

Postal vote application forms from parties and campaigners | Electoral Commission Search

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On this page Code of Conduct for campaigners Design of postal vote application forms Use of data Responding to voter feedback Apply for a postal vote

Postal vote ballot packs Posted: 28 March 2023 Summary Parties and campaigners may encourage voters to vote by post by issuing postal vote application forms. This could be a paper form sent through the post, or a website with information. Parties are not breaking any rules if they encourage voters to apply to vote by post, and should be free to encourage voters to cast their vote in a way that's most convenient for them. There is information about this in the Code of Conduct for campaigners . Code of Conduct for campaigners The Code of Conduct for campaigners includes information about: electoral registration postal voting proxy voting Voter Authority Certificates polling stations Many parties have signed up to the Code of Conduct for campaigners, but it is a voluntary code and is not something that we can enforce. For postal voting, the code explains what information a party should include if it decides to send postal vote application forms to voters. For example, it must be clear where the voter should send the completed application form. The address for the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) at the local council should be clearly provided as the preferred address, and parties are allowed to provide additional addresses as well. The additional address could be on an envelope, which could be pre-paid. As long as the address of the ERO is included somewhere in the information as the preferred address, envelopes like this are allowed. The code also explains parties should send any completed forms to the ERO within two working days of receiving them. We don't have a way of monitoring if forms are sent on to the ERO, but a party could miss out on a vote if they didn't send them. As long as a voter is registered to vote, they would still be able to vote in person on polling day if their postal vote application was not processed. Design of postal vote application forms Under electoral law, there are some electoral forms that we have a role in designing. Postal vote application forms are not one of these, and these forms simply have to include the right information to allow the ERO to determine the application. This means that forms from parties could look different to other postal vote application forms (such as one you've downloaded from us, for example). Use of data Parties might decide to include contact preference options on the form they send out, so that voters can opt in. This is so that the party can send the voter additional campaign materials and reminders to vote. This preference is not about whether the forms will be sent to the ERO or not. If someone were to opt out, the party should still send their form to the ERO within two working days (as stated in the Code). If you're concerned about the use of your data or GDPR, you should contact the party or the ICO . Responding to voter feedback We have received significant feedback from voters about postal vote application forms from parties. We are collating this feedback and will consider it after the elections as part of our routine election evaluation. about how we report on elections . Apply for a postal vote If you want to vote by post but don't want to use an application form from a party or campaigner, you can download a form from us. Postal vote ballot packs Local council election teams process postal vote applications, and are responsible for sending out postal vote ballot packs before elections. Parties and campaigners are not involved in this part of the process. There are changes in the UK Government's Election Act about parties and campaigners handling completed postal votes and postal vote envelopes. These changes will apply from December 2023 (so are not in place for the elections in May 2023). about these changes Related content Apply to vote by post Can't get to the polling station on

polling day? Apply to vote by post by downloading and completing the application form. How to vote by post If you've already applied to vote by post, find out about the process and what you need to do when your postal ballot pack arrives. Register to vote All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. Our Commissioners