



Candidates and Agents Information Pack

UK Parliamentary General Election

4 July 2024

Topics

This Information Pack has been updated to cover changes as enacted by the Elections Act. It will outline:

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Who's who

- The Acting Returning Officer is responsible for running the election. The Acting Returning Officer is Tim Clegg.
- The Electoral Registration Officer is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters lists. The Electoral Registration Officer is Tim Clegg.
- Contact details are provided later.

Key dates

Timetable process	Deadline
Publication of Notice of Election	Friday 31 May
Nominations commence	10am on the day after publication of Notice of Election (3 June)
Close of nominations and notice of appointment of election agents	4pm on Friday 7 June
Publication of statement of persons nominated, including notice of poll and situation of polling stations	5pm on Friday 7 June, or 4pm on Monday 10 June (where objections)
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Midnight - Tuesday 18 June
Deadline for new postal vote applications/changes to existing postal or proxy vote arrangements	5pm on Wednesday 19 June
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm on Wednesday 26 June

Timetable process	Deadline
Deadline for new postal vote applications/changes to existing postal or proxy vote arrangements	5pm on Wednesday 19 June
Deadline for applications for Voter Authority Certificate or Anonymous Elector's Document	5pm on Wednesday 26 June
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm Wednesday 26 June
Appointment of polling and counting agents	Thursday 27 June
Deadline for notification of appointment of sub agents	Tuesday 2 July
Polling Day	Thursday 4 July 7am to 10pm
Deadline to apply for an emergency proxy	5pm on 4 July
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	5pm on 4 July
Return of election expenses	Friday 9 August

Qualifications

Candidates must satisfy criteria on the day they are nominated and on polling day:

- be at least 18 years old
- either be a British citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a qualifying Commonwealth Citizen

There is no requirement to be a registered elector in the UK.

Disqualifications

Certain people are disqualified from becoming an MP, such as:

- **civil servants**
- members of **police forces**
- members of **armed forces**
- **government-nominated directors** of commercial companies
- **judges**
- members of a **foreign legislature** (outside the Commonwealth)
- **peers who sit and vote in the House of Lords**

Further disqualifications include:

- those who are subject to a **bankruptcy restrictions order or debt relief restrictions order** (but not those who are simply bankrupt) in England, Wales or Northern Ireland; or those whose estate has been sequestrated in Scotland and have not been discharged

For elections taking place on or after 2 May 2024:

- those who are disqualified on the grounds that they are found guilty of an illegal or corrupt practice such as undue influence
- those who are subject to a disqualification order under section 30 of the Elections Act 2022

The nomination papers

The following must be submitted by all candidates by 4pm on Friday 7 June, together with the deposit:

- the nomination form
- the home address form
- the consent to nomination form

Party candidates will also need to submit by that time:

- a certificate authorising the use of a party name/registered description on the ballot paper
- a written request to use on of the party's emblems on the ballot paper

The deposit

- Each candidate must deposit £500 with the ARO so that the nomination is valid.
- Can be made using legal tender (cash) or a UK banker's draft.
- The deposit is returned if a candidate polls at least 5% of the valid votes cast across the constituency.

Completing nomination papers

- Take care when completing your nomination papers as mistakes may invalidate your nomination.
- Complete your nomination papers early and arrange for us to provide an informal check.
- The nomination form, consent to nomination form and home address form must be delivered by hand and cannot be submitted by post, fax or other electronic means.
- The nomination and home address form may only be delivered by:
 - you

- our proposer or seconder, or
- by your election agent (if the Acting Returning Officer has previously received notification of their appointment).

Nomination form

- Include your full name
- Optional: complete commonly used name box(es) if commonly known by a name other than full name and wish to use it instead
 - Commonly used names are the only names shown on official notices and ballot papers
 - For elections taking place on or after 2 May 2024, candidates may use one or more of their names given on the nomination paper in a different manner.
 - For example, if Andrew John Smith-Jones is more commonly known as John Smith-Jones, they could ask for this name to be used
- Description field - 3 options:
 - leave blank
 - Independent
 - party candidates can use party name or description authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the Nominating Officer
- Subscribers: 10 subscribers from the constituency are required:
- Must sign and should print their names. Check details of subscribers against electoral register that is **in force on the last day for publication of notice of election (4 June)**.
- If they are not on that register, they can't subscribe your nomination.
- Only ask subscribers to sign after completing the name and description fields on the form.
- Data protection requirements.

Home address form

- Must state home address in full.
- Must state if you do not want your address to be made public and to appear on the ballot paper. If so:
 - give the name of the constituency (or, if after 2 May 2024, the constituency or the relevant area) in which your home address is situated or,
 - if you live outside the UK, the name of the country in which you reside.

Consent to nomination form

All candidates must consent to their nomination.

On the consent to nomination form you will be asked to state:

- that you are qualified and not disqualified from standing
- your date of birth
- the name, address and signature of witness
- that you are not a candidate in another constituency

Certification of authorisation

- Party candidates must have written permission to use the party name/description from the Nominating Officer (or a person appointed to act on their behalf).
- The certificate may:
 - allow the use of the party name or a description
 - allow the candidate to choose whether to use the party name or any of the descriptions registered with the Electoral Commission
- Must be submitted with the other nomination papers by **4pm on Friday 7 June**

Emblem request form

- Party candidates can ask for an emblem to be printed on the ballot papers
- Emblem request form must be submitted by **4pm on Friday 7 June**
- Party candidates should supply an electronic version of the emblem to the Acting Returning Officer if required.

Joint candidates

- Nominated by more than one party
- May use registered joint descriptions
 - must be supported by certificate of authorisation from each party
- May use one emblem of one of the parties but there are no joint emblems

Election agent

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly its financial management.
- Notification of appointment must reach the ARO by **4pm on Friday 7 June**. Form is included in nomination pack.
- You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed.

Sub-agents

The election agent may appoint sub-agents to act on their behalf in the constituency:

- areas of appointment must not overlap
- can attend proceedings instead of the election agent

The agent must give written notice to the ARO by **Tuesday 2 July**.

Other agents

- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on your behalf:
 - you must give notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by Thursday 27 June. We will provide forms.
 - The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of each session. We will give 48 hours' notice in writing.

Free candidate mailing

- All candidates who are validly nominated are entitled to send one election communication, free of charge, to electors across the constituency.
- It must include matters relating to the election only.
- You can choose to send either:
 - one unaddressed election communication of up to 60 grams to every postal address, or
 - one election communication of up to 60 grams addressed to each other
- Contact Royal Mail to make arrangements.

Access to electoral register / absent voting lists

- Access by candidates - once you **officially** become a candidate.
- Make written request to the ERO - forms are available from the Elections Office.
- Only use data for permitted purposes
 - to complete the nomination form
 - to help you campaign
 - to check that donations/loans are permissible

Registration

- As a candidate you are uniquely placed to encourage people to register to vote.
- You should encourage people to register as soon as possible.
- The deadline for applying for the election is **Tuesday 18 June**.
- Individuals can apply to register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. It only takes a few minutes.
- When discussing registering to vote with individuals, you will need to make them aware that they will need:
 - their National Insurance number
 - date of birth and address to register.
- People who do not have / cannot retrieve their National Insurance Number can still register, but they will need to provide further information. If so, they will be contacted by the ERO.

Absent voting

- Highlight that electors can now apply online at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote or www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote.
- When talking to electors about applying to vote by post or proxy, you should make them aware of the relevant deadlines and advise them to apply early.
- You will need to make them aware that they will need to provide their National Insurance number, date of birth, signature and address to register.
- People who do not have / cannot retrieve their National Insurance number or cannot provide a signature can still apply, but they may need to provide further information. If so, they will be contacted by the ERO.
- If you are encouraging people to apply for a postal (or proxy) vote, make sure you explain that they will only qualify for one if they are (or will be) registered in time to vote at the elections.

Absent voting - campaigners

- Campaigners cannot handle postal votes for other electors who are not close relatives or someone for whom they provide regular care
- Campaigners may handle postal voting documents if that's a feature of a job they hold (e.g. a postal worker)
- New limits on the number of postal votes that can be handed in - a maximum of 5 plus their own for each poll

Absent voting - Who is a campaigner?

A campaigner is:

- a candidate at the election(s)
- an election agent (or sub-agent)
- employed by the candidate (for the purposes of the candidate's activities at the election)
- a member of a registered political party who is carrying out activity to promote a particular outcome at an election
- someone employed by a registered political party in connection with that party's political activities

Voter Identification

- Voters in this election will need to provide a form of accepted photographic ID if they wish to vote in person at a polling station.
- Voters will be able to present out of date photographic ID so long as the photograph is still a good likeness.
- If a voter fails to present a form of accepted photographic ID they will not be issued with a ballot paper.
- This includes those who act as a proxy for another person.

Accepted forms of Voter ID

- Voters should be encouraged to check whether they have one of the forms of accepted photographic ID well in advance of the election.
- If a voter does not have an accepted form of photographic ID, they can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate either online www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate or using a paper application form.
- Electors who are registered anonymously must have an Elector's Document to vote in person.
- Any applications must be received by the ERO by 5pm on Wednesday 26 June.

International travel

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)

Irish Passport Card

Driving and Parking

Driving licence (issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state)

A Blue Badge

Local Travel

Older Person's bus pass funded by the UK government

Disabled Person's bus pass funded by the UK government

Oyster 60+ Card funded by the UK government

Freedom pass

Scottish National Entitlement card for the purpose of concessionary travel

60 and Over Welsh Concessionary Travel Card

Disabled person's Welsh Concessionary Travel Card

Senior SmartPass issued in NI

Registered Blind SmartPass or Blind Person's SmartPass issued in NI

War Disablement SmartPass issued in NI

60+ SmartPass issued in NI

Half Fare SmartPass issued in NI

Proof of Age

Identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)

Other Government issued documents

Biometric immigration document

Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card)

Nationality identity card issued by an EEA state

Electoral Identity Card issued in Northern Ireland

Electoral Identity Card issued in Northern Ireland

Voter Authority Certificate

Anonymous Elector's Document

Campaigning dos and don'ts

- Do use imprints on all your campaign material
- Do comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners
- Do make sure outdoor posters are removed 2 weeks after the election
- Do not produce material that looks like a poll card
- Do not pay people to display your adverts (unless they display adverts as part of their normal business)
- Do not handle any postal voting documents you are not entitled to

Code of conduct for campaigners

Campaigners are an essential element of a healthy democracy, but their activities should not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process.

Electoral registration and absent vote applications:

- ensure forms fully confirm to the requirements of electoral law
- ensure electors are aware they can apply to register or for an absent vote online
- include the EROs address for the return of any paper forms
- ensure unaltered applications are sent to ERO withing **two working days**
- make sure electors understand implications of applying for an absent vote if going on holiday
- do not encourage postal ballot pack redirection
- do not encourage electors to appoint a campaigner as proxy

Voter Authority Certificate applications:

- should not handle paper based Voter Authority Certificate applications and should encourage electors to send them directly to the ERO

Postal voting documents:

- never touch any of an elector's postal voting documents
- never observe electors completing their postal vote
- never handle or take any completed ballot paper or postal ballot packs from voters

Campaigning outside polling stations:

- you are allowed to put your messages to voters on polling day, including in public spaces outside polling places
- keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter

Polling day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm
- Office open 6am to 10pm for queries for problems relating to the administration of the election
 - for queries relating to election finance issues, contact the Electoral Commission (contact details shown later)
- Voters in the polling station or in a queue at the polling station at 10pm can apply for a ballot paper
- Voters in this election will need to present photographic ID in the polling station
- Voters can request to have their ID checked in private

Completed postal votes handed in to polling stations

- Postal votes can be handed into polling stations within the voting area
- Anyone returning postal votes by hand must complete a postal vote return form, otherwise the postal votes will be rejected
- Polling station staff may assist anyone wishing to hand in postal votes to complete the relevant form
- An individual may hand in a maximum of 6 electors' postal votes (their own and five others) per poll
- If the individual is a campaigner they may only handle their own postal vote and those that belong to close family members or people for whom they provide care
- Polling station staff will not be able to provide advice about whether someone is a campaigner, but they may reject postal votes if they have reasonable cause to believe an individual is a campaigner
- If postal votes are handed in are not in accordance with the rules, then they will be rejected

Completed postal votes handed in to council buildings

- Restrictions on the numbers of returned postal votes and who may hand in postal votes are the same as for polling stations
- An individual may hand in a maximum of 6 electors' postal votes (their own and five others) per poll
- Staff authorised by the Returning Officer may assist anyone wishing to hand in postal votes to complete the relevant form
- Postal votes dropped off to reception or other council office desks or locations or any posted into council letter boxes without completing the postal vote return form will be rejected and will not be counted.

Counting of votes

- The count will be held in:
 - Stafford Leisure Centre, Lammascote Road, Stafford ST16 3TA
- Candidates, election agents, counting agents and one other person appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend
 - limits to the number of counting agents will be provided

Spending Issues

Candidate spending

- Defined as certain expenses ‘used for the purposes of the candidate’s election’ during the regulated period
- Responsibility of **election agent**
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)

The spending limit



Regulated period	Fixed amount	Constituency type	Variable amounts (per registered parliamentary elector)
Stafford Constituency	£11,390	County	12p per registered parliamentary elector

The electorate figure will be provided by the Elections Office.

Candidates' spending returns

- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election
- Returns made public by Acting Returning Officer
- Sample of returns may be reviewed by the Electoral Commission
- Failure to submit an expenses return is a criminal offence enforceable by the police
- No spending will be reimbursed

Contacts

- Elections Office - 01785 619424,
elections@staffordbc.gov.uk
- Electoral Commission contacts
 - For questions on the Commission's guidance on standing for election, contact www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/contact-us
 - For questions on election spending, contact 020 7271 0616
- SPOC - Staffordshire Police -
spoc@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk