

Template press release for England – annual canvass 2023

Don't lose your vote – residents in <local authority area> urged to check voter registration details

<Name of local authority area> residents are being urged to check their electoral registration details or risk losing their chance to vote on decisions that affect them.

The annual canvass allows <name of local authority> to keep the electoral register up to date, to identify who risks losing their voice at elections, and to encourage them to register before it's too late.

<Name>, Electoral Registration Officer at <name of local authority>, said:

"Keep an eye out for important updates from <name of local authority>. The annual canvass is our way of making sure that the information on the electoral register for every address is accurate and up to date. To make sure you don't lose your say at upcoming elections, simply follow the instructions sent to you.

"If you're not currently registered, your name will not appear in the messages we send. If you want to register, the easiest way is online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote."

Recent home movers in particular are urged to check their details. Electoral Commission research has found that recent home movers are less likely to be registered than those who have lived at the same address for a long time. In Great Britain, 92% of those who have lived in their home for 16 years will be registered, compared with 36% of people who have lived at an address for less than a year.

Melanie Davidson, Head of Support and Improvement at the Electoral Commission, said:

"It's really important that everyone who is eligible to vote is able to do so. We urge people to check for updates from their local council on this year's canvass. The council may contact residents by post or email.

"If you are not registered to vote, make sure you provide the necessary information to your local council when asked and register to vote online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote."

Information on registering to vote is available on the [Electoral Commission](https://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk) website.

Residents with questions about their registration status can contact their local council's electoral services team at <contact details for local authority's electoral services team>.

Ends

For more information contact the [<local authority's communications team contact details or>](#) Electoral Commission press office on 020 7271 0704, out of office hours 07789 920 414 or press@electoralcommission.org.uk

Notes to editors

1. The Representation of the People Act 1983 places a duty on electoral registration officers to maintain the electoral register for their area and to conduct an annual canvass of all residential properties.
2. The electoral register lists the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote. The register is used for electoral purposes, such as making sure only eligible people can vote. It is also used for other reasons as specified in law, such as detecting crime (e.g. fraud), calling people for jury service or checking credit applications.
3. The open register is an extract of the electoral register, but is not used for elections. It can be bought by any person, company or organisation. For example, it is used by businesses and charities to confirm name and address details. Your name and address will be included in the open register unless you ask for them to be removed. Removing your details from the open register does not affect your right to vote.
4. To be eligible to register to vote a person must be:
 - aged 16 or over (a person may register to vote at 16, but may not vote until they are 18)
 - a British or qualifying Commonwealth citizen who has leave to enter and remain in the UK or does not require such leave.
 - a citizen of the Republic of Ireland or other European Union (EU) member state
5. British citizens, Irish citizens and qualifying Commonwealth citizens can vote in local elections in England and Northern Ireland, Mayor of London and London Assembly elections, Police and Crime Commissioner elections and general elections.
6. EU nationals legally resident in the UK may currently register to vote in local government elections, providing they meet with the age and residency requirements and that they [are not legally incapable of voting](#). The Elections Act 2022 will change the eligibility of some EU citizens to vote. Changes are expected to come into force in May 7 2024, after local elections in England, Police and Crime Commissioners elections in England and Wales in 2024.
7. The changes in voting rights for EU nationals will not affect voters from Cyprus, Malta and Ireland.
8. Full details of the Electoral Commission's [research on the electoral registers](#) can be found on its website.