

Voting from Overseas

Frequent Questions and Answers

The Conservative Government has now recast the franchise to include all British citizens living and working around the world who previously resided in the UK and made the registration and voting process easier. This includes provisions for those not previously registered to vote in the UK, overseas voters remaining on the Electoral Roll for up to 3 years and improved online facilities.

Who can vote?

Any British citizen (this includes an Irish citizen who also qualifies for British citizenship), aged 18 and over who was previously registered in, or has lived in the UK, even if that was only as a child.

Which elections can I vote in?

You can vote in any Westminster Parliamentary election and Parliamentary by-election. Also, in any Referendum, subject to the franchise set for it.

Where is my vote counted?

You can register either in the last place you were registered to vote or, if never registered, in your last place of residence in the UK. You will need to provide evidence to support this in your application and you can only register and vote in one place.

Is there a deadline to register to vote?

The cut-off date for registration to vote in a specific Parliamentary election is fixed when polling day is set and is usually 12-15 days beforehand. Obviously, the earlier you register the better, in case of problems proving your identity or last residence, and any international postal system delays if you need to rely on a postal vote.

How do I register to vote?

You will need to register to vote and make a declaration as an overseas elector [HERE](#). If you are registering in England, Scotland, or Wales this is best done online. If you live in Northern Ireland you need to download, print, and complete a registration form. You will need to prove your identity and provide evidence of your last place of residence or where you were last registered to vote in the UK.

How do I prove my identity?

The easiest method should be your National Insurance (NI) Number. If you've forgotten it, you can [try to find it online](#). The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) will then check your NI number against information held about you by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to confirm your identity. You will also need to give your date of birth. Failing this you can provide a scan of your British passport (current or expired). Otherwise, a list is set out of other documents proving ID that can be used. If you cannot provide evidence to satisfy the ERO that you are who you say you are, you could also in the last resort rely on the attestation option.

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What is the attestation option?

You can ask someone who knows you to provide an attestation that you are who you say you are. There are very strict rules around the provision of an attestation, including that an attestor can only provide two attestations during a given period, and it is a criminal offence to make or submit a false attestation.

How can I prove where I was last resident?

The new legislation contains a non-exhaustive list (below) of other documents you can upload to prove your last residence. Any document you provide as proof must contain your name (or a previous name if you have changed it) and the relevant address.

- (a) a driving licence granted in the United Kingdom (including an expired licence);
- (b) an instrument of a court appointment, such as a grant of probate or letters of administration.
- (c) a letter from the Office of the Public Guardian confirming the registration of a lasting power of attorney.
- (d) a letter from His Majesty's Revenue and Customs.
- (e) a council tax demand letter or statement.
- (f) a rent book issued by a local authority.
- (g) a statement of benefits or entitlement to benefits, such as a statement of child benefit.
- (h) a letter from the Department of Work and Pensions, confirming the applicant's entitlement to a state pension.
- (i) a letter from a school, college, university, or other educational institution which confirms the attendance of, or the offer of a place for, the applicant at that institution.
- (j) a letter from the Student Loans Company.
- (k) an official copy of the land register entry for the relevant address or other proof of title for the relevant address.
- (l) a solicitor's letter confirming the purchase of, or confirmation of the land registry registration of, the relevant address.
- (m) a Form P45, Form P60, reference or payslip issued to the applicant by their employer or former employer.
- (n) a bank or building society passbook or statement, or a letter from a bank or building society confirming that the applicant has opened an account with that bank or building society.
- (o) a credit card statement.
- (p) a utility or mobile telephone bill.
- (q) a letter from an insurance provider.

What if I was a child when I last lived in the UK?

The ERO will ask you for the full name of a parent or guardian who was resident at your last address before you left the UK, any evidence that that parent or guardian was registered on the electoral roll, a copy of your birth certificate with the name of the relevant parent or a certificate proving that your guardian had been appointed as your guardian. If you cannot provide any of this evidence, you could also try the attestation route (see above).

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Are there any UK tax implications if I vote?

No. Successive UK legislation has made it clear that there is no connection between being registered to vote, voting, and being domiciled for tax as an overseas elector. This is also made clear in the current HMRC guidance [RDR1](#).

How often will I have to renew my registration?

Overseas electoral registration will now last until the third successive 1st November after which you registered. For those already registered before January 2024 there will be transitional arrangements.

How can I cast my vote?

You can choose how to cast your vote when you register. You have three options: In-person, by post, or by proxy,

Vote in-person - If you happen to be in the United Kingdom near the place you are registered at and have not made postal or proxy arrangements, then you can still go and vote at the appropriate polling station (you will need to show your ID).

Vote by post - You can apply online [HERE](#) for a postal vote. Your ERO will post your ballot soon after they are printed. Postage back to the UK should be free using the international business reply service provided, although check that this is accepted by the postal service in the country where you live. You will have to decide about how efficient the postage system is in your country of residence as in the past there have been delays and ballots don't always arrive early enough for you to vote and post them back in time for your vote to count. If you use a courier service to speed up the process it will be at your expense.

Vote by proxy - You can apply online [HERE](#) for a proxy vote. You will avoid the potential delays in the international postal system, but you must nominate and trust someone else to vote the way you want for you. They must be 18 years old, registered to vote, able to get to the polling station (or vote by postal proxy) and eligible to vote in the election. They can only act as proxy for up to four people of which only two can be UK residents. Your proxy if they wish can opt to vote by post within the UK which is called a **Postal Proxy**. This is useful if they do not vote at the same polling station as you are registered at or are not sure they can get to it. We therefore recommend a Postal Proxy.

Need help finding a Proxy? Request [HERE](#)

Further Information:

[UK Government](#)

[Electoral Commission](#)

[Contact your ERO](#)

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