

## Who can register to vote?

- Anyone aged 16 or over (but you cannot vote until you are 18).
- British or qualifying Commonwealth citizens. This means Commonwealth citizens who have leave to remain in the UK or do not require such leave.
- Citizens of the Republic of Ireland or other European Union (EU) member states.

## Who can vote?

- British, Irish and qualifying citizens of Commonwealth countries (including Cyprus and Malta) can vote at all elections.
- Citizens of other EU member states resident in the UK can vote in local government elections but cannot vote in UK Parliamentary elections.
- Residents in Scotland or Wales may also vote in Scottish Parliamentary or National Assembly for Wales elections.

### 1. The United Kingdom (GB) & Ireland (IE)

### 2. Commonwealth Countries (Listed below)

A person who is a Commonwealth citizen is a qualifying Commonwealth citizen for registration purposes if they do not require leave to remain in the UK or they do require leave to remain in the UK but have been granted such leave or are treated as having been granted such leave.

Any type of leave to remain is acceptable, whether indefinite, time limited or conditional.

Qualifying citizens of the following countries meet the nationality criteria to register in respect of all elections.

Antigua and Barbuda	Jamaica	Pakistan	Swaziland
Australia	Kenya	Papua New Guinea	Tanzania
Bangladesh	Kiribati	Republic of Dominica	The Bahamas
Barbados	Lesotho	Rwanda	The Gambia
Belize	Malawi	Seychelles	Tonga
Botswana	Malaysia	Sierra Leone	Trinidad and Tobago
Brunei	Maldives	Singapore	Tuvalu
Cameroon	Mauritius	Solomon Islands	Uganda
Canada	Mozambique	South Africa	Vanuatu
*Fiji	Namibia (NA)	Sri Lanka	Samoa
Ghana	Nauru	St Christopher and Nevis	Zambia
Grenada	New Zealand	St Lucia	*Zimbabwe
Guyana	Nigeria	St Vincent and the Grenadines	

India

\*Citizens of Fiji and Zimbabwe retain their voting rights despite the countries having been suspended from the Commonwealth.

### 3. British Dependent Territories

Anguilla	Falkland Islands and Dependencies
Bermuda	Monserrat
British Antarctic Territory	Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands
British Indian Ocean Territory	St Helena and Dependencies

#### **4. European Union Member States**

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus\*, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta\*, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden

\*Also Commonwealth

#### **Cyprus**

For registration purposes, the whole of Cyprus is considered to be a Commonwealth country and the Electoral Registration Officer should not be concerned with the political situation regarding the division of the island. If there is any doubt as to whether a person from Cyprus should be registered they should be asked for confirmation of the type of passport that they hold.

Provided that the person has a passport from either the Republic of Cyprus or the Republic of Northern Cyprus, they are entitled to be included in the register of electors as Commonwealth citizens. Anyone claiming to be from Cyprus but with a Turkish passport, however, is not entitled to register.

#### **5. Hong Kong**

Following its transfer to Chinese sovereignty on 1 July 1997, Hong Kong was deleted from the list of British Overseas Territories. As a result, former residents of Hong Kong are not qualifying Commonwealth citizens by virtue of their residency in Hong Kong as Hong Kong Chinese is no longer a nationality.

If an elector declares their nationality to be Hong Kong Chinese then the Electoral Registration Officer should exercise their powers to require evidence of the elector's actual nationality and confirm the type of passport that they hold.

Any previous resident of Hong Kong who holds a British Dependent Territories, British Nationals (Overseas) or British Overseas passport meets the nationality criteria for all elections in the UK.

Any previous resident of Hong Kong who only has a Chinese Special Administrative Region passport is Chinese and may not register.

#### **6. Dual citizens**

Some applicants may have more than one nationality. If an Electoral Registration Officer receives information from an applicant demonstrating that they have two or more nationalities, the application will be processed in accordance with the nationality that provides the higher level of franchise e.g. an application stating that the applicant is a dual German and British citizen should be registered as a British citizen, as this gives them the wider franchise.

Where a registration form is returned from a resident purporting to be ineligible to register (for example from an American citizen), the application must be rejected and a notice of rejection must be sent to the applicant. This notice will make it clear that the application failed the nationality qualification and should explain what steps should be taken should they also hold an eligible nationality.

If an applicant does also hold a nationality that would entitle them to register, they can be registered in respect of that nationality, and the fact that one of their nationalities would not entitle them to register is irrelevant.

## **7. Citizenship ceremonies**

Citizenship ceremonies are the final stage for those attaining British citizenship. Some residents may already be registered due to their previous nationality but may need to apply to register for UK Parliamentary elections where they are registered for local government elections only.

Citizenship is conferred at the ceremony itself so an invitation to a citizenship ceremony is not in itself proof of citizenship.

British Nationality Act 1948.

Section 1, British Nationality Act 1981

## **8. Persons claiming asylum**

The fact that an applicant or elector has claimed asylum has no connection to their right to be registered as an elector and therefore the Electoral Registration Officer has no right to ask for any evidence or information about the particulars of the asylum claim itself.

However, the Electoral Registration Officer can make enquiries as to nationality and whether a person has any type of leave to remain in the UK.