Postal Voting Guide
Your questions answered

How do I apply to vote by post?

To vote by post you must first be registered to vote. Register by 22 May to vote in the General Election on 8 June. You don’t need to register again if you’ve already registered.

The fastest way to register to vote is online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

You can apply to vote by post for a set period of time, for all future elections, or for a particular election.

The deadline to apply for a postal vote is Tuesday 23 May 2017 by 5pm. To request an application form, telephone Electoral Services on (01733) 452249 or email: electoral.services@peterborough.gov.uk

Once your application is processed, we will send you a letter of confirmation.

What if my pack does not arrive?

Postal voting packs are sent by first class post. However, we have no control over the postal service.

If your pack has not arrived by the fourth working day before the election, we can issue a replacement – one cannot be issued before this time by law.

Replacements can only be issued up to 5pm on election day; they cannot be given to you in a polling station. You will need to bring photographic identification (to prove who you are) to the council offices, in order to receive a replacement.

What we will send you:

- Instruction sheet
- Ballot Paper(s)
- Envelope ‘A’ - to seal your completed ballot paper
- Postal Voting Statement - you must sign and enter your date of birth
- Return Envelope ‘B’

Never give your postal vote to anyone who says they are collecting for the Council or the Returning Officer.

We NEVER do this.

Helpline: (01733) 452249
Email: electoral.services@peterborough.gov.uk
www.peterborough.gov.uk/elections

For a large print version of this leaflet - or an alternative language or format - please call (01733) 452249

What about postal voting fraud?

Some people are worried about postal voting fraud. We take these concerns very seriously and have robust systems in place to prevent electoral fraud.

Here are some safeguards we have in place

- You cannot get a postal vote unless you are registered to vote first.
- Every request is checked. You can only get one postal voting pack for an election, even if you send in more than one application form.
- A request for a postal vote is turned down if the application form is not signed or there is no date of birth. You also have to sign any request to cancel or change your postal vote.
- We write back to everyone who arranges a postal vote.
- The Postal Voting Statement is there to prevent fraud.
- The signatures and dates of birth are cross-checked with original application forms.

What you can do

- Let us know if your postal voting pack does not arrive.
- If you can, post it back yourself. Don’t give your pack to someone else to post unless you trust them.
- If you decide not to vote, never give your pack to someone else - dispose of your pack safely.
- Tell us if you move, so your postal voting details can be kept up to date.

What will I get my postal voting pack?

Packs containing postal ballot papers will be sent out from Wednesday 24 May. Timescales are set by legislation and are beyond our control. Consequently, if you anticipate going away before this, you are advised to appoint a “proxy” to vote on your behalf. Contact Electoral Services for more advice on (01733) 452249.
What is the Postal Voting Statement?

You will need to give your date of birth and signature on the postal vote application form. When we send you your ballot paper, you will have to re-enter your date of birth and signature on the Postal Voting Statement.

When your vote is returned to us, we will check the signature and date of birth you have given on the statement, against your original application form to ensure they match.

This helps to stop voting fraud. It does NOT mean your vote can be identified.

To ensure your vote is counted you must:
- return your Postal Voting Statement
- sign your own form - not someone else’s
- enter your date of birth - not the date you sign the form.

Can you send my pack overseas?

We can send postal voting packs overseas.

But please remember, you have very little time to receive your pack, vote, and post it back to us (you cannot fax your ballot paper). Your vote has to reach us by 10pm on election day. Votes received after this time cannot be counted – even if postmarked before election day.

If you are overseas, our advice is to appoint a “proxy” in the UK to vote for you – although it is, of course, your choice. Contact Electoral Services for more advice.

Can someone else use my postal vote for me?

If you have a disability that prevents you from completing your postal vote, you can ask someone you trust to help you. They have to keep your vote secret.

You can arrange for someone to vote by post for you - called a "postal proxy" - but you have to apply to Electoral Services to do this.

Useful websites:
- www.peterborough.gov.uk/elections
- www.electoralcommission.org.uk
- www.aboutmyvote.co.uk

If you throw your pack away, you throw your vote away.

What if my signature has changed or I cannot sign?

If you have a different signature because your name has changed (e.g. marriage) you should make a new application to vote by post.

This needs to reach us by 5pm on Tuesday 23 May 2017.

If you cannot sign, you need to apply on a special application form called a Postal Vote Waiver. Contact Electoral Services on (01733) 452249 for further advice.

It is against the law for someone else to sign your Postal Voting Statement for you. “Power of Attorney” does not apply to postal voting.

What happens when you get my postal vote?

1. We check your signature and date of birth against your original application form.
2. We separate your statement from your unopened ballot paper envelope.
3. The statements are sealed away. This means that no one will be able to know who you voted for.
4. At special opening sessions we take the ballot papers out of the envelope, and check the numbers match the envelope. Votes are not counted at this stage. Candidates and their appointed helpers can watch to make sure the rules are followed. Everyone present has to keep the proceedings secret.
5. The ballot papers are put into ballot boxes, which are kept in secure locked storage until election day. The boxes then go to the count venue and are opened in the same way as the boxes from polling stations.

Except in the above cases, it is a serious offence to give your vote to someone else or to use another person’s vote.

There is a £5,000 fine, six months in prison, or both.