

January 2023

Voter ID: Quick guide for staff (Wales)

Voter ID requirement

From 4 May 2023, the UK government has introduced a new requirement for voters in Wales to show photo ID to vote at polling stations at certain elections.

This will apply to:

- Police and Crime Commissioner elections
- UK parliamentary by-elections
- Recall petitions

From October 2023, the policy will also apply to UK Parliament general elections.

NOTE : Voters in Wales will not need to show photo ID to vote at a polling station at Senedd elections or local council elections.

Purpose of this guide

This quick guide provides information for staff working at local authorities in Wales who will be supporting members of the public to understand the change and responding to their queries.

It includes information on:

- [Which forms of photo ID will be accepted](#)
- [Applying for a Voter Authority Certificate](#)
- [What voters can expect at the polling station](#)






Supporting those who need it to vote

We know that some people are more likely to experience barriers in preparing for this change and may need support to access photo ID.

Anyone who does not already have an accepted form of photo ID will be able to apply for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

Accepted forms of photographic ID

For the elections listed above (but not Senedd or local council elections) the following forms of photographic ID will be accepted at polling stations. Voters only need to show one form of ID to vote, but it must be the original, hard copy version and not a photocopy or a digital version.

|  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| International travel | Driving and Parking | Local travel | Proof of age | Other government-issued documents |
| Passport | Driving license (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 National identity cards |

Only specific forms of the above ID will be accepted. For more information on which forms will be accepted, including a full list of accepted concessionary travel cards, see [Annex 1](#).

If someone is not sure whether they have accepted ID or not, they can visit www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID or call the Electoral Commission helpline on **0800 328 0280**.

Expired photo ID will be accepted if the photo remains a good enough likeness for the polling station staff to be able to identify the voter.

Anyone who doesn't currently have an accepted form of photo ID, or isn't sure whether they still look like the photo on their ID, can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate.

Applying for a free Voter Authority Certificate

Voters need to be registered to vote, or have applied to be registered, before they apply for a Voter Authority Certificate. When someone registers to vote, they will be asked whether they have photo ID or if they want to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate.

Apply online

Applications can be completed online at voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk/.

Apply by post

Voters can also apply for a Voter Authority Certificate by completing a paper form and sending it to their local council.

They can request a form from the council. They can find their contact details by entering their postcode at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voter.

Apply over the phone or in person

Your council may also accept applications over the phone and in person (this will be down to the local council to decide).

The application process

When applying for a Voter Authority Certificate, the voter will need to provide their:

- Name
- Address
- Date of birth
- National Insurance number

They will also need to provide a photograph.

If the voter doesn't know their National Insurance number, they can look for it on their payslips or on official letters about tax, pensions or benefits.

If they are unable to find it, they can still complete their application, but they will need to provide alternative proof of their identity, which could include a birth certificate, bank statement or utility bill. Their council will contact them to arrange this.

They can also ask someone who knows them to provide an attestation to the council to verify their identity if they don't have any other accepted proof of identity. The person providing the attestation must be a person 'of good standing'. Your local council can provide more information about the requirements of an attestation.

Providing a photograph

Requirements for the photograph are similar to passport photos and must show the person's head and shoulders with nothing covering the head – unless a head covering is worn for religious or medical reasons. The face must not be covered for any reason.

If someone needs help taking their photo, their local council will be able to do this for them.

For more information on the requirements for the photograph, see [Annex 2](#) or visit electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID.

The local council will process the application and send the Voter Authority Certificate to the voter by post. Voter Authority Certificates do not have an expiration date, but voters are encouraged to renew their Voter Authority Certificate after 10 years.

All data voters provide when applying for a Voter Authority Certificate will be stored securely by local councils in line with data protection regulation.

What will happen at the polling station

When someone arrives at the polling station to vote, a member of staff will:

1. Ask them for their name and address so they can find them on the register
2. Ask for their photo ID, and check if it is acceptable
3. If their ID is acceptable, they will give them their ballot paper and direct them to complete it at a polling booth as usual.

A private area will be available at polling stations so voters can choose to have their ID viewed in private. This may be a separate room, or an area separated by a privacy screen, depending on the polling station.

If members of the public would like further information about what to expect at the polling station, they should contact their local council. They can find their contact details by entering their postcode at electoralcommission.org.uk/voter.

Annex 1: Accepted forms of ID

The following forms of photo ID will be accepted when voting at a polling station:

- A passport issued by the UK, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or a European Economic Area (EEA) state
- A Blue Badge parking permit
- A driving license (including provisional license) issued by the UK, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state
- An identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)
- Biometric Immigration document
- Defence Identity Card
- A national identity card issued by an EEA state
- The following concessionary travel cards:

Passes funded by the UK Government

- An Older Person's Bus Pass
- A Disabled Person's Bus Pass
- An Oyster 60+ card
- A Freedom Pass

Passes funded by the Scottish Government

- The National Entitlement Card

Passes funded by the Welsh Government

- A 60 and Over Welsh Concessionary Travel Card
- A Disabled Person's Welsh Concessionary Travel Card

Passes issued under the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme

- A Senior SmartPass
- A Registered Blind SmartPass or Blind Person's SmartPass
- A War Disablement SmartPass
- A 60+ SmartPass
- A Half Fare SmartPass

Annex 2: Photograph requirements for the Voter Authority Certificate application

Photo style

The photo must be of the applicant:

- Facing forward and looking straight at the camera
- A close up of their head and shoulders, without any head covering, unless they wear one for religious beliefs or medical reasons
- Without any other person visible
- With a plain facial expression and with their eyes open and clearly visible (e.g. without sunglasses and not obscured with hair etc.). Please note this does not apply where the applicant is unable to provide a photograph which complies with either or both of those requirements (as the case may be) due to any disability.

Photo quality

The photo of the applicant must:

- Be a true likeness that has not been changed or manipulated
- Be in colour
- Be taken against a plain, light background
- Be in sharp focus and clear
- Be free from 'redeye', shadows which obscure the face, or reflection
- Not be damaged

Photo size

Where the applicant applies online, the photograph they provide must be:

- At least 750 pixels in height and 600 pixels in width
- Contained in an electronic file which is no more than 20MB in size

Where the applicant applies using a paper form the photograph must be:

- At least 45 millimetres in height and 35 millimetres in width
- No larger than 297 millimetres in height or 210 millimetres in width

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