

Changes to how you can vote



Easy read booklet

Who we are



We are **Shout Out UK**. We teach young people how to write and say what they think about what happens in **media** and **politics**.



Media means all the ways we get information, like from tv, radio, or newspapers.



Politics means how decisions are made by groups of people.



We are working with **Greater London Authority** and the **Electoral Commission** to make sure people in London know about some changes that have been made in the last year to how they can vote.

GREATER
LONDON
AUTHORITY

The
Electoral
Commission

Greater London Authority speak and stand up for people who live in London. Greater London Authority is based at London City Hall.

The **Electoral Commission** helps people vote.

What this booklet is about



Some new changes have been made to how you vote in some **elections**. **Elections** are when lots of people vote for the person they would like to be in charge or make decisions for them.



These changes are part of a law called **The Elections Act**.



We have made a **campaign** to tell people about the new changes. A **campaign** is when you share information to get people to do or talk about something.



The main change is that you must now show a certain type of **photo ID** when you vote. **Photo ID** means a document with a photo of you that shows who you are, like a passport or driving licence.



This booklet tells you about this main change and our campaign.

About our campaign



Our campaign will tell everyone in London about the new changes to how they vote.



We mostly want people who are **under-represented** or not **registered** to vote, to see our campaign.



Under-represented means from a group of people who don't often vote so what they think is not said or heard.

Registered means to sign up so you are allowed to vote in elections.



We have asked people who are under-represented to help us make information and things like posters for our campaign.



Lots of different organisations and people who work in education helped to make our campaign.



We will share information about our campaign with **communities** in London, people who work in education, and on **social media**.



Communities means where people live and who they know.



Social media means online apps like Instagram, X (Twitter) or Facebook.



We will also run activities where people can learn about the new changes to how they vote.

Why our campaign is important



We know how hard it is for people who are deaf, disabled or part of the LGBTQIA+ community to vote.



The new changes make it harder for people who are not registered and are under-represented to vote.



Out of everywhere in the UK, London has one of the smallest number of people who are registered to vote.



We want our campaign to get more people registered and able to vote.

If you want to talk to someone



You might want to talk to someone about these new changes.



You can send an email to
correspondence@communities.gov.uk



You can write a letter and send it to this address

**The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF**



Send an email to this address if you are a civil society organisation and you want to help us with our campaign

democracy@london.gov.uk

Answers to some questions

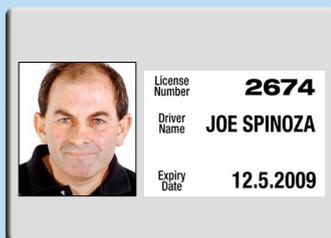


The rest of this booklet answers some questions you might have about how you vote.



What type of photo ID do I need to vote?

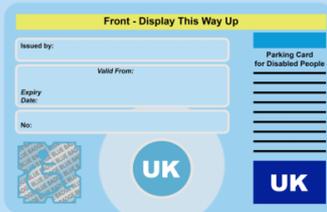
You must show a certain type of photo ID when you vote. You must show one photo ID from the list below.



- A UK passport.
- A passport from a country in the EEA or Commonwealth.
- A driving licence from the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or a country in the EEA.
- A national identity card from a country in the EEA.
- An Older Person's Bus Pass.



- A Disabled Person's Bus Pass.
- A biometric immigration document.



- A Freedom Pass.

- A Blue Badge.

- A free Voter Authority Certificate.

- A 60+ Oyster photocard.

- An identity card called a PASS.

- A Ministry of Defence Form 90.



If your photo ID is out of date, you can still use it to vote if the photo looks a lot like you.



You won't be the person who decides if your photo still looks like you.

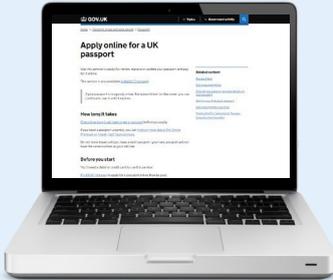


If you are not sure, you can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate. You can find out more about this later on in this booklet.





Where can I get these types of photo ID?

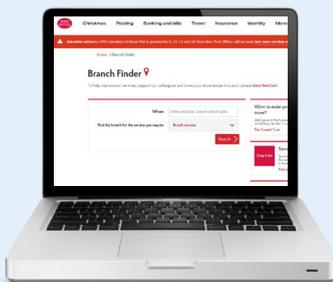


Go to this website to apply for a British passport

www.gov.uk/apply-renew-passport

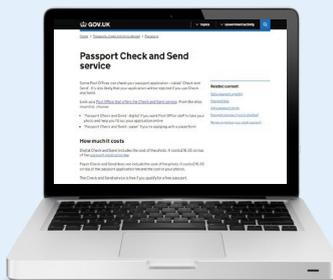


Or go to your local post office to get a form to apply for a passport.



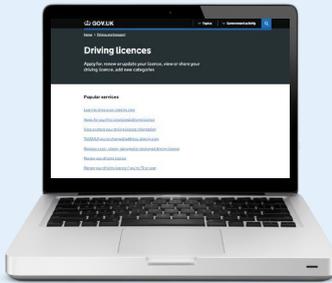
Go to this website to find your local post office

www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder



Go to this website to find out more about how the post office can help

www.gov.uk/how-the-post-office-check-and-send-service-works



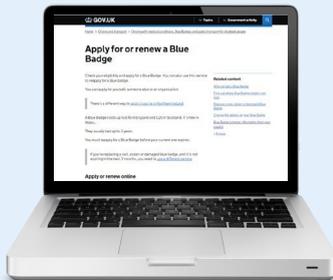
Go to this website to apply, renew or update your driving licence

www.gov.uk/browse/driving/driving-licences



Go to this website to apply for a 60+ Oyster photocard

tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/60-plus-oyster-photocard

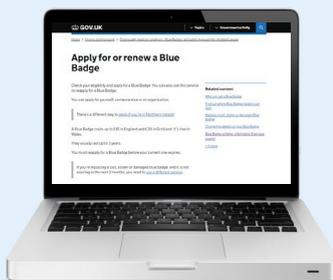


Go to this website to apply for a Blue Badge

www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge

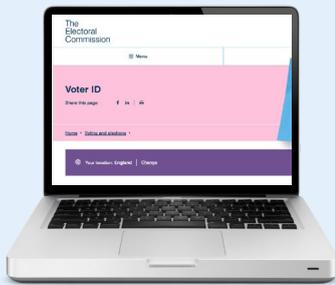


Talk to your **local council** if you want to ask any questions about Blue Badges. Your **local council** are in charge of services in your area.



Go to this website to find your local council

www.gov.uk/blue-badge-scheme-information-council



Go to this website to read the Electoral Commission's advice

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id



Go to this website to find out how Citizens Advice can also help you

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/

When will I need a photo ID to vote?



A new law started in **May 2023** that changes how people can vote in all elections.



You now need to show photo ID to vote in all types of elections.



This includes

- the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections.
- local elections
- general elections



What types of photo ID can I not use to vote?

You cannot use

- a work pass.
- a student pass.
- a railcard.
- an 18+ Oyster card.

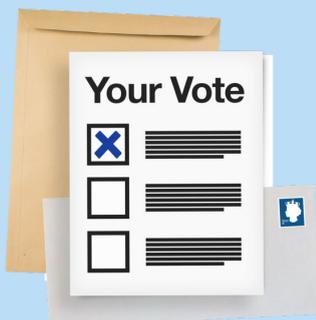


What will happen if I go to the polling station, and I do not have a photo ID?



A **polling station** is the place where you go to vote.

If you do not have a photo ID, you will not be given a **ballot paper** and you will not be able to vote.



A **ballot paper** is a piece of paper with choices for who you can vote for.



Can I still vote if I do not want to show a photo ID?



If you do not want to show a photo ID, you can ask someone else to vote for you or send your vote in the post.



The person who votes for you will need to show their own photo ID when they vote for you.

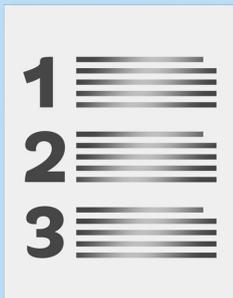


If someone has asked you to vote for them, you can only do this for four people. Two of them can live in the UK.



Will someone check my photo ID?

At the polling station, someone will check that the name on your photo ID is the same as your name on the **electoral register**.



The **electoral register** is a list of everyone who can vote.



They will not check your **gender**, address or **nationality** on your photo ID.

Your **gender** means if you describe yourself as a male, female or something else.



Your **nationality** means what country you were born in.



What should I do if my name on my photo ID is not the same as my name on the electoral register?

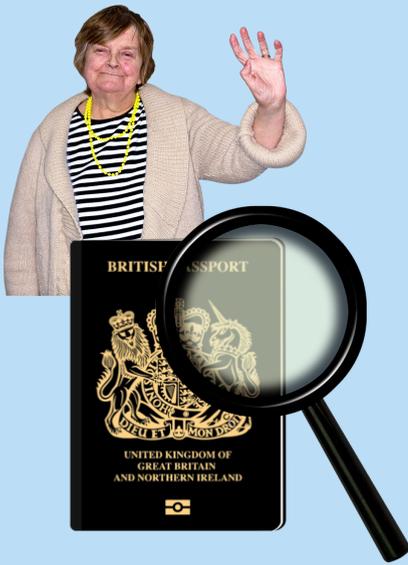


You will need to show an official document that says you have changed your name.

Or you can apply for a free **Voter Authority Certificate** using the same name you wrote down when you registered to vote.



Or you can contact your local council and ask them to change your name on the electoral register.



Can someone check my photo ID in private?

Private means as few people as possible will see your photo ID or your face if it is covered for religious or medical reasons.

Yes. You can ask for someone to check your photo ID in private.



What should I do if I do not want my photo ID to show my gender?

A Voter Authority Certificate does not show your gender.



Go to this website to apply for a **free** Voter Authority Certificate

www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate



What do I do if my photo ID is lost or stolen close to an election?

Someone else will need to vote for you. Go to this website to apply for someone else to vote for you



www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/ways-vote/apply-vote-proxy



How do I apply for a Voter Authority Certificate?

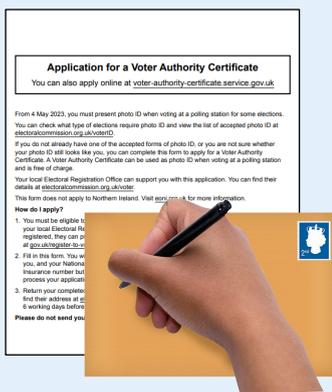


Go to this website to apply
www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate



You will need

- a photo of yourself.
- your date of birth.
- your National Insurance number.



Go to this website to print out a paper copy of this form
www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-voter-authority-certificate-by-post-if-youre-living-in-the-uk



You should send the form to your local council.



Can I get help to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate?



Your local council can help you to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate.



Can I use a Voter Authority Certificate as photo ID for other things?

No. You can only use a Voter Authority Certificate to vote.



Do I need to take a photo for a Voter Authority Certificate?

Yes.



Are there rules about how to take the photo?

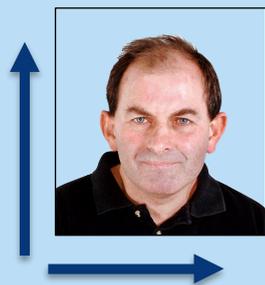
Yes. You need to



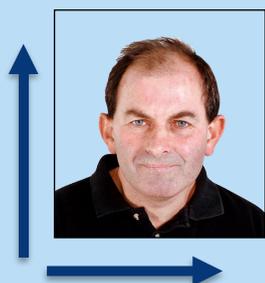
- ✓ look at the camera.
- ✓ not wear anything on your face or head, unless you wear a head covering because of your religion.



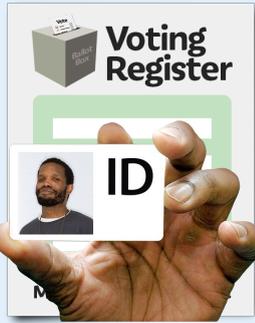
- ✓ make sure you take the picture against a plain, light background.
- ✓ have a plain expression. This means you cannot smile or frown.



If you apply for a Voter Authority Certificate online your photo needs to be at least 20cm tall and 16cm wide.



If you apply for a Voter Authority Certificate using a paper form your photo needs to be at least 45 mm tall and 210 mm wide.



Do I need to register to vote and show a photo ID?

Yes. You will need to register to vote and show a certain type of photo ID



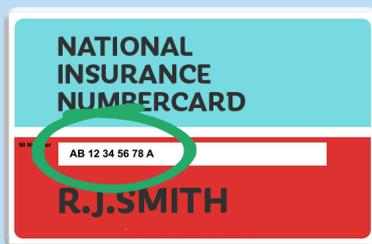
How do I register to vote?

Go to this website to fill in an online form

www.gov.uk/register-to-vote



It should only take you 5 minutes to fill in the online form.



It is helpful if you have your National Insurance number but do not worry if you don't have it.



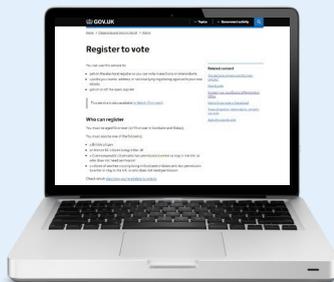
Your National Insurance number is used to check who you are.



Can I register to vote if I don't have a National Insurance number?



You can register to vote if you don't have a National Insurance number.



You still need to fill in the online form, but the form will ask for your contact details so someone from your local council can talk to you.



Someone from your local council will check who you are in a different way.



They might ask you to send a **copy** of your birth certificate, a bill, or a bank statement. A **copy** means you don't send them the real document.

18



Do I have to be 18 to register and to vote?

You can register to vote when you are 16, but you need to be 18 to vote.



Do I only have to register once?

You will have to register to vote again if you change your name or address.



If you get **British citizenship** you should register to vote again. **British citizenship** means that by law you can vote, work in the UK and have a British passport.

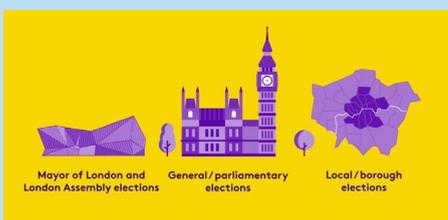
What elections can I vote in?

You can vote in all elections if you are British, Irish, or from a Commonwealth country.

If you are from a country in the EU you might be able to vote in



- London borough council elections.
- Mayor of London and London Assembly elections.





You can only vote in local elections if you are

- a **qualifying EU Citizen**
- Or
- an **EU Citizen with retained voting rights.**



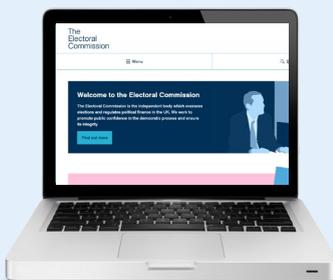
A **qualifying EU Citizen** is someone who used to live in Denmark, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal or Spain who can stay or work in the UK.



A **citizen** is a person who lives in a place like a town, city or country.



An **EU Citizen with retained voting rights** is someone from other EU countries that has been allowed to stay or work in the UK since before **31 December 2020.**



Go to this website to find out more about what elections you can vote in

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/which-elections-can-i-vote#citizenship-en

Who can register to vote in London?



You can register to vote if you

- usually live in London, and you are 16 years old.
- are British, Irish, or if you are from a country in the EU or Commonwealth.
- did live in London but now live in a different country. You will need to register with your address from when you lived in London. You will also need to register every 3 years.



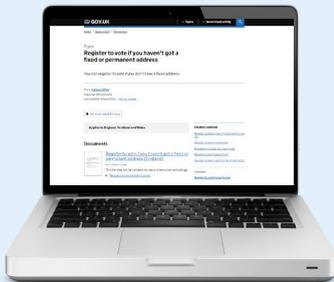
Go to this website to find out if you can register to vote

[www.electoralcommission.org.uk/
i-am-a/voter/which-elections-
can-i-vote](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/which-elections-can-i-vote)



Can I vote if I don't have an address?

You can vote if you're homeless or if you don't have an address. You will need to use the address of the place where you are most often. This is called a **declaration of local connection**.



Go to this website if you need to fill in a **declaration of local connection**

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



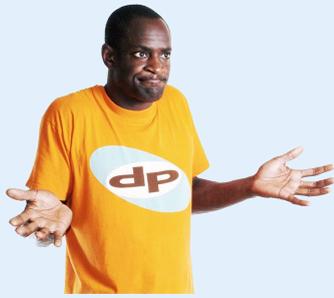
Do I have to register to vote or apply for a Voter Authority Certificate by a certain time?



You can register to vote any time, but you should register 2 weeks before any election you want to vote in.



You must apply for a Voter Authority Certificate by 5pm 6 working days before you can vote.



Why should I register to vote or get a Photo ID to vote?



If you register to vote, your **credit score** gets better. **Credit score** is a number that can help you buy things because it shows if you can be trusted to pay.



If you register to vote you can also be chosen to take part in **jury service**.



Jury service is when you go to court to help make a decision about a crime with a group of people called a jury.



If you vote you have the chance to say what you think about issues that most affect you and your community.



Who will see my information if I register to vote or apply for a Voter Authority Certificate?



When you register to vote, any information about you is kept safe. If you are worried about your safety, you can register to vote **anonymously**.



Anonymously means your name and address won't be on the electoral register.



When you vote, you will need to show a document called an **Anonymous Elector's Document** instead of a photo ID.



Go to this website to find out more about how you can register to vote anonymously

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/who-can-vote/register-vote/register-vote-anonymously



How do I apply for an Anonymous Elector's Document?

You need your name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number to apply.



If you cannot find your National Insurance number, you can still apply.



You can ask someone you know to **verify your identity**.



Verify your identity means someone else answers some easy questions about you, like what is your name and address.



Ask your local council about who can verify your identity.



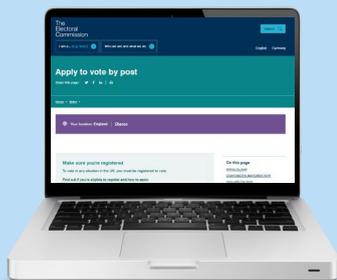
You can still ask someone else to vote for you (proxy voting) or vote by post if you want to vote anonymously.



Are there different ways to vote?



After you register to vote, you can vote in person on the day of the election, by post, or by asking someone else to vote for you (proxy voting).



Go to this website to find the form you need to fill in if you want to vote by post

www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote



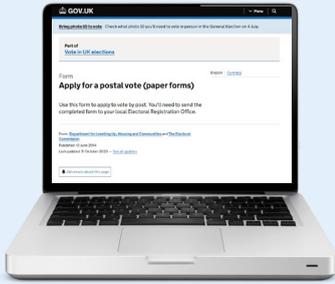
Go to this website to find the form you need to fill in if you want to ask someone else to vote for you

www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote



You can print these forms and fill in the paper copies if you cannot fill them in online.

The next page tells you how to do this.



Go to this website to print the form you need to fill in if you want to vote by post

www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote



Go to this website to print the form you need to fill in if you want to ask someone else to vote for you

www.gov.uk/government/collections/proxy-voting-application-forms

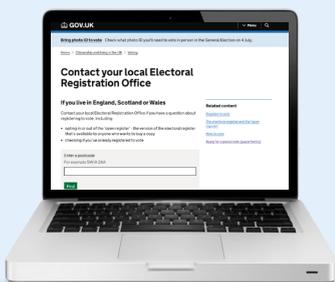


You can also ask for the forms to be sent to your address if you cannot print them.



You will need to send them to your local **Electoral Registration Office**.

Your **Electoral Registration Office** can give you information about voting, like if you are registered to vote.



Go to this website to find out more information about voting in your local area

www.gov.uk/contact-electoral-registration-office



Do I always need a photo ID to vote?

No. You do not need photo ID if you ask someone to vote for you or if you vote by post.

If someone votes for you, they will need to show their own photo ID.



What changes have been made to how I can vote?

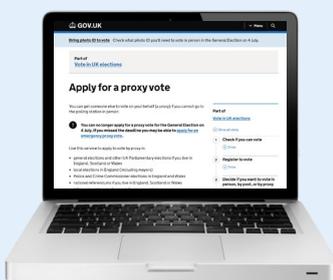
Since **October 2023** you

- can apply online if you want to choose someone to vote for you. You will need to show photo ID.
- need to reapply every 3 years if you want to vote by post. You will be able to do this online or by a paper form.



Go to this website to find out more about postal voting

www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote



Go to this website to find out more about how someone else can vote for you (proxy voting)

www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote



Where can I find my local polling station?

When your **polling card** is sent to you in the post it will tell you where your polling station is.



A **polling card** tells you where your polling station will be and on what day you can vote.



Your polling station could be any public building near you like a school or community centre.



7am to 10pm

Your polling station will be open from 7am to 10pm on the day you can vote.



It's okay if you lose your polling card, you can always find your polling station if you go to this website and search for your postcode

wheredoivote.co.uk/



What will happen at my local polling station?



Someone will ask for your name and address and check you are on the electoral register.



They will look at your photo ID and give you a ballot paper.

You will then choose who you want to vote for on your ballot.



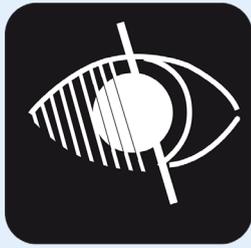
How will someone check my photo ID if I wear a face covering because of my religion?



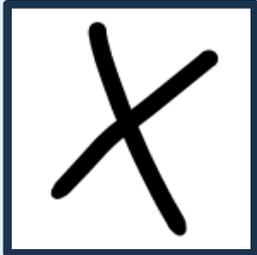
You might need to take your face covering off for a short amount of time so someone can check you are the person on your photo ID.



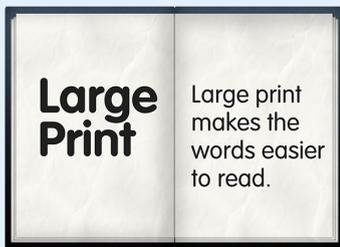
You can ask for a woman to check your photo ID and to go somewhere private before you take your face covering off.



I'm blind, can someone help me at the polling station?



Yes. Someone can help you put a cross by the person you want to vote for on your paper ballot.



All polling stations should have

- Tactile marks.
- Audio machines.
- a large print paper ballot.
- magnifiers.



Can I ask for a reasonable adjustment?

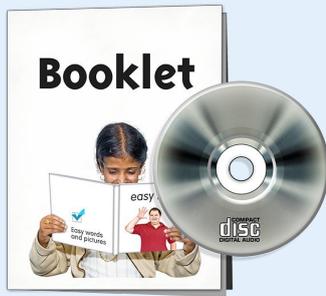
Reasonable adjustments are changes to make something fair for a disabled person, like a wheelchair ramp.



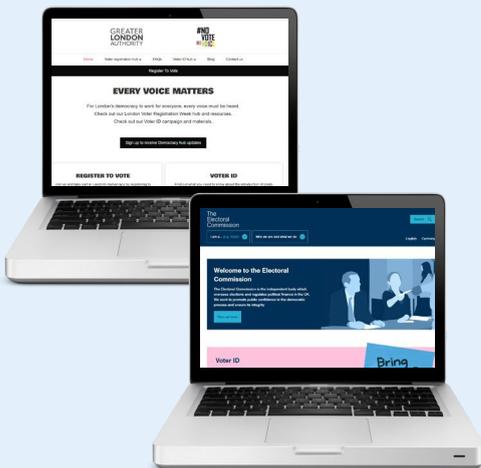
You can ask for anything you need on the day you go to the polling station.



Or you can contact your local council to ask for anything you will need before you go.



Can I read information about how to vote and photo IDs in a different format?



Go to one of these websites to find information in different formats

- [registertovote.london/](https://www.registertovote.london/)
- www.electoralcommission.org.uk/



Is there any information for people who are transgender?



Transgender means people who are now a different gender to the one they were born.



Go to this website for information and advice if you are transgender

www.lgbthero.org.uk/advice-for-trans-people-voter-id-elections-uk



Is there any information for people who are Gypsies, Roma and Travellers?



Go to this website for information and advice

[travellermovement.org.uk/
operation-traveller-vote](https://travellermovement.org.uk/operation-traveller-vote)



Is there any information for people who wear face coverings because of their religion?



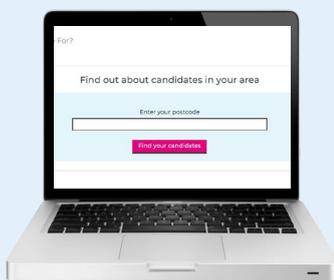
Go to this website for information and advice

[mcb.org.uk/local-elections-2023-
voter-id-and-face-coverings/](https://mcb.org.uk/local-elections-2023-voter-id-and-face-coverings/)



Who should I vote for?

You should decide on your own who to vote for.



Go to this website to learn more about who you can vote for

whocanivotefor.co.uk/