

# Don't miss the right to vote



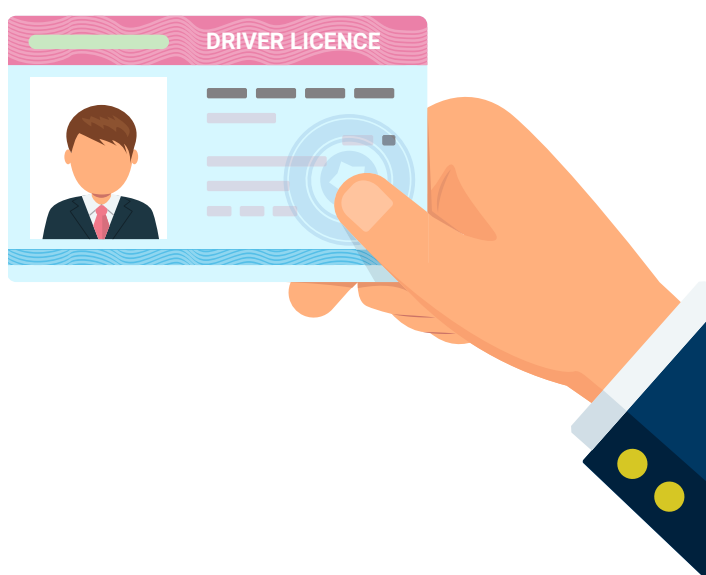
This important blog will raise your awareness about the upcoming changes to **voting requirements**, and help you ensure that everyone you support is able to vote in future elections.

## What's changing?

The government has been becoming increasingly worried about 'voter fraud' and people casting votes when they are not entitled to, or assuming the identity of other people to vote multiple times. To help address this concern, the government has decided that in order to vote in person, people will need to prove who they are by showing some kind of **photographic identification**.

This will become a requirement from **4 May 2023** for people that want to vote in person at local elections, any by-election, or for Police and Crime Commissioner elections. From **October 2023** it will also apply to UK General elections.

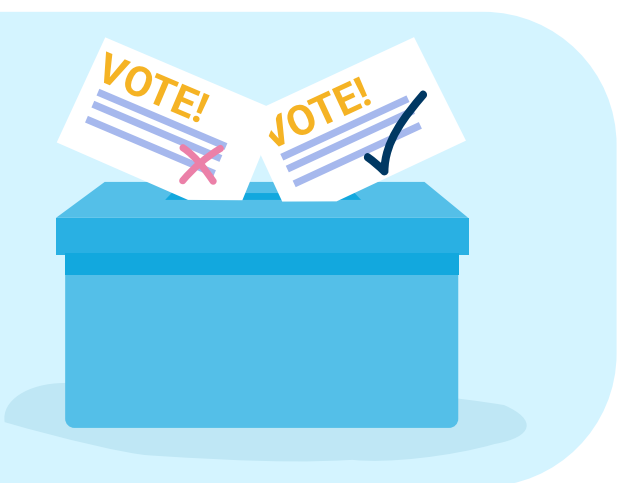
If people want to use postal votes or proxy votes there are no changes, apart from the person voting on behalf of the person (the proxy) will have to show their own photographic voter ID.



## Why is it important for me to know about it?

In wider society this need to have photographic ID may not be so much of an issue. However, in care service people may be more marginalised, they may not have access to the range of services that others do, or they may not have a passport or driving licence. If they do not have people to act on their behalf, it could be a major concern.

You may think that you have photos of people that use your service on MAR charts, care plans etc, and that one of these could be taken along to the voting station, but these will not be sufficient to provide the assurance that is needed.



In addition, if you manage a service that is registered with the CQC there is an expectation that you will ensure that the human rights of people are promoted, that people are encouraged to be full members of society and that they are enabled to live full, independent lives. Promoting the right to vote is central to this thinking.

If you do not prepare for these changes and people are not able to vote as a result of you not facilitating it to happen, the CQC will take a very dim view, and it could potentially affect your rating and all the negative consequences attached to this.

## What should I do?

First of all, you need to understand the wishes of the people you support, and if they have expressed a wish to want to vote in future elections then you need to make sure that this is possible.



## Register to vote



People who want to vote need to be registered to vote, and if they aren't then they will not be allowed, even if they turn up with photo ID. So, before you start thinking about what ID is available, you need to ensure that the people you support are on the electoral register. This can be done either online or by post, it is a quick, simple process and you don't need much information, usually just a National Insurance number. All the information you need about registering to vote in the UK has been produced by the government and is available [here](#).

## Postal Vote

If people want to vote by post, then they will not need Photo ID and the process hasn't changed. You can apply for a postal vote by filling in a simple form and returning it to your local electoral registration office, all the details you need are available [here](#).



## Do you have photo ID?

If people already have some form of photo ID then there shouldn't be a problem, it just needs to be taken along to the voting station and shown before voting. The main types of acceptable photo ID include a passport, driving licence, blue badge or a disabled or older person's bus pass. The ID can be out of date, but the photograph needs to still look like the person.

## What if you don't have any photo ID?

If the person does not have any photo ID, or is concerned that the photo no longer looks like them, then the government has established a '**Voter Authority Certificate**' which is free and can be applied for online or by post. To do this the person will already need to be registered to vote and then provide a name, address and date of birth. More details, the forms and answers to the questions you may have can be found [here](#).

It is thought that because these changes are not widely known when an election is announced there will be a rush to get the necessary paperwork. As such, it is advised that you plan for any future elections now by talking to the people you support about voting and what they would like to do. Then you can support them to register, set up a postal vote, ask about photo ID, and if necessary, apply for a Voter Authority Certificate.

We are fortunate enough to live in a democracy, and it would be very poor practice if a procedural matter within your control made it so a person couldn't vote if they wished to.

