

Electoral Commission

Guidance for Candidates at Parish council elections in England

Qualifications and disqualifications for standing for election

In order to stand as a candidate, you must ensure that you meet the necessary qualifications and be sure that you are not disqualified. This section sets out the qualifications and disqualifications for standing for election.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are qualified to stand and are not subject to any disqualifications. Neither the Returning Officer nor the Electoral Commission can confirm this to you. If you are in doubt about your eligibility, you should seek legal advice.

Qualifications

To be able to stand as a candidate at a parish council election you must:

1. be at least 18 years old
2. be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights
3. meet at least one of the following four qualifications:
 - You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the parish in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards. More information is set out in our guidance 'Being a registered local government elector'.
 - You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election. More information is set out in our guidance 'Occupying as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the local authority area'.
 - Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the parish area. More information is set out in our guidance 'Your main or only place of work is in the local authority area'.
 - You have lived in the parish area or within three miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election. More information is set out in our guidance 'Living in the parish area (or within three miles of it)'.

When completing your home address form and consent to nomination form you will be asked to indicate which qualifications you meet. You should indicate on the forms all those qualifications that apply to you.

Meaning of an eligible commonwealth citizen

An eligible Commonwealth citizen is a Commonwealth citizen who either:

- does not need leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom, or
- has indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom

Meaning of qualifying EU citizens

A qualifying EU citizen is a citizen of a country:

- that has a bilateral Voting and Candidacy Rights (VCR) treaty with the UK
- is resident in the UK
- with any form of leave to remain, or does not require such leave.

Currently the UK holds bilateral treaties with the following countries:

Denmark

Luxembourg

Poland

Portugal

Spain

Meaning of EU citizens with retained rights

An EU citizen has retained rights if:

- they are a citizen of a country which does not have a bilateral Voting and Candidacy Rights (VCR) treaty with the UK
- and they have been legally resident in the UK since before the UK left the EU on 31/12/2020 (the Implementation Period Completion Date – IPCD)

The member states of the European Union which do not currently have a bilateral VCR treaty with the UK and are not Commonwealth countries are:

Austria

Hungary

Belgium

Italy

Bulgaria

Latvia

Croatia

Lithuania

Czech Republic

The Netherlands

Estonia

Romania

Finland

Slovakia

France

Slovenia

Germany

Sweden

Greece

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The full guide can be found at

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-parish-council-elections-england