

Elections Act 2022

Introduction

- What are changes being introduced?
- How will they affect voters?
- When will these changes take place?
- How are these changes being implemented?

Elections in 2024

- Mayor of London and Greater London Assembly elections 2 May 2024
- General election by January 2025
- Potential for them to take place on the same day!

Elections Act changes

- **Voter ID** - electors to show photo ID before voting at a polling station (in force)
- **Accessibility** - supporting voters with disabilities and an extension to rules for companions (in force)
- **First Past the Post (FPTP)** - all elections in the UK are now FPTP (in force)
- **Absent voting** - rules regarding handling and processing absent vote applications (for May 2024 elections)
- **Postal & proxy voting at election** - electors will be able to apply to vote by post online - existing postal voters will need to renew every 3 years under the new rules (October 2023)
- **Overseas electors** - 15 year rule removed (no upper limit) and registration period extended to 3 years (January 2024)
 - **EU Citizens' voting and candidacy rights** - EU citizens will no longer automatically be entitled to register to vote and stand for election. Two groups of EU citizens will retain rights (June 2024 - 1 Feb 2025)

Voter ID (in force)

- All polling station voters will be required to show photo identification in order to receive their ballot paper(s) or the ballot paper(s) for person they are acting as a proxy for.
- This was introduced earlier this year at local elections around the country
- Any by-election in Croydon will have voter ID

What type of ID can be used?

Includes:

- Passport
- Driving licence
- Blue Badge
- Identity card (a PASS card)
- Older person's / Disabled person's Bus Pass
- Voter Authority Certificate

Voter Authority Certificate

- If Voters do not have one of the acceptable forms of ID they can apply for a VAC
- Online or in-person applications
- Deadline is 6 working days before polling day

Evidence from introduction of voter ID 2023

- Almost all electors had one of the valid forms Voter ID
- Almost all electors knew they needed valid ID and brought it with them
- Many who were turned away came back with ID
- Comms and training for staff vital

Accessibility requirements (in force)

- Anyone can accompany and assist a voter
- The Elections Act introduces provisions that must be met by the Returning Officer in order to support voters with disabilities at a polling station; and provide equipment to assist these voters.

First Past the Post (in force)

- First Past the Post for all elections
- Mayor of London and Mayor of Croydon elections affected by this change

Absent vote applications (October 2023)

New online application service

- Electors will be able to apply online for an absent vote
- Both online and paper applications will include a requirement for the applicant's identity to be verified

Government portal available from October 2023

Postal vote renewal

- Currently renew signatures every 5 years
- In future re-apply for postal vote every 3 years from January 2024
- Political parties must not have applications returned to them – they must be sent directly to the Returning Officer

Absent voting at elections (May 2024)

Postal Voting

- Ban on all parties and campaigners from handling completed postal votes and postal vote envelopes
- Restriction on those able to hand in a postal vote
- Limit of number of postal votes a person can hand in at civic officers and polling stations (6)
- Forms must be completed for each postal vote handed in - by the person handing in

Absent voting at elections (May 2024)

Proxy Voting

Limit on the number of voters someone can act as proxy for:

- Maximum 2 people (for standard domestic voters)
- Maximum 4 people (2 for standard domestic voters and 2 overseas/service voters)

Overseas elector changes (January 2024)

- Changes for overseas electoral registration will include the removal of the current 15 year rule as well as an extension of the current declaration renewal requirement to 3 years.
- Overseas applications to be made online - going through register check process.
- Overseas electors are only eligible to vote in parliamentary elections and referendums.
- The current number of overseas electors on the register is 375, during the 2019 snap general election this number reached 1,220, and 1,782 for the 2016 EU Referendum.

Changes to the rights of EU citizens to vote or standing in local elections

Under the proposed changes, EU citizens who were living in the UK before the end of the EU Withdrawal Agreement Implementation Period (up until 31 December 2020) would keep their right to vote and stand in elections.

EU citizens who have arrived in the UK since 1 January 2021 would have these rights, if the UK Government has negotiated agreements with EU Members States to allow its citizens living in the UK to vote, in return for the same right for UK citizens living in that country.

So far these agreements have been made with:

- Luxembourg
- Poland
- Portugal
- Spain

Currently **24,880** EU Citizens on the register. **11,156** of these would be automatically accepted and sent confirmation while the remaining **13,724** will be written to and where possible manually approved or removed from the register