

Briefing Note

Voter Identification

From May 2023, all electors who wish to vote in person, including those acting as a proxy on behalf of another individual, will be required to produce an accepted form of photographic identification (photo ID) at polling stations before being provided with a ballot paper.

The Cabinet Office has decided to introduce this requirement to reduce cases of voter fraud. The requirement was brought in under the Elections Act 2022, and the relevant sections are now in force.

This requirement will apply to:

- UK Parliamentary General Elections
- Local Elections
- Local Referendums
- Police and Crime Commissioner Elections
- Recall Elections

The first poll this will apply to will be the local elections on Thursday 4 May 2023.

A comprehensive communications campaign will advertise the requirements in plenty of time across a broad range of channels before this policy is implemented nationwide.

What types of photo ID will be accepted?

Poll Clerks will be able to accept many forms of identification, including:

- Various concessionary travel passes
- PASS cards
- Ministry of Defence identity cards
- Photocard parking permits issued as part of the Blue Badge scheme
- Driver's licenses
- Passports

Expired photo ID will also be accepted, as long as the photograph is still a good likeness of the elector.

What if an elector does not have an accepted form of photo ID?

Electors without photo ID will be able to apply for a 'Voter Authority Certificate' in advance of the poll. This will be a free photo ID document, specifically issued for the purpose of voting.

How will electors apply for Voter Authority Certificates (VACs)?

Applications for VACs will be made by post, online or in person. The Cabinet Office has stated that they will bear the cost for Local Authorities issuing the certificates.

Online applications: This will be through a dedicated online system similar to the Register to Vote service. An elector will be able to upload their details and a photograph.

Postal applications: Application forms will be made available to download and print from gov.uk, but electors will also be able to request that Electoral Returning Officers (EROs) post an application form to them.

In-person applications: Electors will be able to apply for a VAC in person, however, Local Authorities will be given discretion to determine the best approach to this locally.

Current expectations are that applications for VACs will open in January 2023.

Deadlines for applications and Temporary Certificates

The deadline for applications for VACs for a particular poll is 5pm, 6 working days before polling day.

EROs will be able to provide Temporary VACs as an interim measure if time constraints mean that permanent VACs cannot be issued in time. A Temporary VAC will only be valid for the day of the poll, however, the ERO will then produce a permanent VAC in due course, without the elector needing to make a further application.

Temporary VACs can be issued locally until 5pm on the date of the relevant poll.

If you have any other questions or queries, please contact the Council Elections Office on 01283 221000 or the Councils Website www.southderbyshire.gov.uk