

POSTAL VOTE CAMPAIGN PACK

Applying for
a Postal Vote
online

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WHAT'S CHANGED

From 31 October 2023 electors who want to apply for postal votes can now do so online. Until 30 October, anyone wanting to apply for a postal ballot had to fill out and return a printed form.

When applying for a postal ballot, electors will now need to include their National Insurance number. This applies whether they are applying for a postal ballot online or on paper.

**You can now apply
for a postal vote at
www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote**



LEGAL DETAILS

The process of applying for a postal vote has changed as a result of the Elections Act 2022.

From 31 October 2023, voters will be able to apply for absent votes online. Voters will also, for the first time, be required to provide their National Insurance number.

The changes will require voters to reapply for postal votes every three years. Existing postal voters won't automatically need to re-apply. The changes will take place on a phased basis over the next 2-3 years, and existing postal voters will be contacted by their Electoral Registration Officer when they need to re-apply.

From 1 May 2024 it will be an offence for a campaigner to handle someone's postal vote or postal vote documents.

This means campaigners can now only collect a completed postal vote application form in a sealed business return envelope addressed to Electoral Services at their Local Authority (these are known as BREs, business return envelopes).

[You can find a postal vote BRE product on Labour Connects](#)

These changes do not apply to local elections in Scotland and Wales, and Scottish and Welsh Parliamentary elections.

We abide by the Electoral Commission's code of conduct for campaigners. The current code of conduct can be found here – www.electoralcommission.org.uk/media/1268 – and will soon be updated to reflect the changes to legislation. We may need to update our guidance upon the release of the new code of conduct and will update this pack and campaigners accordingly.

WHY ARE POSTAL VOTES IMPORTANT

Signing up Labour voters to postal votes is a key part of the Win '24 strategy.

This is because postal voters are more likely to vote than those who vote at polling stations.

- 👉 In the 2019 General Election, postal vote turnout was 84%, **nearly 20% higher** than the in person turnout of 64.5%.
- 👉 In the 2018 local elections, postal vote turnout was 67%, **nearly 40% higher** than the in person turnout of 28.6%.

Postal votes make it possible for lots of electors to vote who might not be able to go to a polling station on polling day.

Reasons people might choose to get a postal vote include:

- ✔️ Caring commitments
- ✔️ Travelling or away from home on polling day
- ✔️ Mobility issues making it harder to travel to their polling station
- ✔️ Work commitments or shift pattern
- ✔️ University students living elsewhere during term time
- ✔️ Illness or hospital treatment

Signing up Labour supporters to postal votes helps Labour win. This is because polls are open on polling day for 15 hours for those who vote at polling stations, but postal voters have around two weeks to complete and return their vote. This means we can use our time and target our message and resources more effectively across the short campaign.

SIGNING UP ELECTORS TO POSTAL VOTES

On the doorstep

Previous postal vote sign up process

- In the past campaigners have been able to fill out a postal vote application form on the doorstep with an elector, and then return the application to the council on behalf of the elector.
- This process has now changed. Due to the requirement to provide a National Insurance number, we can only collect completed forms in a sealed business return envelope.

New postal vote sign up process

Online application process

- Labour supporters can be directed to sign up for a postal vote online using the website www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote.
- Stickers and businesses cards will be available from the [Labour Shop](#) with a QR code which electors can scan to bring up the [application form page](#).
- Voters must complete the application form themselves on their own device

Sticker and business card



Paper application process

- Some people will still prefer to fill out paper application forms, so campaigners should carry new, up to date versions. These can be downloaded [here](#).
- Campaigners should also use [Labour Connects](#) to set up a Business Reply account with Royal Mail with the return address to Electoral Services at their Local Authority, and also carry these envelopes while campaigning.
- These can either be handed to people along with their postal vote form, or, if electors fill out the form on the doorstep, they can put into the envelope.
- Due to the requirement to provide a National Insurance number, campaigners can only collect forms in a sealed business return envelope.
- Campaigners can also collect an email address on the doorstep to send a form or link to the application, with the consent of the elector.

Dialogue

- Briefing your phonebankers to encourage postal vote sign-up with Labour supporters they speak to is an important aspect of a successful Postal Vote campaign.
- You could run a specific postal vote sign up phonebank, and call all the Postal Vote/ Early Vote Sign up selection.
- If a voter is Labour and would like a postal vote, enter their email address and they will be sent an email directing to the new postal vote application portal so they can easily apply online.
- If they do not use email then campaigners should take their address and post them a form with a freepost envelope addressed to the council – again, this can be set up on Labour Connects.

Direct mail

Encouraging Labour supporters to sign up to postal votes has never been easier, with a Connects Template with pre-written copy. You can also adapt the snippet copy below:

Dear {{forename (actual)}} {{surname (actual)}}

For too long our economy, our public services and our communities have suffered from the sticking plaster politics of Conservative governments.

13 years of Conservative failure has left Britain with a cost of living crisis that is hurting working people, left the NHS without the doctors and nurses it needs, and criminals are being let off while victims of crime are let down.

The Conservatives don't have a plan. They're out of touch, out of ideas and out of time.

Only Labour has a long term plan to get Britain's future back. Labour will restore Britain's hope and optimism, and deliver the change our country demands.

**I want you to be part of that change and make your voice heard.
I urge you to vote from home, vote by post and vote Labour at the next election.**

Applying to vote by post is easier than ever before. Just visit www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote - it takes only moments to apply.

If you'd rather apply by post, you can complete and return the enclosed form. Whether you apply online or using the printed form, you will receive your ballot paper in the post so you can vote from home.

Signing up for a postal vote helps Labour win the next election and deliver the change our country demands. Only Labour will get Britain's future back.

Vote from home, vote by post, vote Labour.

Yours sincerely,

<Candidate name>

- Direct mails should direct electors to the online application form, and/or include a printed application form and a business return addressed envelope.



- You can use 'Win 24 Recommended PV sign up' selections on Contact Creator to build a pool of key postal vote sign up targets.

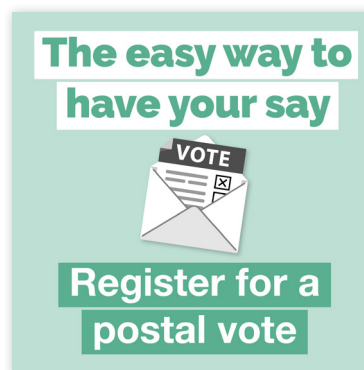
Digital

As over 80% of the electorate are active social media users, you should also consider encouraging postal vote applications through your online messaging. You could run adverts on various social media platforms targeting the same audience that you've doorknocked, phonebanked and/or delivered a direct mail to with direct links to sign-up to a postal vote using the online form.

The Labour Party's [postal vote registration website](#) will now redirect to the [official online application form](#).

The Elections Act 2022 included provisions to require imprints to be included on a wide range of digital campaign material. Those provisions will come into force from **1 November 2023**, which means from this date onwards, it will be a **legal requirement** to include an imprint on regulated digital campaign material.

Guidance on the new imprint requirements which you can find [here](#), along with sample social media headers for [national material only](#). Editable versions for local parties and individual candidates/elected representatives are available on Labour Connects..



GUIDANCE FOR BOARD RUNNERS

Before the session:

- Make sure you have printed new, up to date postal vote application forms. If you are not sure if forms are up to date, check if it has space for a National Insurance number – if it does, this means it is the correct form to use.
- Make sure you have printed business return envelopes (you can set these up on [Labour Connects](#)).

On the day:

- At the start of the session, remind campaigners of why it is important to sign up Labour supporters to postal votes – ie that postal voters are more likely to vote, and have more time to vote, meaning we can use our time and target our message and resources more effectively across the short campaign.
- Remind campaigners to only encourage Labour supporters to sign up for postal votes.
- Make sure campaigners are aware of the change in the rules: they are not allowed to handle postal vote forms unless in sealed business return envelopes, which they should have in their packs.
- Hand out stickers with the postal vote application form QR code on, and/or encourage campaigners to open the website on their phone: www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote.

GUIDANCE FOR CAMPAIGNERS

The postal vote application process has changed and new guidance applies. Please ensure you are up to speed with the new guidance by reading this briefing sheet thoroughly before starting your doorstep session.

Due to the requirement to provide National Insurance number, we can only collect forms in a sealed business return envelope.

A reminder that Labour Party campaigners are not allowed to handle postal votes on behalf of voters. This is part of the code of conduct and will become an offence from 1 May 2024.

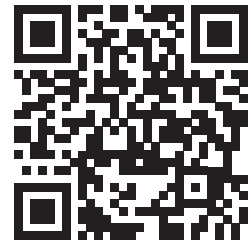
Voters can now sign up for a postal vote online: www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote

NEW: postal vote sign up on the doorstep

If you have a conversation with a Labour supporter on the doorstep, ask them if they would like to sign up for a postal vote.

Online application process:

- Direct Labour supporters to the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote) application form
- They can scan the QR code from their phone, take a business card with the QR code and website, or you can collect their email address (with consent) and send them the link as a follow up to the doorstep session



Paper Application process:

- Ensure you have the new paper application form with a field for the voter to enter their NI number and a Business Return Envelope addressed to Electoral Services at the Local Authority
- Allow the voter to complete the form and seal in the envelope to be returned to Electoral Services at the Local Authority for processing
- Due to the requirement to provide National Insurance number, we can only collect forms in a sealed business return envelope.

If you have any questions or are in doubt about the postal vote sign up process please ask your board runner or campaign organiser for advice.

THANK YOU FOR CAMPAIGNING WITH US TODAY