

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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Our work

Who is the Greater London Authority?

The Greater London Authority (GLA), also known as London City Hall, is the London regional government, with jurisdiction over Greater London and the City of London. The GLA is made up of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly.

Who is Shout Out UK?

Shout Out UK (SOUK) is an impartial creative social enterprise with a specialist focus on raising media and political literacy amongst young people. SOUK has been the delivery partner for the GLA - coordinated London Voter Registration Week between 2020 and 2025 and wider GLA civic and democratic participation programme.

What is the GLA Civic and Democratic Participation Programme?

The Greater London Authority (GLA) Civic and Democratic Participation Programme is a non-party political, year-round programme of projects and campaigns through which the GLA supports all Londoners, but especially under-registered and under-represented Londoners, to access their civic and democratic rights.

The GLA - led programme is coordinated with the Electoral Commission and local authorities. It is delivered by a community delivery partner, currently Shout Out UK (SOUK). Information materials and activities are co-designed with under-represented communities and co-delivered online and offline with the support of a broad, pan-London coalition of partners and supporters.

In parallel, and to complement this activity, grantees of the GLA Democratic Participation grants programme have delivered activity in trusted community settings. You can find more information on the GLA Democracy Hub at <https://registertovote.london/>.

The programme's definitions for civic and democratic participation are:

- Civic participation = the ability to participate in civic life e.g. starting and/ or signing petitions, participation in peaceful and legal protest, community organising, volunteering, etc.
- Democratic participation = the ability to take part in the democratic process e.g. standing for elected office, registering to vote and voting (if eligible), taking part in deliberative and participatory democracy (such as citizens assemblies) etc.

What is London Voter Registration Week (LVRW)?

It's an annual, non-party political, impartial, non-election specific project run by the Greater London Authority, in partnership with a delivery partner, the London Voter Registration Strategic Partnership and a broad coalition of support. Taking place usually in September, it informs and encourages Londoners – especially under-registered and under-represented Londoners – to register to vote and access other democratic rights.

What is London Democracy Week?

London Democracy Week (LDW) is an annual, non-party political, impartial project run by the Greater London Authority, in partnership with a community delivery partner. It took place for the first time in March 2025. It aims to inform Londoners – especially under-registered and under-represented Londoners – about their civic and democratic rights and bring together all those who want to further London's democracy.

What was the Voter ID public awareness campaign?

The Elections Act (2022) brought changes to the way we vote and who can vote.

The Greater London Authority and a diverse coalition of civil society organisations, education institutions and all London borough electoral services came together to deliver an impartial public awareness campaign. The campaign informed eligible Londoners, particularly under-registered and under-represented Londoners of all backgrounds, about these unprecedented changes, such as:

- The introduction of mandatory photo identification to vote in person in Parliamentary/ General elections, local/ borough elections, and Mayor of London/ London Assembly elections in London.
- Changes to the voting rights of some EU Londoners
- Changes to applications for postal and proxy voting

Relevant resources can still be found at www.registertovote.london/our-work/voter-id-campaign

Why are we doing this / How will Londoners be impacted?

The changes to democratic rights brought in by the Elections Act (2022) pose significant barriers to already under-registered and under-represented Londoners, many of whom have been disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

London already has one of the lowest voter registration rates across the UK regions and nations. Find out more at <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/survey-of-londoners-2021-22>.

Evidence from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (February 2022), Trust for London and the3million ("London Voices: The Journey to Full Participation", December 2021) and GLA polling (between August 2022 and January 2025) identifies the demographics and communities that are least likely to have an accepted photo ID to vote. These are:

- young Londoners (aged 18-25)
- Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and migrant Londoners, including EU Londoners
- D/deaf and disabled Londoners
- older Londoners
- LGBTQIA+ Londoners, with a focus on trans and non-binary Londoners
- low-income Londoners
- social and private renting Londoners, and Londoners in precarious housing, including homeless Londoners

Registering to vote

Who can register and vote in London?

You can register to vote if you are resident (usually live) in London and are aged 16 or over (but you will not be able to vote until you are 18).

Currently, British, Irish, qualifying Commonwealth, qualifying EU citizens and EU citizens with retained voting rights residing in London can register and vote.

In line with the [British Nationality \(Eswatini, Gabon and Togo\) Order 2023](#) which amends the British Nationality Act and came into force on 15 December 2023, citizens of Togo and Gabon are now able to register to vote as qualifying Commonwealth citizens.

British citizens living overseas who have previously lived or been registered to vote in London are eligible to register and vote in UK Parliament elections using the last address that they were resident in London.

You can check your eligibility at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/which-elections-can-i-vote..>

Can EU Londoners still register and vote?

If you are a qualifying European Citizen (EU) citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights who is over the age of 16 and residing in London, then you can register to vote in London.

Qualifying EU citizens and EU citizens with retained rights aged 18+ are able to vote in local elections, such as London borough council elections and the Mayor of London/ London Assembly elections.

A qualifying EU citizen is an EU citizen of Denmark, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, or Spain who has permission to enter or stay in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man, or who does not need permission.

An EU citizen with retained voting rights is an EU citizen of any other EU country who on or before 31 December 2020 had permission to enter or stay in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man, or who did not need permission, and this has continued without a break.

Permission to enter or stay in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man (also called Leave to Enter or Remain) refers to a legal immigration status.

You can check your eligibility and the elections that you can vote in at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/who-can-vote/other-registration-options/voting-if-youre-eu-citizen-living-uk.

Do I have to be 18 to register and vote?

No, it's a common misconception. In London, and the rest of England, you can register to vote from 16 years old, but you won't be able to vote in an election until you're 18.

I do not have a fixed address. Can I register to vote?

Yes, you can. Many people do not have a fixed or permanent address, and some might be homeless. You can still register to vote at a place where you either have the most local connection or spend most of your time, by making a declaration of local connection. There is a specific form for registering in this case - you can find it at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-to-vote-if-you-havent-got-a-fixed-or-permanent-address>.

Can I register to vote if I live overseas?

British citizens living overseas who have previously lived or been registered to vote in London are eligible to register and vote in UK Parliament elections using the last address that they were resident in London.

You can register to vote at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>.

Electoral services will verify an applicant's identity and check previous residence or registration at the given London address.

If you are registered as an overseas voter, you can vote in person if you will be in London on election day or apply to vote by post or by proxy. Overseas voter registrations will need to be renewed within 3 years.

You can find out more at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/who-can-vote/other-registration-options/voting-if-you-live-overseas>.

Do I need to provide evidence of my identity to register to vote?

All new applications to register to vote are data matched against central government records. Where a match cannot be found, you will be sent a request for 'Evidence of identity'. You should respond as soon as possible, otherwise your application may be rejected.

The evidence of identity needs to be provided online or in print to your borough electoral services. You can either provide:

- One “Primary identification document”, or
- One “trusted government document” and two “financial/ social history documents”, or
- Four “financial/ social history documents”

Primary identification documents	
Document	Notes
Passport	Any current passport
Biometric residence permit	UK issued only
EEA identity card	Must still be valid
Photo card part of a current driving licence	UK/Isle of Man/Channel Islands (full or provisional)
Northern Ireland Electoral ID card	

Trusted government documents	
Document	Notes
Old-style paper version of a current driving licence	UK only
Current photo driving licence	Any other than UK and Crown Dependencies
Birth certificate	UK and Crown Dependencies only
Marriage or Civil Partnership certificate	UK and Crown Dependencies only
Adoption certificate	UK and Crown Dependencies only
Firearms licence	UK and Crown Dependencies only
Police Bail sheet	UK and Crown Dependencies only

Financial and social history documents		
Document	Notes	Issue date and validity
Mortgage statement	UK, Crown Dependencies, or EEA	Issued in the last 12 months
Bank or building society statement	UK, Crown Dependencies, or EEA	Issued in the last 3 months
Bank or building society account opening confirmation letter	UK and Crown Dependencies	Issued in the last 3 months
Credit card statement	UK, Crown Dependencies, or EEA	Issued in the last 3 months
Financial statement (for example, pension or endowment)	UK, Crown Dependencies, or EEA	Issued in the last 12 months
Council Tax statement	UK and Crown Dependencies	Issued in the last 12 months
Utility bill (except mobile phone bill)	UK and Crown Dependencies	Issued in the last 3 months
P45 or P60 statement	UK and Crown Dependencies, or EEA	Issued in the last 12 months
Benefit statements (for example, child benefit, pension)	UK, Crown Dependencies, or EEA	Issued in the last 3 months
Central or local government, government agency, or local government department	UK, Crown Dependencies, or EEA	Issued in the last 3 months

giving entitlement (for example, from DWP, Job Centre Plus, HMRC)		
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I do not have a National Insurance number. Can I still register to vote?

Yes, you can still apply through the online voter registration portal, but you must leave your contact details. Your council electoral services will then get in contact to verify your identity through alternative means to complete the process. For example, you may be asked for a birth certificate, utility bills or bank statements. This means you can still register to vote, even if you don't have your National Insurance number to hand.

How do I register to vote?

To register to vote you can head to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote and fill in the online form. It only takes a few minutes. All you need is your National Insurance (NI) number. Your NI number is used in the registration process as a unique identifier, the easiest and quickest way to confirm who you are. But don't worry if you don't know or don't have an NI number – just leave your contact details during the online registration process, and your local council electoral services will get in touch.

Is there a deadline to register to vote?

You can register to vote at any time. However, your application to register is not always processed immediately, so it is best to register as soon as possible in advance of any upcoming elections. The exact date for the voter registration deadline in any particular election will be advertised in advance, but typically the deadline is around two weeks before election day.

Once I register to vote, am I then registered for life?

No, you must re-register to vote if you ever change your address, your legal name or your nationality. Dual nationals should re-register when they get their British citizenship because it carries with it full voting rights.

If I register to vote, do I have to vote?

Voting is not mandatory in the UK. So, if you're registered to vote you have the option to vote or not. But you cannot vote if you are not first registered to vote.

Ways of voting

What elections can I vote in?

If you are a British, Irish or qualifying Commonwealth citizen who is over the age of 18 and residing in London, then you can vote in all elections, including the UK General/ Parliamentary elections and referendums, London local/ borough council elections and the Mayor of London/ London Assembly elections.

If you are a qualifying European Citizen (EU) citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights who is over the age of 18 and residing in London, then you are only able to vote in local elections, such as London borough council elections and the Mayor of London/ London Assembly elections.

A qualifying EU citizen is an EU citizen of Denmark, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, or Spain who has permission to enter or stay in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man, or who does not need permission.

An EU citizen with retained voting rights is an EU citizen of any other EU country who on or before 31 December 2020 had permission to enter or stay in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man, or who did not need permission, and this has continued without a break.

Permission to enter or stay in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man (also called Leave to Enter or Remain) refers to a legal immigration status.

For up-to-date information check <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/>.

What are the different ways of voting?

Once registered to vote, you can vote:

- in person at a polling station on election day;
- by post, if you are not around on election day, for example, if you are on holiday;
- by proxy, which means asking someone else you trust to cast your vote for you, for example if you are ill

To vote by proxy, you can apply online at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote>.

To vote by post, you can apply online at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote>.

If you cannot apply online, you can download and complete a proxy vote application form at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/proxy-voting-application-forms> or a postal vote application form at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote> and send it to your local Electoral Registration Office or request an application form be sent to you in the post.

You can find the details of your borough electoral services at <https://www.gov.uk/contact-electoral-registration-office>.

Do I need a photo ID for all ways of voting?

No, you will not need to show a photo ID in order to vote by post or by proxy.

Your proxy will need to show their own photo ID at the polling station, when they vote on your behalf. To vote in person at the polling station you will need an accepted photo ID to vote.

To vote by proxy or by post you can apply online at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote> or <https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote>.

If you cannot apply online, you can download and complete a proxy vote application form at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/proxy-voting-application-forms> or a postal vote application form at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote> and send it to your local Electoral Registration Office or request an application form be sent to you in the post.

You can find the details of your borough electoral services at <https://www.gov.uk/contact-electoral-registration-office>.

Voting in person

Where can I find my polling station?

If you are registered to vote in person, a polling card will be sent to your registered address before election day. This card will include the address of your assigned polling station - you can only vote at that polling station, and it is likely to be a local public building such as a school, faith or community centre. It will be open between 7 am and 10 pm on election day. Don't worry if you lose your polling card – you don't need it to vote (**unless you're registered to vote anonymously**) and you can find your polling station by entering your postcode at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a-voter/your-election-information>.

What will happen at the polling station?

All polling stations are **open from 7 am until 10 pm on election day**. Some might have greeters who will welcome voters before they enter the polling station and ask them if they brought an [accepted form of photo ID](#) to be able to vote in person.

Once in the polling station, you can expect the following:

- A staff member will ask you for your name and address, and check that you are on the electoral register.
- They will ask to see your photo ID, check that it's accepted (more info at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id/accepted-forms-photo-id>), and that it looks like you. If you are registered to vote anonymously (more info at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/who-can-vote/register-vote/register-vote-anonymously>), you will be asked to show your poll card and Anonymous Elector's Document (AED). A private area will be available should you choose to have your photo ID viewed in private. This might be a separate room, or an area separated by a privacy screen, depending on the polling station.
- Once your photo ID has been successfully checked the staff member will cross your name off the register and give you a ballot paper listing the candidates you can vote for. You might be given more than one ballot paper if there is more than one election taking place in your local area on the same day.
- Take your ballot paper (or papers) to a polling booth, so that you can vote in secret. Read the instructions on the ballot paper carefully. Some elections use different voting methods, so you need to make sure you fill in each ballot paper correctly.
- Complete your ballot paper using the pencil provided in the polling booth. You can also use your own pen if you want to. Don't write anything else on the paper, or your vote may not be counted. If you make a mistake, don't put your ballot paper in the ballot box. Ask the polling station staff for a replacement ballot paper and fill it in again.
- Once you're done, fold your completed ballot paper and put it in the ballot box.

Photo Voter ID

Do I still need to register to vote on top of showing a photo ID to vote?

Yes, registering to vote remains the first step to exercising your democratic rights. You will need to register to vote well in advance of election day, so make sure to prep ahead!

What forms of photographic identification (photo ID) will be accepted to be able to vote in person?

Accepted photo ID to vote cannot be any form of ID. Londoners will need to possess and present **one** of these accepted forms of photo IDs recognised in law as the proof of identity required to be able to vote:

- A United Kingdom passport
- A passport issued by an European Economic Area (EEA) state or a Commonwealth country
- A national identity card issued by an EEA state
- A UK driving licence (with photo, paper licences will not be accepted)
- A driving licence issued by the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or an EEA state
- A biometric immigration document (including eVisas)
- An identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)
- A Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card) and Ministry of Defence Form 100 (HM Armed Forces Veteran Card)
- Older Person's Bus Pass, Disabled Person's Bus Pass, Oyster 60+ Card, Freedom Pass
- A Blue Badge
- [A free Voter Authority Certificate](#)

Please note that you need to take **the original** form of photo ID with you to the polling station. Photocopies of documents and photos on your phone will not be accepted.

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 photo ID at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id>.

If they are not in this list, other photo IDs issued by third parties **will not** be accepted as proof of identity to be able to vote.

What is an eVisa and how can I use it to vote in person?

An eVisa is an online record of your immigration status and the conditions of your permission to enter or stay in the UK.

If you decide to vote in person, at the polling station, you will need to log in into your eVisa account and show the eVisa on your mobile phone or other device. eVisas can be used as an accepted form of photo Voter ID from 1 May 2025 onwards.

eVisas are already included in the legislation's accepted list of photo Voter ID, as a biometric immigration document. Therefore, electoral services may not make any changes to poll cards or polling station notices to specifically reference that an eVisa is an accepted form of ID.

How can I apply for an accepted photo ID to vote?

You can apply for, renew or update your licence, view or share your driving licence at <https://www.gov.uk/browse/driving/driving-licences>.

You can apply online for a British passport at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-renew-passport>. You can pick up passport application forms from your local Post Office (find your branch at <https://www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder>) and apply by post, or use the Post Office Check and Send service (more info at <https://www.gov.uk/how-the-post-office-check-and-send-service-works>).

You can find out more about the 60+ London Oyster photocard at <https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/60-plus-oyster-photocard>.

You can apply for or renew a Blue Badge at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge>. For questions about the Blue Badge scheme contact your local council at <https://www.gov.uk/blue-badge-scheme-information-council>.

Your local Citizens Advice might be able to support. Find your local branch at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>.

How can I apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate?

If you do not have one of the accepted forms of photo ID to vote, you can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate. It can only be used for voting purposes, not as a form of ID, and it is valid for 10 years. You will need to provide a photograph, your date of birth and National Insurance number as part of the application. If you don't know your National Insurance number, or don't have one, you can still apply. Your council will contact you to request alternative proof of your identity.

You can apply online at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate>.

Or you can fill out a paper application form at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1137587/VAC_public_facing.pdf and send this to your local council. You can request the instructions in Large Print, Braille or Easy Read.

To get in touch with your local electoral services team, enter your postcode here <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information>.

How will my photo ID be checked if I wear a face covering for religious reasons?

To allow polling station staff to check you look like your photo ID, you will be asked to briefly remove your face covering so they can see your face. Face coverings can be worn for the rest of the voting process.

You can ask for a female member of staff to check your photo ID if you prefer, and polling station staff will accommodate this, if possible.

You can ask for your photo ID to be checked in private. A private space will be available in the polling station for this purpose. Such requests should be handled discreetly and with courtesy. You do not have to give a reason for this request, and you should not be asked to explain why.

A mirror will be available so you can ensure your face covering is in place correctly before leaving the private area.

If you refuse to remove your face covering and staff are unable to check your photo ID, this may mean that you will not be issued your ballot paper, so might not be able to vote.

How will my photo ID be checked if I wear a face mask for medical reasons?

To allow polling station staff to check you look like your photo ID, you will be asked to briefly remove your face mask so they can see your face. This requirement applies if you are an immuno-suppressed voter or wear a mask for other health reasons.

You can ask for your photo ID to be checked in private. A private space will be available in the polling station for this purpose. Such requests should be handled discreetly and with courtesy. You do not have to give a reason for this request, and you should not be asked to explain why.

If you refuse to remove your face mask and staff are unable to check your photo ID, this may mean that you will not be issued your ballot paper, so might not be able to vote.

How will polling station staff decide if the photo on my ID looks enough like me?

Polling station staff will look at the photo on your photo ID and the name to check that this matches your name on the electoral register. If you are unsure if your photo will be recognised, you can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate with a recent photo of yourself. More info at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id/applying-a-voter-authority-certificate>.

If your concerns relate to your gender presentation, the Voter Authority Certificate does not include a gender marker.

I am a blind/ partially sighted voter, what support is available to me at the polling station?

Following the Elections Act (2022), Returning Officers – officials who oversee elections – are now required to make provisions for disabled people to enable an independent and secret vote. Returning Officers must follow Electoral Commission accessibility guidance.

To support blind and partially sighted voters, all polling stations are required to have:

- A tactile voting device
- A large print copy of the ballot paper for reference
- Magnifiers
- Additional lighting

- Assistance from polling station staff to be guided to the voting booth and to mark your vote if needed

Returning Officers are also required to anticipate what is needed in their area and can provide additional equipment, such as audio devices to enable someone to vote independently and in secret. Read more about the Electoral Commission guidance for Returning Officers at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-returning-officers-assistance-voting-disabled-voters/ensuring-voting-accessible/providing-equipment-polling-station-enables-or-makes-voting-easier-disabled-voters>.

How can you request a reasonable adjustment at the polling station?

You can ask polling station staff on the day, and they will assist the best that they can. To make sure things are as smooth as possible for you, you can write to your local Returning Officer or local electoral services, to notify them that you require reasonable adjustments to be able to vote independently. To find their contact information, you can use the Electoral Commission's postcode look up tool at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information>, and use RNIB's template notification letter to get in touch, available at https://www.rnib.org.uk/documents/1604/Notification_template_for_individuals_to_send_to_Returning_Officers.docx.

Guidance has also been issued to polling station staff to make it clear that mobile phone apps (such as "Seeing AI" which can use Artificial Intelligence to read out printed text), or video magnifying devices, can be used by blind and partially sighted people to vote as a reasonable adjustment.

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

If you experience any issues at the polling station or want to give feedback about your experience, you can contact the electoral services team at your local council. To get in touch with your local electoral services team, enter your postcode here - <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information>.

Further information on photo Voter ID

What will happen if I go to the polling station with no accepted photo ID?

If you go to the polling station to vote with no accepted photo ID, you will not be issued with a ballot paper and will need to return with an accepted form of photo ID.

If you produce an original accepted photo ID on your return, you should be able to vote.

What if I don't want to show a photo ID to vote?

If you would prefer not to show a photo ID at a polling station, you can apply to vote by post or by proxy. Photo ID isn't required to apply or vote by post. It is not required when you apply for a proxy vote, but your proxy will be required to show their own accepted photo ID at the polling station, when they vote on your behalf.

What details will be checked on my photo ID?

Photo ID checks at the polling station will be looking to confirm that the name on your photo ID is the same as your name on the electoral register. Staff will not be checking the gender marker, address or nationality on your ID.

The name on the electoral register does not match the name on my photo ID, what can I do?

If your name is different on the electoral register to your photo ID, you can:

- bring an official document with you as proof of the name change, for example a marriage certificate (as well as your photo ID)

- you can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate using the name that you are registered to vote with and a recent photo <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate>.
- or you can contact your local electoral services team to change your name on the electoral register <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information>.

Can I have my photo ID checked in private? Do I have to give a reason why?

Yes, a private space will be available in the polling station for this purpose. You can ask for your photo ID to be checked in private. Such requests should be handled discreetly and with courtesy. No, you do not have to give a reason for this request, and you should not be asked to explain why.

I'm worried about using a photo ID with a gender marker to vote, what can I do?

The name on your photo ID should be the same name that you used to register to vote. You do not need to show a photo ID that includes a gender marker.

If you don't have photo ID, feel worried about using an existing form of photo ID which has a gender marker, or aren't sure if you still look like the photo on your ID, you can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate>. A Voter Authority Certificate does not have a gender marker.

What can I do if my photo ID is lost, stolen, destroyed or damaged before polling day?

If your photo ID is lost, stolen, destroyed or damaged, and the deadline to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate has passed, you can apply for an emergency proxy vote at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/ways-vote/apply-vote-proxy>.

This only applies in an urgent situation that occur after the normal proxy vote deadline. This form can also be used if your Anonymous Elector's Document is lost, stolen, destroyed or damaged. These applications can be made up to 5pm on polling day.

When did the requirement to show photo ID to vote in person start?

The requirement for photo ID to vote in person has been applicable at local elections in England from May 2023. The first time it applied in pan - London elections was the 2 May 2024 Mayor of London and London Assembly elections. The requirement for the UK Parliamentary/ General elections took effect for elections after 5 October 2023, and in any individual parliamentary by-elections after May 2023.

I am concerned about the introduction of photo ID to vote, who can I speak to?

The GLA did not introduce photo ID to vote and only has powers to raise awareness and try to address the equalities implications.

If you are a civil society organisation and want to help us spread awareness and distribute our resources, to ensure we reach as many Londoners as possible please reach out to the GLA Democratic Participation team via democracy@london.gov.uk.

If you wish to express concerns about the introduction of photo ID to vote, you can email correspondence@communities.gov.uk or write to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.

Why aren't other forms of ID accepted?

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

The UK Government has provided more information about the criteria considered. You can find that on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/voter-identification-at-polling-stations-and-the-new-voter-card/protecting-the-integrity-of-our-elections-voter-identification-at-polling-stations-and-the-new-voter-card>.

Further information on the Free Voter Authority Certificate

What information is included on the free Voter Authority Certificate?

The free Voter Authority Certificate will show your 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.

What are the photo requirements for a Voter Authority Certificate application?

As part of the application process for a Voter Authority Certificate, you will need to provide a recent photo. Requirements for the photo are similar to requirements for passport photos and must show your head and shoulders with nothing covering your head – unless a head covering is worn for religious or medical reasons. Your face must not be covered for any reason.

Photo style

The photo must be of the applicant:

- Facing forward and looking straight at the camera
- A close up of their head and shoulders, without any head covering, unless they wear one for religious beliefs or medical reasons. The face must not be covered for any reason
- Without any other person visible
- With a plain facial expression and with their eyes open and clearly visible, for example, without sunglasses and not obscured with hair

Please note this does not apply where the applicant is unable to provide a photograph which complies with either or both of those requirements due to any disability.

Photo quality

The photo of the applicant must:

- Be a true likeness
- Be in colour
- Be taken against a plain, light background
- Be in sharp focus and clear
- Be free from 'redeye', shadows which obscure the face, or reflection
- Not be damaged

Photo size

Where the applicant applies online, the photograph they provide must be:

- At least 750 pixels in height and 600 pixels in width
- Contained in an electronic file which is no more than 20MB in size

Where the applicant applies using a paper form, the photograph must be:

- At least 45 millimetres in height and 35 millimetres in width
- No larger than 297 millimetres in height or 210 millimetres in width

Where can I get support with a free Voter Authority Certificate application?

If you need any help with applying for a free Voter Authority Certificate, taking a photo for your application or want to request a paper application form, you can contact the electoral services team in your borough council.

You can find their contact details by entering your postcode at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information>.

You can find more information at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id/applying-a-voter-authority-certificate>

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

Yes, you can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate or Anonymous Elector's Document at any time, but the deadline for applications for a particular election is 5pm, 6 working days before polling day.

To find out more information, including how your application will be determined, check this Electoral Commission guidance issued to Electoral Registration Officers at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/running-electoral-registration-england/voter-authority-certificates-and-anonymous-electors-documents/deadlines-applications-voter-authority-certificates-or-anonymous-electors-documents-a-particular>.

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

No, the Voter Authority Certificate is for voting purposes only and cannot be used as proof of identification for any other reason. It will not be accepted as a proof of age or proof of address document.

Postal and proxy voting

What are the changes to proxy voting that I need to be aware of?

Changes to proxy voting took effect from 31 October 2023.

There is now a limit on how many people one person can act as a proxy for, this includes family members. You can vote by proxy on behalf of a maximum of two UK-based voters or up to four non-UK-based voters (i.e. overseas British voters).

You can apply for some types of proxy vote online at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote>. You will not be able to apply online if your application needs attesting (required for people who are registered to vote anonymously) or if you are applying for an emergency proxy vote.

If you cannot apply online, you can download and fill in a proxy vote application form at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/proxy-voting-application-forms> and send it to your local Electoral Registration Office or request an application form be sent to you in the post.

You can find the details of your borough electoral services at <https://www.gov.uk/contact-electoral-registration-office>.

Both online and paper applications will require ID verification (except for emergency proxy votes). You will not need to provide a photo ID to vote by proxy (your proxy will need an accepted photo ID to vote on your behalf). There are other identification checks, including verification of your signature and date of birth.

For up-to-date info on proxy voting check <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/ways-vote/apply-vote-proxy>

Transitional processes will be in place if you have an existing arrangement to vote by proxy. You can update an existing proxy vote by contacting your local Electoral Registration Office at <https://www.gov.uk/contact-electoral-registration-office>.

What are the changes to postal voting that I need to be aware of?

Changes to postal voting took effect from 31 October 2023.

A successful postal vote application will be valid for you to vote by post for a maximum period of three years. After three years, you will need to re-apply if you want to continue to vote by post.

You can apply for a postal vote online or if you cannot apply online, you can download and complete a postal vote application form at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote> and send it to your local Electoral Registration Office or request an application form be sent to you in the post.

You can find the details of your borough electoral services at <https://www.gov.uk/contact-electoral-registration-office>.

You will not need to provide a photo ID to vote by post. There are other identification checks, including verification of your signature and date of birth. For up-to-date info on postal voting check <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/apply-vote-post>.

Transitional processes will be in place if you have an existing postal vote. You can update an existing postal vote by contacting your local Electoral Registration Office at <https://www.gov.uk/contact-electoral-registration-office>.

If you aren't able to post your postal vote in time, you can take it your polling station or to your local council on polling day. Voters will be only able to hand in their own postal vote, and the postal votes of up to five other people, at a polling station. Campaigners can only hand in their own postal vote, and postal votes for up to five other people that are either close relatives, or someone they provide regular care for. All individuals handing in postal votes to local authority offices or polling stations will need to complete a postal vote return form.

Is there a deadline to apply for postal or proxy voting?

Yes, there is a deadline to apply for both postal and proxy voting.

The deadline to apply for a postal vote is 5pm, 11 working days before the polling day.

The deadline to apply for a proxy vote is 5pm, 6 days before election day.

Remember, you will need to complete a new postal or proxy vote application if you have moved house or changed your name.

Voting anonymously

What is anonymous registration?

When someone registers to vote, their name and address will appear on the electoral register.

If someone is worried that their name and address being on the electoral register could put their safety at risk, they can apply to register as an anonymous voter.

This is how entries usually appear on the electoral register:

FBC412 Vella, John 59 Green Lane

BC413 Vella, Veronica 59 Green Lane

This is how anonymous entries appear on the electoral register: BC602 N

The 'N' signifies that this entry relates to an anonymously registered voter. This means people registered to vote anonymously will still be able to vote, but their name and address will not be on the electoral register.

Can I register anonymously?

Anyone who wants to register to vote anonymously will need to:

- Complete an application form
- Explain why their safety, or the safety of someone in their household, would be at risk if their details were on the electoral register
- Submit evidence to support their registration
- Return the application form, explanation and evidence to their local council

You can download a guide to registering anonymously, created in partnership with Women's Aid at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/resources/democratic-engagement-resources/supporting-domestic-abuse-survivors-register-vote-anonymously>. You can find the print application form at https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-02/Register-to-vote-anonymously-resident-in-England_0.pdf.

If you need help to register to vote anonymously, you can contact your local council. To find their contact details, enter your postcode at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information>.

You can register to vote anonymously at any time. However, it is best to apply as soon as possible in advance of any upcoming elections. The exact date for the voter registration deadline in any particular election will be advertised in advance, but typically the deadline is around two weeks before election day.

Anonymous registration only lasts for one year, so you must reapply each year. Your electoral registration office will contact you when it is time for you to reapply.

I am registered to vote anonymously; how does the photo ID requirement change the way that I vote in person?

Anonymous electors wishing to vote in person at the polling station will need to produce an Anonymous Elector's Document as their accepted photo ID. This is a document containing your elector's number and a photo produced by your local Electoral Registration Officer following verification of your identity. As an Anonymous elector you cannot use other forms of accepted photo ID. You will be required to produce your poll card and anonymous elector's document when voting in person.

Everyone who is already registered to vote anonymously, or who registers to vote anonymously ahead of the elections, will be invited to apply for an **Anonymous Elector's Document** by their local council. You can also contact the local council to request one. You can find their details by entering your postcode at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information>.

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

When applying for an Anonymous Elector's Document, you will need to provide your:

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

If you don't know your National Insurance number, you can look for it on your payslips or on official letters about tax, pensions or benefits. If you are unable to find it, you can still complete your application, and you will be asked to provide alternative forms of ID to verify your identity, which could include a birth certificate, bank statement or utility bill. Your council will contact you to arrange this if you leave your contact details.

You can also ask someone who knows you to provide an attestation to the local council to verify your identity if you don't have any other accepted proof of identity. Your local council can provide more information on who can provide an attestation. You can find contact details for them by entering your postcode at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information>.

What does an Anonymous Elector's Document look like?

An Anonymous Elector's Document has the words 'Elector's Document' written on the top and does not refer to the voter's status as being registered to vote anonymously.

An Anonymous Elector's Document includes:

- The date of issue
- Your photograph
- Your electoral number (which is the number which will appear on the electoral register instead of your name and address)
- An appropriate identifier (which is a combination of 20 letters and numbers generated by the software used by Electoral Registration Officers)

If you are an anonymous voter, you need to bring your Anonymous Elector's Document when you go to the polling station. You do not need to bring an additional form of accepted photo ID with you.

What will happen at the polling station?

Anonymous voters will need to bring both their poll card and their Anonymous Elector's Document when they go to their polling station.

When you arrive, you will be greeted by a member of staff, who will:

1. Ask to see your poll card – you will not need to provide your name and address
2. Find your elector number on the register
3. Check your Anonymous Elector's Document
4. Cross you off the list, and give you your ballot paper

A private area will be available at polling stations so you can have your Anonymous Elector's Document viewed in private. This may be a separate room, or an area separated by a privacy screen, depending on the polling station.

Do I have to vote in person if I'm registered anonymously?

No, if you would prefer not to vote in person at a polling station, you can apply to vote by post or by proxy. Your photo ID isn't required to apply or vote by post or by proxy. Your proxy will be required to show their own accepted photo ID at the polling station to be able to vote on your behalf.

To vote by proxy or by post, you need to apply online at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote> or <https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote>.

If you cannot apply online, you can download and complete a proxy vote application form at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/proxy-voting-application-forms> or a postal vote application form at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote> and send it to your local Electoral Registration Office or request an application form be sent to you in the post.

You can find the details of your borough electoral services at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information>.

To find more about how to vote anonymously check, <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/ways-vote/how-vote-anonymously>.

Benefits of registering to vote and having an accepted photo ID to vote

What are the benefits of registering to vote and getting a photo ID to vote?

Registering to vote enables you to exercise your fundamental democratic rights, which were hard won and are not available to all Londoners.

Being registered to vote also improves your credit score because potential lenders are able to refer to the electoral register to verify your name and address. The electoral register is also used to select participants for jury service – diverse juries are more likely to result in fairer verdicts.

You decide if you want to vote or not. But, making sure you are registered to vote and have an accepted photo ID to be able to vote, allows you to have your voice heard on the issues that matter to you, your family and your community, London's and the country's future.

Voting systems

What voting system is used for the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections?

The Elections Act (2022) brought changes to the voting system for the Mayor of London elections. The way we vote for the London Assembly has not changed.

Mayor of London election

The Mayor of London is now elected using the First Past-the-Post system. You can vote for one person, by putting a cross [X] in the box next to your preferred choice/ candidate. The person with the most votes will become Mayor of London. This system is also used for the UK Parliamentary / General elections.

The government has indicated that there will be changes to the voting system for the Mayor of London elections and that this will revert back to the supplementary voting system. For up-to-date information please visit [London Elects](#).

The London Assembly is made up of 25 Assembly Members (AMs) - 11 represent the whole capital and 14 are elected by constituencies.

Constituency London Assembly Member

The constituency London Assembly Members are elected using the First Past-the-Post system. You can vote for one person, by putting a cross [X] in the box next to your preferred choice/ candidate. The person with the most votes will become your constituency's London Assembly Member. A constituency is usually made of two or three London boroughs.

London-wide Assembly Member

The pan-London Assembly Members are elected using the Additional Member system, whereby the number of votes cast for each party equate proportionally into the number of AMs seats won by that party.

You can find out more about the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections on London Elects at <https://www.londonelects.org.uk/changes-how-we-vote>.

My data

Who will have access to my data if I register to vote or apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate?

If you think your name and address being on the electoral register could affect your safety, or the safety of someone in your household, you can apply to register to vote anonymously. The steps required for this process are available at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/register-vote/register-vote-anonymously>

If you're registered to vote anonymously and want to vote in person, you'll need to apply for an **Anonymous Elector's Document**. You can find more info at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/who-can-vote/register-vote/register-vote-anonymously#anonymous-electors-document>.

If you are concerned about the security of your personal information, namely about being on the 'open register' which can be purchased by third parties, you are always able to 'opt-out' of the open register during the online registration process. You will remain on the 'full register' which is used by borough electoral services (for example to send out poll cards before elections) and for checking loans applications/ credit score checks. This is different to being registered anonymously, where your details will not appear on either the 'open register' or the 'full register'.

Legal and digital imprints

What are legal and digital imprints?

Legal (printed materials) and digital (digital materials) imprints state who is responsible for publishing campaign and political materials and whom they are promoting it for (i.e. who paid for it) to provide transparency. So, if you're unsure who is trying to inform or influence you, you can check the imprint.

Here is the example of an imprint template we use with our community delivery partner and grantees:

"Supported by the Greater London Authority, City Hall, Kamal Churchie Way, London E16 1ZE. Printed and promoted by [name of organisation], [registered address of organisation]."

You can find further information on imprints at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/imprints>.

Further accessible materials and other resources for voters

Where can I find accessible resources on voter registration and Voter ID information?

Every year, the GLA creates digital and print resources in the most widely spoken London community languages.

The [Register to Vote animation](#), which includes information on voter registration and voter ID, has been translated into 16 community languages, including BSL.

Each FAQ question in this document has been translated into BSL. You can access the [BSL playlist of videos on the London Gov YouTube channel](#).

You can find all our digital and print resources, on the GLA Democracy Hub at <https://registertovote.london/>. The Electoral Commission also produces its own UK - wide information materials which you can access at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/>.

Where can I find other communities - specific information and resources?

[Democracy Classroom](#) is a shared resource hub developed by a partnership of non-partisan organisations to provide teachers, youth workers, and practitioners with accessible, non-partisan political literacy resources. LGBT HERO has

created [Don't Lose Your Voice](#) – an LGBTQ+ Democracy Hub. It contains resources to support civic and democratic participation, including specific resources for trans and non-binary voters.

Resources for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers can be found at <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/news/fft-publish-voting-resources-for-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-people/> The Royal National Institute of Blind People has produced guidance for those with sight loss, including how to request reasonable adjustments at the polling station: [Voting and elections: what you need to know | RNIB | RNIB](#)

United Response has created accessible and Easy Read information on how politics works, voting and your rights, as part of their My Voice My Vote campaign. You can find out more here: [My Vote My Voice](#)

Whom should I vote for?

All materials and activity relating to the GLA - coordinated Voter ID public awareness campaign and the annual London Voter Registration Week are completely impartial and non-party political. Neither the GLA, nor Shout Out UK can be perceived to support any political party or candidate and, as such, we do not share opinions on how Londoners should vote.

One of the exciting things about registering to vote and making sure you have an accepted photo ID to be able to vote is learning about your potential local or national representatives and deciding who you want to represent you and your interests. You can do your own research at <https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/> and make up your own mind.

How can I get my voice heard, beyond voting?

There are many ways, other than voting, you can make your voice heard:

- Start or sign petitions: To start a petition, go to <https://petition.parliament.uk> . If a petition reaches 10,000 signatures, the government will respond.
- Reach out to your Member of Parliament (MP) or local representative: If there is an issue that matters to you, you can contact your local MP or local representative by writing a letter, sending an email, or attending a surgery (in person meeting). Find out more at <https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/contact-an-mp-or-lord/contact-your-mp/> or www.gov.uk/find-your-local-councillors
- Volunteer: Find a cause that matters to you and volunteer your time to a local organisation! Check www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/volunteering
- Get involved in public consultations: The government can hold public consultations on a range of issues. They may come in the form of online surveys, focus groups, public meetings, and more. To see all current UK Government public consultations, check out <https://www.gov.uk/search/policy-papers-and-consultations>
- Take part in peaceful protest: The right to peaceful protest is a human right, but one that some people around the world are still fighting to have.
- Get involved in community organising: You can get involved in community led action and local campaigns on issues that matter to you.

Remember, your vote is your voice and your voice matters! #NoVoteNoVoice