.

You can apply online or by post <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id/applying-a-voter-authority-certificate>

To apply you will need

- a recent, digital photo of yourself
- your National Insurance number

If you do not have a National Insurance number, you can use other documents that prove your identity, for example a birth certificate, bank statement and utility bill.

I can't apply online; how can I apply?

You can [visit one of our libraries](#) and use one of the computers there for free. Or you can apply by post, see below for more information.

Can I apply by post?

Yes, you can apply for the Voter Authority Certificate by post. [Visit one of our libraries](#) or Electoral Services, The Town Hall, Katharine Street to pick up a paper application form. You can [download and print a copy of the Voter Authority Certificate](#) application form at home.

Please return paper applications to:

Electoral Services

The Town Hall
Katharine Street
Croydon, CR9 1DE

If you need any help with applying for a Voter Authority Certificate, contact our Electoral Services Team on 0300 373 595 / electoral.services@croydon.gov.uk

I struggle to fill in forms by myself, is there someone that can help me?

You can get support from the following places:

- **Libraries**

[Visit one of our libraries](#), and one of our staff can help you.

- **Contact centre**

You can speak to an adviser at our contact centre on 0300 373 595 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm) to arrange for someone to support you.

Also, you can call the Electoral Commission Helpline for help on 0800 328 0280.

How much does the Voter Authority Certificate cost?

It's free to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate.

What is the deadline to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate?

The deadline to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate is 5pm 6 working days before an election. For the Mayor of London and Greater London Assembly elections 2 May

Processing your application

We will process your application and send your Voter Authority Certificate and instructions on how to use it by post.

Voter Authority Certificates have no expiry date, but it's recommended that you renew your certificate after 10 years.

Get help applying for a Voter Authority Certificate or want to request an application form, contact our Electoral Registration Office on 0300 373 595 or email electoral.services@croydon.gov.uk

How we handle personal data you provide to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate

All the personal data you provide when applying for a certificate is stored securely in line with data protection regulations.

Is there a deadline to apply for the Voter Authority Certificate?

The deadline to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate will be 5pm six working days before the date of the election, 24 April for the London Mayoral election.

How long is the Voter Authority Certificate valid for, do I need to apply for one every year?

The Voter Authority Certificate has no expiry date, but the recommendation is to renew it every 10 years.

When will I get the Voter Authority Certificate?

Electoral Services will process your application as soon as possible and provided there are no problems your application, your Voter Authority Certificate will be dispatched within 5 working days.

What information do I need to provide to get a Voter Authority Certificate?

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

- Name
- Date of birth
- Address
- National Insurance number
- a recent photograph

If you don't know your National Insurance number, or don't have one, you can still apply. The Electoral Services Team will contact you to request alternative proof of your identity, such as a birth certificate, bank statement and a utility bill.

If you don't have any other accepted proof of identity, you can ask someone you know to confirm your identity. This is known as an attestation.

The type of photograph needed is like the one you need for a passport photo. Details of these requirements can be found on Voter Authority website <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate>

If you don't know your National Insurance number

You can find your National Insurance number on:

- payslips
- official letters about tax, pensions or benefits

I have lost my poll card/ I didn't get a poll card can I still vote?

This year the traditional poll card design has been replaced by an enveloped letter. The envelope will say 'POLL CARD ENCLOSED' on it. The purpose of a poll card is to tell you your polling station you can vote in is located. You can vote without your poll card, but it makes the voting process quicker if you take it with you when you go to vote.

Will I need a Voter ID if voting by post or by proxy?

You don't need to show photo ID to apply to vote by post or proxy, however, your proxy will need to show their photo ID at the polling station when they vote on your behalf.

Voters who vote by post do not need to acceptable photo ID.

What is the deadline to vote by post or proxy?

The deadline to apply to vote by post is 5pm, 11 working days before an election, so **5pm on Wednesday, 17 April** is the last day you can apply to vote by post for the Mayor of London and Greater London Assembly elections.

The deadline to apply to vote by proxy is 5pm, 6 working days before an election, so **5pm on Wednesday, 24 April** for the Mayor of London and Greater London Assembly elections.

When is the deadline I can register to vote?

The last date you can register to vote is midnight 12 working days before an election, so for the Mayor of London and Greater London Assembly elections **midnight on Tuesday 16 April**.

Returning completed postal votes

All postal votes will include a pre-paid 1st class envelope for the postal vote to be returned in. It must be received before 10pm on Thursday 2 May.

However, voters can hand in their postal vote and/or the postal vote of others at the Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon, CR9 1DE during normal office hours, or at any polling station in the borough before 10pm on Thursday 2 May 2024.

When voters hand-deliver postal votes they must complete a form to be attached to the postal vote. Staff either at the Town Hall or at the polling station will provide you with a form to complete. **Please** allow extra time to do this when hand delivering postal votes.

There is now a limit to the number of postal votes someone can hand deliver – You can hand in your own postal vote and postal votes for up to **5** other voters.

A political campaigner can only hand in their postal vote plus the votes of up to 5 family members or people for whom they provide regular care.

I'm currently homeless/have no permanent address; can I get a Voter Authority Certificate?

Yes, but first you must register to vote. You can choose to collect the voter ID from Electoral Services office.

To register to vote, to fill in a form titled '[Electoral registration form for someone with no fixed or permanent address](#)'.

The form asks for the address where you would like to be registered. This can be anywhere in the local authority area where they spend a substantial part of their time. The form also asks for an address where correspondence, including the poll card, can be sent.

Hard copies of the forms can be collected from the Reception in the Town Hall.

I'm temporarily in hospital, can I apply for a VAC?

Yes.

I'm in prison, can I get a VAC?

Convicted prisoners are not eligible to register to vote, so consequently cannot apply for VAC.

I have a photo ID, but my name has changed, married/divorced etc...different to the one on the ID. What do I do?

If you arrive at the polling station, explain to the Presiding Officer the reason for discrepancy. The Presiding Officer will ask number of prescribed questions, if they are satisfied with your answers, you will be allowed to vote.

It is best however to update the name on the electoral register. Please email electoral.services@croydon.gov.uk, provide your name address and proof of name change such as change of name deed poll, marriage certificate, decree absolute.