

Member Briefing

Number: 2328

Title: Voter ID – National Campaign Launch

Summary: The UK Government has introduced a requirement for voter to show photo ID when voting at a polling station. This new requirement will apply for the first time in England at the local, town and parish elections on Thursday, 4 May 2023.

Background

The Elections Act makes a range of changes which will impact on electoral administrators, campaigners and voters. These will apply at the following election types:

- UK Parliamentary elections in Great Britain
- Local election in England – including mayoral elections
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales

The following provisions in the Elections Act 2022 are expected to be in place from the May 2023 polls:

- Making it easier for disabled people to vote
 - o Disabled voters can choose anyone who is over 18 to accompany them in the polling station, to help them to vote
 - o Requirement for Returning Officers to take all reasonable steps to provide equipment to support disabled voters to vote independently and in secret at the polling station, and in doing so to have regard to any relevant guidance issued by the Electoral Commission.
- Requirement for voters at polling stations to show photographic identification before they receive their ballot paper. Anyone who does not have a valid photographic ID can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate, to be issued free of charge by the Electoral Registration Officer.

What happens next in relation to Voter ID?

The UK Government has introduced a requirement for voter to show photo ID when voting at a polling station at the elections listed above. This new requirement will apply for the first time in England at the local, town and parish election on Thursday 4 May 2023.

On Monday, 9 January 2023 the Electoral Commission launched the new Voter ID public awareness campaign '**Note to self**', which aims to raise awareness of the new requirement.



'Note to self' features giant handwritten sticky notes as unmissable reminders that will prompt voters to bring their ID on polling day. Voters can expect to see the Electoral Commission sticky note reminders across advertising channels including billboards and buses, online in the Electoral Commission social media feeds, on their website banners and in local newspapers. There will also be a TV advert that will appear on TV and 'Video on Demand' and will be used across a range of digital channels to increase the shareability of their campaign.

The Electoral Commissions campaign advert will direct voters to their website to find out more information. [Voter ID | Electoral Commission](#)

Which forms of ID can be used to vote?

Many electors may already have a form of photo ID that is acceptable. Any of the following can be used.

- Passport
- Driving licence (including provisional license)
- Blue badge
- Certain concessionary travel cards
- Identity card with PASS mark (Proof of Age Standards Scheme)
- Biometric Immigration document
- Defence identity card
- Certain national identity cards

For more information on which forms of photo ID will be accepted, visit [electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID](#) or call their helpline on: 0800 328 0280.

If an elector does not have an accepted form of photo ID

If an elector doesn't already have an accepted form of photo ID, or they are not sure whether the photo ID still looks like them, then they can apply for a free voter ID document, known as a **Voter Authority Certificate**. Electors can apply for this at [voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk](#) this service went live today, Monday, 16 January 2023.

Alternatively, a paper application form can be completed and then sent to Democratic Services for processing.

If anyone requires any additional support with applying for a Voter Authority Certificate or want to request an application form, please encourage your residents to contact Democratic Services.

We know that some groups are more likely to experience barriers in preparing for this change and may need support to access photo ID. Plans are in place at a local level to support our residents and Members along with Town and Parish Clerks will be provided with a toolkit. The toolkit will assist in communicating the key messages and supporting residents to navigate the Voter ID requirement, this information will be shared in due course.

Any residents who have any questions can contact Democratic Services team via: elreg@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk or call: **01244 977084**

Alongside the national campaign to raise awareness, we will issuing a range of local communications and resources to encourage everyone who needs to ensure they have a valid photo ID. This will include writing out to every household in Cheshire West and Chester advising them of the forthcoming elections, Voter ID and what to expect at a polling station. Information will also be going out with the council tax mailing in mid-March.

The Council's social media platforms will also play its part in communicating the changes and the team will also be providing voter ID drop-in sessions in and around the borough to work with electors to complete their application, locations will be confirmed shortly and included in the toolkit that will be provided to members and town and parish clerks.

We will also continue to promote the role that postal voting plays as an alternative means to enable everyone entitled to vote to do so.

For further information, contact: Emma Lawrence

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Responsible Committee, Cabinet Member: Councillor Paul Donovan

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