

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The elections will take place at a time when COVID-19 continues to present risks to public health. Depending on the infection rate, measures taken to control the spread of the virus may change as we approach May. This means we cannot currently answer all the questions you may have about how the election will be run. However, we are working hard to help ensure you can stay safe when casting your vote next May.

When is the election? What elections are taking place?

On Thursday 6 May 2021, residents in Southwark will be voting for the Mayor of London and London Assembly Elections. These elections will be held in May after being postponed in May 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

How do I register to vote?

To vote in any election in the UK, you must be registered to vote. It only takes a few minutes to [apply to register online](#).

If you're unable to register online, you can complete a paper form. Please download the relevant [application form](#). Alternatively, please telephone us on 020 7525 7373 and we can post an application form to you.

How can I vote at the May 2021 elections?

There are a number of ways to vote in the elections in May - you can vote in a polling station, by post, or by appointing someone you trust to vote on your behalf, known as a proxy vote.

How can I apply to vote by post or proxy?

First you must ensure you are registered to vote, which can be done online in just a few minutes. You can [apply to register online](#).

To apply to vote by post you need to:

1. Download, print and fill in a [postal vote application form](#)
 2. Once you have completed the form and signed it, please email a clear scanned copy to postal.votes@southwark.gov.uk (it must be a clear legible image) or post the form to Southwark Council, Electoral Services, PO Box 64529, London SE1P 5LX
- Or, you can also telephone us on 020 7525 7373 and we can post an application form to you.

If you're thinking about voting by post, you can apply to do this now. This will make sure your application is processed early, and your postal vote can be sent to you more quickly once the candidates for the elections are confirmed.

If you aren't able to cast your vote in person or by post, you can also ask someone you trust to cast your vote for you. This is called a proxy vote and the person casting your vote is often referred to as your proxy. The person voting on your behalf can either go to your polling station to cast your vote, or can apply to vote for you by post.

To apply for a proxy vote, complete a [proxy vote application form](#).

Is voting by post safe?

Yes, voting by post is safe and proven cases of electoral fraud are rare. When voting by post, you should mark your vote on the ballot paper in secret, and seal the envelope yourself.

You will also be asked to give your date of birth and signature when applying for a postal or proxy vote. This makes postal voting safe, because when you return your postal voting pack your signature and date of birth are checked against those you provided previously to confirm your identity.

Your signature and date of birth are separated from your ballot paper before it is looked at or counted, so giving this information will not affect the secrecy of your vote.

How are you making polling stations safe?

We are putting arrangements in place to help ensure polling stations are safe places to vote. You can expect many of the measures you've become used to over recent months in shops and banks, such as hand sanitiser, floor markings and face coverings.

We will continue our discussions with public health authorities as we prepare for the elections to make sure we are following the most up to date guidance. We will continue to update this page as more information and guidance becomes available.

Will I need to bring my own pen or pencil?

Guidance in this area is still being developed, but you are always welcome to use your own pen or pencil. We are working with the UK's governments, members of the electoral community and public health authorities to help ensure polling station are safe places to vote at the May 2021 elections.

Is it safer to vote by post, instead of going in person?

We are working hard to ensure that polling stations will be safe places to vote in May, but you can choose to apply to vote by post or by proxy instead to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

What should I do if I find out closer to the time that I need to self-isolate, or my area goes into a local lockdown?

We want to make sure that everyone who is entitled to vote is able to do so, regardless of the pandemic. We will be providing more information nearer the time on how you can vote if you need to self-isolate, or live in an area under lockdown restrictions.

Last updated on Tuesday 3 November 2020.