

# Registering To Vote Overseas

Registering to vote overseas is simple. We'll give you the steps you'll need to understand under what circumstances you can vote, how you can register, how to vote and other useful tips.

## Under What Circumstances Can You Vote?

If you are an overseas voter you can only vote in parliamentary elections or national referendums, you cannot vote in local elections. If you've been a permanent resident outside of the United Kingdom for over fifteen years you can no longer vote. You need to be a UK or eligible Irish citizen.

## Registering to Vote

These are the main steps you need to take in order to retain your important right to vote and you should start the process **AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE**:

1. Register to vote with your local council - this can take a few weeks to complete
2. Register to cast your ballot by either postal vote OR proxy - this will take a further few weeks to get in place
3. Renew your right to vote every year

### ***1. How You Can Register to Vote from Overseas***

You can register to vote overseas using the UK government's [online registration form](#). To complete this form you will need your UK national insurance number, your passport and the postcode of the address you were last registered to vote at in the UK. Anyone registering as an overseas voter in Northern Ireland will not be able to register online. However, you can complete [a paper application form](#) and return it to the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland:

Electoral Office  
Headquarters St Anne's  
House 15 Church Street  
Belfast BT1 1ER

<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

Steps to fill in the  
form:

- Make sure you fill every part out.
- You'll need the month and year you left the UK.
- You'll need the postcode of the last UK address where you last registered to vote.
- Take some time to review the form before sending it along.

After completing the registration form you'll need to contact your UK local authority, there's a handy election tool that can help you find them. The tool lets you put in a postal code and provides the addresses of the nearest Electoral Registration office. Here's the link:

<https://www.yourvotematters.co.uk/postcode-results>

Here's an example of what you can expect to see after entering your postal code and using the election tool. For example, if you were to search on the postal code LS1 3AD, the tool would provide you with the council address and Electoral Registration Officer that corresponds with this postal code, i.e.:

Leeds City Council Electoral  
Registration Officer Electoral Services  
Leeds Town Hall The Headrow Leeds  
LS1 3AD 0113 2224411  
electors@leeds.gov.uk  
[www.leeds.gov.uk/Pages/Default.asp](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/Pages/Default.asp)  
x

## ***2. How You Can Register to Cast Your Ballot***

Once you've found your local authority, you'll need to fill out either a proxy or a postal vote form (note: you cannot do both) and send it to your Electoral Registration Officer (ERO). The best

way to do this is via email. See section below on “Ways You Can Vote from Overseas” for information on how to ascertain whether a postal or proxy vote is best.

<https://www.gov.uk/voting-in-the-uk>

### **3. Renew Your Right to Vote Annually**

Your council will now have you registered to vote and have an email and/or overseas address that they will use to communicate with you. They will email or send you a form every year which you will have to fill out and email or post back to them to renew your right to vote. Make sure you let your council know if your postal address overseas or email changes so that you can maintain your right to vote.

## **Ways You Can Vote from Overseas**

You have a few options as to how you will vote of which you can only choose one:

- by **post** - you'll post your ballot to the authority.\*
- by **proxy** - you'll formally register a friend or family member to stand in for you in the UK.\*
- by **person** - at the time of the election you decide to fly back and vote. \*You will need to register to vote by post or proxy well in advance of election day!

If you register to vote by post, your Council will post your ballot to the overseas address you specified when you registered and you must post your completed ballot to the return address provided with the ballot by any deadlines specified.

If you register to vote by proxy, your proxy (e.g., friend or relative who has agreed to cast your vote) will receive your ballot and fill it out on your behalf. Note: they will have to physically cast your ballot at the polling station you are registered at,

so only choose a proxy if they are conveniently located in your voting district.

**One last request:** If any links are outdated, please let us know, or if you have suggestions on how to improve our page let us know, we may even quote you.