

Voter ID / Voter Authority Certificate

From 4 May 2023, voters in England will need to show photo ID at polling stations in order to get a ballot paper to vote in the following elections:

- Local elections
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections
- UK parliamentary by-elections
- Recall petitions
- Neighbourhood Planning Referendums

From October 2023 it will also apply to UK General elections.

Please note, this does *not* apply to people who have a postal vote.

The accepted forms of photo ID include:

- A **passport** issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory, an EEA state, or a Commonwealth country (including an Irish Passport Card)
- A **photo driving licence** issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state (this includes a provisional driving licence)
- A **biometric immigration document**
- An identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a **PASS card**)
- A Ministry of Defence Form 90 (**Defence Identity Card**)
- A **Blue Badge**
- A **national identity card** issued by an EEA state
- An **Older Person's Bus Pass**
- A **Disabled Person's Bus Pass**

Expired copies of the above can still be used at the polling station, as long as the photograph is still a good likeness of the elector.

However, if you do not have acceptable photo ID, as listed above, you can apply for a free voter ID document, which is known as a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC). Applications can be made [online](#) or by completing a paper form.

Common Questions

| Issue/question | Answer | Action |
|--|--|--|
| Do I need to get a Voter Authority Certificate? | Only if you don't already have a suitable form of photo ID. | Check the list of ID to see if what you have is suitable. |
| Do I need to be registered to get a Voter Authority Certificate? | Yes. Applicants must first be on the Register of Electors. If you're not already registered, you can complete an application for a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) at the same time as registering to vote. | If you don't know if you're registered, please ring the Electoral Services office on 01543 464457 to check. They will be able to advise you what you need to do. |
| I already have photo ID (in date), what do I need to take to the polling station? | See the list above. Only one form of photo ID needs to be seen at a polling station. This needs to be the original version and not a photocopy or an image on a mobile phone. | No further action required if you are already registered to vote and have suitable photo ID. You must take your photo ID to the polling station or you won't be given a ballot paper. If you forget to take it, you can come back with it later in the day and you will be able to vote. |
| I have photo ID but it is out of date, will this be accepted at a polling station? | Yes, provided it is one of the accepted forms of photo ID, and it has a good likeness of you. | The name on the photo ID must be the same name as listed in the electoral register. |
| I don't think I have an accepted form of photo ID | You can apply for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC), if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You don't have an accepted form of photo ID • You are not sure whether their photo ID still looks like them • You are worried about using an existing form of ID for any other reason, such as the use of a gender marker. | You can apply: <p>Online at GOV.UK.</p> <p>By post</p> <p>Complete a paper application and send it to: Electoral Services, Cannock Chase District Council, Civic Centre, Beecroft Road, Cannock WS11 1BG</p> <p>In person at the above offices.</p> |

| Issue/question | Answer | Action |
|--|---|---|
| My name on the electoral register is different from the name on my photographic identification | The decision on whether an identification document bearing a different name or an alternative spelling of a name from the one on the register can be accepted will be at the discretion of the polling station staff, who must be satisfied that the identification provided is acceptable. | If your applicant's name has changed, for example through marriage, you may be required to provide further proof of identity, such as a marriage certificate, providing evidence of name change. |
| How do I apply for a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC?) | <p>You must first be on the Register of Electors.</p> <p>If not already registered, you can complete an application for a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) at the same time as registering to vote.</p> | <p>You can apply:</p> <p>Online at GOV.UK.</p> <p>By post</p> <p>Complete a paper application and send it to: Electoral Services, Cannock Chase District Council, Civic Centre, Beecroft Road, Cannock WS11 1BG</p> <p>In person at the above offices.</p> |
| What information do I need to provide in completing my application? | <p>When applying for a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC), you will need to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Address • Date of birth • National Insurance number • A recent digital photo (passport style against a light background) <p>You need to apply by using the same name that you are registered with.</p> <p>You do not need to provide your gender, and the certificate will not have a gender marker.</p> | <p>You can apply:</p> <p>Online at GOV.UK.</p> <p>By post</p> <p>Complete a paper application and send it to: Electoral Services, Cannock Chase District Council, Civic Centre, Beecroft Road, Cannock WS11 1BG</p> <p>In person at the above offices</p> |

| Issue/question | Answer | Action |
|---|--|---|
| <p>What if I don't know my National Insurance number or don't have one?</p> | <p>National Insurance numbers are normally included on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payslips • Official letters about tax, pensions or benefits <p>If a National Insurance number cannot be found, an application can still be made.</p> <p>Option 1 - Other proof of identity, such as a birth certificate, bank statement and a utility bill. The Council will contact you to arrange this.</p> <p>Option 2 - If you don't have any other accepted proof of identity, you can ask someone you know who is already on the electoral register to confirm your identity. This is known as an "attestation".</p> | <p>If a National Insurance number or other proof of identity is not provided, a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) will not be issued.</p> <p>Please contact Electoral Services on 01543 464457 for further help.</p> |
| <p>Do I need to provide a photo when completing my application?</p> | <p>Yes. You will need to supply a passport style photo when completing an application online (this can be taken with a smartphone or tablet device and uploaded as part of the online application).</p> <p>If applying by post or in person, you will need to attach a passport style photo.</p> <p>If you cannot supply a photo, you can come to Civic Centre to have your photo taken and be assisted with completing the application.</p> <p>A physical photo must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 45 mm in height by 35 mm in width • Maximum 297 mm in height by 210 mm in width | <p>The photo of you must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • head and shoulders; facing forward, looking straight at the camera with a plain facial expression. • eyes open and clearly visible (for example without sunglasses and not obscured with hair). • no head covering, unless for religious beliefs or medical reasons. <p>The photo must also be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a true likeness • in colour • taken against a plain, light background • in sharp focus and clear • free from 'redundant'; shadows which obscure the face; or reflections • be undamaged |

| Issue/question | Answer | Action |
|---|--|---|
| How does my application get processed? | <p>The Council will process the application and a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) will be sent in the post within a few days.</p> <p>Voter Authority Certificates (VAC) do not have an expiry date and can be used year after year. However, it is recommended that they are renewed after 10 years, or if the elector's name or appearance changes.</p> | |
| What does the voter authority certificate look like? | A4 specialist watermarked paper based document showing: elector's name; photograph; date of issue; recommended date of renewal; issuing authority; alphanumerical reference number; & inherent security features. | |
| I have a proxy do I need to apply? | You do not need to apply for a VAC if you will not be voting in person. The appointed proxy will need to provide their own photo ID at the polling station, when voting on your behalf | Please check that your proxy has valid photo ID. If you decide to vote in person you will need to ensure you have your own acceptable photo ID. |
| I have a postal vote do I need to apply? | No. Postal voters and postal proxy voters do not require a VAC. | No further action required. |
| I am an anonymous elector how do I apply for a voter authority certificate? | Please contact the Electoral Services team | |
| I no longer want to vote in person at a polling station, what are my options? | <p>Apply to vote by post.</p> <p>Apply to vote by proxy</p> <p>You will not require a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC)</p> | |

| Issue/question | Answer | Action |
|---|--|---|
| I have moved house, do I need to apply for a new Voter Authority Certificate (VAC)? | No. However, you will need to register to vote at your new address. | You can do this online . |
| I have not received my Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) | | Contact Electoral Services on 01543 464457. If a temporary VAC is issued, a permanent VAC will be supplied automatically after the election. |
| I have lost my Voter Authority Certificate (VAC), do I need to reapply? | | Contact Electoral Services on 01543 464457 |
| What do I do if my identification is lost, stolen or damaged close to polling day? | | Contact Electoral Services on 01543 464457 |
| How will I receive my Voter Authority Certificate (VAC)? | By post (Royal Mail) Or collect in person (you will need to request this - and state a reason why - when completing the VAC application). | VACs are normally printed within 1-2 days of being sent to the print supplier and sent directly via 1 st class post. Delays receipt, as sent to CCDC offices first. Must be collected in person by the individual, not anybody else. |
| Can I use my voter authority certificate as ID outside of the polling station? | No. The Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) is only intended to be used as photo ID for the purpose of supporting the democratic process. | |