

Voter ID deadline warning

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Epsom and Ewell Times has reported before about anxieties around the new requirement for photo ID for voters at the upcoming local elections 4th May. LDRS reports on anxieties in the Surrey Borough of Runnymede which are no doubt shared in Epsom and Ewell:

Don't leave getting your voter ID for the May local elections sorted until the last minute. That is the message from Runnymede Borough Council's election manager as the deadline to secure proof approaches.

Local elections are taking place this year on Thursday May 4 and this year, for the first time, every voter heading to a polling station in England must show a photo ID in order to cast their ballot.

Councils across Surrey have been rolling out communication pushes as the "last thing they want" is to be turning people away at the polls. Kath Richards is the election manager for Runnymede Borough Council. She said: "The deadline to apply for voter id is April 25 at 5pm. After the 25th there is nothing they can do. My concern is people will leave it until the last minute. The nearer the election day they've got to rely on the post. If they leave it they might have to collect it themselves. We don't know if there is going to be a rush."

There are a host of valid IDs that will be accepted on the day, including expired official documents such as passports, so long as there is still a strong resemblance to the photograph.

Those who do not own an accepted ID can apply for what is known as the free Voter Authority Certificate - a fast track card that will allow people to vote.

However, the deadline to apply is fast approaching leading to fears some may leave it too late. Applying for the voter card can be done online. Residents upload a photo of themselves and it lands with the council where it is then checked to ensure the person is who they say they are.

After that it is sent to a printing company in Sunderland before being posted back to people's homes.

So far Runnymede has received about 60 applications - which have come through 'in dribs and drabs' despite the communications push that saw notices go up on bins, banners and through people's doors.

She said: "We don't want people to turn up on the day and not be able to vote because they've not got the right information. The ID needs to be an original document. I've got a picture of my passport on my phone but I can't use it. I can be an out of date passport as long as the picture bears a resemblance. If you still look like the picture in your passport it will still be accepted. I don't want to be in a position where somebody says they don't know about it. The last thing we want to do is turn people away."

She estimates that there are between two and eight per cent of the voting population who do not have a valid photo ID.

Not a massive figure in a population of about 60,000 voters but enough to potentially swing the balance in wards where there is a small majority.

Accepted forms of photo ID:

You can use any of the following accepted forms of photo ID when voting at a polling station.

International travel

Passport issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory, an EEA state or a Commonwealth country

Driving and Parking

Driving licence issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state (this includes a provisional driving licence)

A Blue Badge

Local travel

Older Person's Bus Pass funded by the Government of the United Kingdom

Disabled Person's Bus Pass funded by the Government of the United Kingdom

Oyster 60+ Card funded by the Government of the United Kingdom

Freedom Pass
Scottish National Entitlement Card
60 and Over Welsh Concessionary Travel Card
Disabled Person's Welsh Concessionary Travel Card
Senior SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
Registered Blind SmartPass or Blind Person's SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
War Disablement SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
60+ SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland
Half Fare SmartPass issued in Northern Ireland

Proof of age

Identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)
Other government issued documents
Biometric immigration document
Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card)
National identity card issued by an EEA state
Electoral Identity Card issued in Northern Ireland
Voter Authority Certificate
Anonymous Elector's Document

The name on your ID should be the same name you used to register to vote.

Those who have registered to vote anonymously and want to vote in person, need to apply for an Anonymous Elector's Document.

Voter ID cards can be applied for via the Government's website

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