

The  
Electoral  
Commission

# Candidates and agents Briefing

UK Parliamentary General Election  
Thursday 4 July 2024

# The Electoral Commission

## Topics

- who's who
- key dates of the election timetable
- qualifications & disqualifications
- nominations
- agents
- voter ID
- postal votes
- polling day
- counting of votes
- candidates' expenses
- integrity issues
- contacts

# The Electoral Commission

- Who's who
- **The (Acting) Returning Officer** is responsible for running the election. The (Acting) Returning Officer is Stephen Gabriel.
  - **The Electoral Registration Officer** is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters lists.
  - The Electoral Registration Officer for the Tamworth Borough part of the Tamworth Constituency is Stephen Gabriel.
  - The Electoral Registration Officer for the Lichfield District part of the Tamworth Constituency is Simon Fletcher.

**Contact details are provided later**

## Key dates

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

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## Key dates

Deadline for applications for Voter Authority Certificate or Anonymous Elector's Document	<b>5pm</b> Wednesday 26 June
Appointment of polling and counting agents	Thursday 27 June
<b>Polling day</b>	Thursday 4 July 7am to 10pm
Deadline to apply for an emergency proxy	<b>5pm on</b> Thursday 4 July
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes ends	<b>5pm on</b> Thursday 4 July
Return of election expenses	+ 35 calendar days from result Friday 9 August (if result declared on 5 July)

## 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, a 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 the **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**
- 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

## Disqualifications

- 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



## Submitting nomination papers

- All candidates must submit by Friday 7 June:
  - their nomination form
  - their home address form
  - their consent to nomination
- 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 one of the party's emblems on the ballot paper

Please ensure you use the up-to-date forms

## Submitting 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
  - your proposer or seconder, or
  - by your election agent (if the (Acting) Returning Officer has previously received notification of their appointment).
- £500 deposit – cash (pounds sterling)
  - deposit is returned if a candidate polls at least 5% of the valid votes cast across the constituency

## 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
- 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

## Nomination form

- 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.**
- 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 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

### Must include:

- Statement you are qualified and not disqualified from standing
- Your date of birth
- Name, address and signature of witness
- Statement you are not a candidate in another constituency

## Certificate 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 paper.
- 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 RO 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 (A)RO 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.

## 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 elector
- contact Royal Mail to make arrangements

## Access to electoral register / absent voting lists

- Access by candidates – once you **officially** become a candidate:
  - earliest, on 22 May if you, or others, have declared yourself a candidate on or before this date
  - After 4 June, once you or others have declared yourself a candidate or you submit your nomination papers, whichever is earliest
- Make **written** request to the ERO's for each area – forms are included in your nomination pack.

Access to  
electoral  
register /  
absent voting  
lists

- 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 **<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>**. It only takes a few minutes.



## Registration

- 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 may need to provide further information. If so, they will be contacted by the ERO.

## Absent voting

- 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.

Electors can now **apply online** at [www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote](https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote) or [www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote](https://www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote)

## 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 five plus their own for each poll

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## Absent Voting Who is a campaigner?

A campaigner is:

- a candidate at the election(s)
- an election 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 <https://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 the 6th working day before poll.

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## Accepted forms of Voter ID (1)

### **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

## Accepted forms of Voter ID (2)

### **Local travel**

Older Person's bus pass

Disabled Person's bus  
pass

Oyster 60+ Card

Freedom pass

Scottish National  
Entitlement card

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



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## Accepted forms of Voter ID (3)

### **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 Identify Card)

Nationality identity card issued by an EEA state

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
- No signs are to be placed on any street furniture, such as lampposts
- 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

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## 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 conform fully to the requirements of electoral law
  - Ensure that electors are aware that they can apply to register or for an absent vote online.
  - Include the ERO's address for the return of forms
  - Ensure unaltered applications are sent to ERO within **two working days**
  - Make sure electors understand implications of applying for an absent vote
  - 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.

## Code of conduct for campaigners

- Postal ballot packs:
  - 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.

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## Polling day

- Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm.
- Office open 6am to 9pm for queries or 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 outside 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
- Postal votes can be handed into polling stations within the constituency until 10pm or delivered to Tamworth Borough Council Offices until 5pm.
- A person in a queue at a polling station at 10pm waiting to hand in postal vote can do so after 10pm.

## Completed Postal Votes Handed In at 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 not in accordance with the rules, then they will be rejected

## Completed Postal Votes handed in to council offices

- 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.
- Postal votes for all contested electoral areas may be returned by hand to:  
**The Post Room  
Tamworth Borough Council  
Marmion House  
Lichfield Street  
Tamworth  
B79 7BZ**
- Staff authorised by the Acting 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:  
The Sports Hall – The Rawlett School  
Comberford Road  
Tamworth  
B79 9AA
- Count centre will open to candidates and agents from 8pm.
- Candidates, election agents, counting agents and one other person appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend
  - the number of counting agents will be given at next briefing.



# 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**
- Limit on expenses: See next slide
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)

## The spending limit



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

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## 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.

## Guidance for Candidates and Agents

The Electoral Commission have produced a suite of guidance and forms. To access these please visit:

[Guidance for Candidates and Agents at UK Parliamentary general elections in Great Britain | Electoral Commission](#)

If you require any forms, please visit the Resources section:

[Resources for Candidates and Agents at UK Parliamentary elections in Great Britain | Electoral Commission](#)

# Contacts

## Contacts

- **Nomination appointments** – 01827 709263  
[candidates&agents@tamworth.gov.uk](mailto:candidates&agents@tamworth.gov.uk)
- **Elections office (Tamworth Borough Council)** – 01827 214155  
[elections@tamworth.gov.uk](mailto:elections@tamworth.gov.uk)
- **Elections office (Lichfield District Council)** – 01543 308215  
[elections@lichfielddc.gov.uk](mailto:elections@lichfielddc.gov.uk)
- **Highways department** – 0300 111 800  
[highways@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:highways@staffordshire.gov.uk)
- **Staffordshire Police (Single Point of Contact)**  
[election.spoc@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:election.spoc@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk)
- **Electoral Commission contacts**
  - For questions on the Commission's guidance on standing for election, contact [MidlandsInbox@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:MidlandsInbox@electoralcommission.org.uk)
  - For questions on election spending, contact 020 7271 0616

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# Questions



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Thank you