

## Who can register to vote?

You can register to vote in the UK if you are:

- resident (usually live in the UK), and
- aged 16 or over, but you will not be able to vote until you are 18 (except in some elections in Scotland, where the voting age will be 16 in some elections).
- You must also be either:
  - a British or Irish citizen; or
  - a Commonwealth citizen who has leave to remain in the UK or who does not require leave to remain in the UK; or
  - an EU citizen.

*You can register to vote even if you are homeless or don't have a fixed address. You can use the address of somewhere you spend a lot of your time, like a day centre or night shelter, a friend's place or somewhere outdoors.*

## How to register to vote

### England, Scotland and Wales

It's quick and easy to **register to vote online**, as long as you know your National Insurance number and date of birth. If you can't provide your NI number and date of birth you may have to contact your **electoral registration office**.

You can also download a **register to vote form** and post it to your local authority.

## What to do if you're homeless or have no fixed address

You can still register to vote even if you do not have a fixed address. This may be because you are:

- a homeless person
- a patient in a mental health hospital
- a person remanded in custody

To register, you need to fill in a form called a 'Declaration of local connection'. You can get this form from **your electoral registration office**. Or you can **download and print a registration form**. You may be able to get help filling it in from your local homelessness support services.

## People without a permanent address

You can register from an address where you would be living if it were not for your current circumstances, or an address where you are staying temporarily or have lived at in the past.

## People with no fixed address

You can give details of where you spend a lot of your time (during the day or night). This might be a *day service, night shelter, or an address nearest to, for example, a park bench, a bus shelter or the doorway to a high-street store.*

## Why should you register to vote?

- You have to be registered to vote so you can vote in elections and referendums.
- You can be fined if you are asked to register to vote and fail to do so without valid reason.
- Being on the electoral register could help improve your credit rating.

In some circumstances, you can **register to vote anonymously**.

## Why should you vote?

- It's your chance to make your voice heard about important issues.
- Politicians are far more likely to listen to you if you can vote them in or out.
- Politicians, including MPs and councillors, represent your local area and have the power to change things.

## Who can vote in local elections?

You must be:

- Aged 18 or over; and
- Resident and registered to vote in the UK; and
- A British or Irish citizen resident in the UK; or
- A Commonwealth citizen who has leave to remain in the UK or who does not require leave to remain in the UK; or
- An EU citizen.

These rules also apply to local by-elections and Police Commissioner elections.

## Who can vote in a general election or parliamentary by-election?

You must be:

- Aged 18 or over; and
- Resident and registered to vote in the UK; and
- A British or Irish citizen resident in the UK; or
- A citizen of the Commonwealth nations of Malta and Cyprus; or
- A Commonwealth citizen who has leave to remain in the UK or who does not require leave to remain in the UK.

Convicted prisoners can't vote in any election, but those on remand and civil prisoners can vote if they are on the register.

## How to vote

If you are eligible and registered to vote you can vote:

- **in person at a polling station**
- **by post**
- **by proxy** (getting someone else to vote for you)

You can **apply for a postal or proxy vote online** or by **contacting your electoral registration office**.

## What happens if you don't register?

If you're asked to register by your Electoral Registration Office and don't do so, you could be fined.

You won't be fined if you have a valid reason for not registering, like a long stay in hospital or if you have severe learning difficulties.

### **The electoral register and 'open register'**

There are two versions of the electoral register. Everyone's name and address goes on the full version of the electoral register. The full version of the register is only used for:

- elections
- preventing and detecting crime
- checking applications for loans or credit

The 'open register' is available to anyone who wants to buy a copy and is frequently used for marketing purposes. You can easily opt-out of the 'open' version when you register.

***If you can show that you have good reason, you can register anonymously. For example, if you're concerned about your safety. Your details won't appear on either version of the electoral register if you register anonymously.***

**You can opt out of the open register online.**

**Contact your electoral registration office** to ask about anonymous registration.