

Implementation of the Elections Act 2022

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Elections Act 2022

- Royal Assent April
- Most of the detail will be in secondary legislation which will be introduced over the next two years
- New burdens funding for the additional responsibilities and equipment

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Key features

- Introduction of Voter Identification
- Accessibility at polling stations
- Absent voting changes
- EU Citizens' Voting & Candidacy Rights
- Overseas Electors
- Other measures relating to candidacy, campaigning, & offences

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Voter Identification

- Electors and proxy voters will be required to identify themselves by showing an accepted form of **photographic identification document** before being issued with a ballot paper in a polling station
- To be introduced at the May 2023 polls
- SI due on 6 November to be in effect mid January 2023
- Defined list of acceptable documents
- Any elector can apply for a free **Voter Authority Certificate – launch January 2023**

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Voter Identification

- Private areas within polling stations to produce identification if requested
- Only the presiding officer and poll clerk can inspect ID unless permitted by elector
- Presiding officer must refuse an elector a ballot paper if they have reasonable doubt the ID does not look like the elector or suspect the documents are forged
- A refusal to deliver a ballot paper is final and cannot be questioned in any way

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Acceptable Documents

- A United Kingdom passport
- A passport issued by an EEA state or a Commonwealth country
- A driving licence issued by UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or an EEA state
- A biometric immigration document
- An identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)
- A Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card)
- Older Person's Bus Pass
- Disabled Person's Bus Pass
- Oyster 60+ Card
- Freedom Pass
- Blue badge
- A national identity card issued by an EEA state

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Acceptable Documents

- Appointment of an emergency proxy up until 5pm on polling day in the case of documents lost, stolen, destroyed or damaged beyond use after the application deadline
- Research shows between 96% and 98% have access to these documents. For Crawley we might expect approximately between 1600-3200 electors to need a Voter Authority Certificate.
- Special arrangements for anonymous electors.



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Voter Authority Certificate

An **A4 paper-based document authorised and issue by the Electoral Registration Officer** with inherent security features, displaying:

- The elector's name and Photograph
- Date of issue
- Issuing local authority
- a reference number and Recommended renewal date
- Applications on-line via gov.uk or by paper form to the Town Hall
- National Insurance number to verify identity
- Deadline for applications 6 working days ahead of a poll
- Temporary certificates can be issued locally
- Research shows between 96% and 98% have access to these documents. For Crawley we might expect approximately between 1600-3200 electors to need a Voter Authority Certificate.



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Voter Identification Publicity

- National publicity by the Electoral commission starts January 2023.
- No new burdens funding for locally produced publicity.
- New A4 sized enveloped poll card setting out the requirements.



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Absent Voting changes

- Political parties & campaigners banned from handling postal votes **from May 2024**
- Electors will be able to apply online for an absent vote from **July 2023**
- Applications will require identity verification - both online and paper applications will include a requirement for the applicant's identity to be verified **May 2024**
- Limit of the number postal votes a person can hand in at a polling station **Autumn 2023**
- Postal voters will need to make a fresh application every 3 years from **January 2024**
- Electors will only be allowed to act as proxy for up to 4 people, of which no more than 2 can be "domestic electors" - i.e. not overseas voters **May 2024 polls**



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Accessibility

- A general responsibility to take all reasonable steps to support voters with disabilities
- The provisions for voters to be assisted by a companion will be extended to allow anyone over the age of 18 to assist
- Expected to be in place at elections taking place from May 2023



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EU Citizens' Voting and Candidacy Rights

- EU citizens will no longer automatically be entitled to register to vote, and stand for election.
- Two groups of EU citizens will retain their rights:
 - 'qualifying EU citizens' from countries with reciprocal agreements, and who have leave, or do not require it, to remain in the UK - currently Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal and Spain
 - 'EU citizens with retained rights' who were resident in the UK before 1 January 2021



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EU Citizens' Voting and Candidacy Rights

- Expected to be in place at elections from **May 2024**
- Review existing EU electors and process applications in line with new eligibility criteria **June 2023**
- Communication with EU electors

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Overseas Electors

- The 15-year limit on voting rights for British citizens living overseas will be removed
- Overseas electors will be able to register at an address where they were previously registered, or if they were never registered, where they were last resident
- The registration period will be increased to 3 years, and renewals will be linked to a fixed point of 1 November

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Campaigning

- Changes to the offence of undue influence
- Extension of requirement for imprints to electronic material

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New Burdens Funding – Timeline

Nov 2022	Accessibility (Grant) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Equipment • Training (Electoral Services Team) 	Voter ID (Grant) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral Staff costs • Training (Electoral Services Team) <p><small>Should be aware that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) are still developing the policy and secondary services Team</small></p>
April 2023	Accessibility (Grant) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training (poll staff) 	Voter ID (Grant) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral staff costs • Polling station staff costs • Training (poll station staff) • Poll cards
Nov 2023	Accessibility (JLB) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment costs • Staff time costs 	Voter ID (JLB) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment costs (privacy screens, mirrors, cameras) • Electoral staff costs • Equipment storage costs

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