

East Suffolk residents need photo ID to vote at elections in May

Residents in East Suffolk are being urged to make sure they are ready to vote in May by checking they have an accepted form of ID.

For the first time, voters will need to show photographic identification if they want to cast their ballot at this year's local elections. However, anyone currently without the correct ID can apply for free ID to ensure they don't miss out.

Accepted forms of ID include a UK, European Economic Area (EEA) or Commonwealth passport; a UK, EEA or Commonwealth drivers' licence; and some concessionary travel passes, such as an older person's bus pass or an Oyster 60+ card. Voters will be able to use expired ID if they are still recognisable from the photo.

The full list of accepted ID is available at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID, with more information about the new requirement and details of how to apply for free ID.

Anyone who does not have one of the accepted forms of ID can apply for free ID online at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID or by completing a paper form.

Chris Bally, Returning Officer at East Suffolk Council said: "With elections taking place in East Suffolk on 4 May, it is important that everyone who wants to vote has an accepted form of ID. It may seem early but checking now means you will be ready to vote in May.

"Residents who do not have one of the accepted forms of ID can apply for free ID, either online or by completing a paper application form and sending this to our electoral services team. If you need any help with applying for the free ID or want to request an application form, contact the electoral services team on 01502 523320."

Ailsa Irvine, Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance, said: "Anyone voting at a polling station in England this May will need to show photo ID before they can be given their ballot paper. It's important that everyone understands what types of ID they can use, and how to apply for free ID if they need it. You can find information about the new requirement and what to expect at the polling station on the Electoral Commission's website."

Anyone who wants to have their say in the elections this May must also be registered to vote. It only takes five minutes to register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. Voters wishing to apply for free ID should first make sure they are registered to vote.

The requirement to show photo ID at the polling station is a new requirement, introduced by the UK Government's Elections Act which was passed last year and comes into effect for the first time this May.

ENDS.

Notes to editors

1. Local elections are taking place in East Suffolk in May 2023

2. The requirement to show photo ID at the polling station, is a new requirement, introduced by the UK Government's Elections Act which was passed last year.
3. The legislation requires voters at polling stations to show an accepted form of photo ID before they receive their ballot paper. From May, voters will need to show photo ID before voting in local council elections in England,
parliamentary by-elections, and police and crime commissioner elections in England and Wales. From October 2023, photo ID will be needed at UK parliamentary general elections. It will not be a requirement at local elections in Scotland or Wales, or elections to Scottish Parliament or Senedd. The requirement already exists in Northern Ireland.
4. To apply for the Voter Authority Certificate, voters will need to provide a photo, full name, date of birth, the address at which they are registered to vote and their National Insurance number.
5. The UK Government's Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities is responsible for the new voter ID policy and for the free voter ID application system. Enquiries relating to the application system or the policy itself should be directed to the Department.
6. The Electoral Commission is responsible for ensuring voters are aware of the new voter ID requirement, and for supporting local authorities with the process. Questions related to the public awareness campaign should be directed to the Electoral Commission.
7. Local authorities are responsible for implementing voter ID at the local level.