



Representation of the People Act 1985

1985 CHAPTER 50

Voting at parliamentary elections in the United Kingdom and local government elections in Great Britain

[^{F17} **Absent vote at a particular election and absent voters list.**

- (1) Where a person applies to the registration officer to vote by post, or to vote by proxy, at a particular parliamentary ^{F2} . . . election, the registration officer shall grant the application (subject to subsection (5) below) if—
- (a) he is satisfied that the applicant's circumstances on the date of the poll will be or are likely to be such that he cannot reasonably be expected to vote in person at the polling station allotted or likely to be allotted to him under the appropriate rules,
 - (b) he is satisfied that the applicant is or will be registered in the register of parliamentary ^{F3} . . . electors, ^{F4} . . .
- [^{F5}(ba) the application states the applicant's date of birth and the registration officer is satisfied that the date stated corresponds with the date supplied as the date of the applicant's birth pursuant to section 10(4A)(b), 10A(1A)(b) or 13A(2A)(b) of the principal Act,
- (bb) [^{F6}in the case of an applicant other than one who is or will be digitally registered,] the application is signed and (unless section 10(4B), 10A(1B) or 13A(2B) of the principal Act applies) the registration officer is satisfied that the signature on the application corresponds with the signature supplied as the applicant's signature pursuant to section 10(4A)(a), 10A(1A)(a) or 13A(2A)(a) of the principal Act,
- [^{F7}(bba) in the case of an applicant who is or will be digitally registered, the registration officer is satisfied that the application—
- (i) is signed, and
 - (ii) includes the digital registration number allocated to the applicant by the officer,]
- (bc) the application either states the applicant's national insurance number or states that he does not have one, and the registration officer is satisfied as mentioned in subsection (1A) below, and]

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(c) the application meets the prescribed requirements.

^{F8}(1ZA) [In the case of an applicant who is or will be digitally registered, if the registration officer is satisfied that it is not reasonably practicable for the applicant to sign in a consistent and distinctive way because of blindness or any other disability of that person or because that person is unable to read, the officer may make a determination to that effect.]

^{F9}(1A) [For the purposes of subsection (1)(bc) above, the registration officer must be satisfied—

- (a) if the application states a national insurance number, that the requirements of subsection (1B) below are met, or
- (b) if the application states that the applicant does not have a national insurance number, that no such number was supplied as his national insurance number pursuant to section 10(4A)(c)(i), 10A(1A)(c)(i) or 13A(2A)(c)(i) of the principal Act.

(1B) The requirements of this subsection are met if—

- (a) the number stated as mentioned in subsection (1A)(a) above is the same as the one supplied as the applicant's national insurance number pursuant to section 10(4A)(c)(i), 10A(1A)(c)(i) or 13A(2A)(c)(i) of the principal Act, or
- (b) no national insurance number was supplied under any of those provisions, but the registration officer is not aware of any reason to doubt the authenticity of the application.]

^{F10}(2) [Subsection (1) above does not apply to a person who is included in the record kept under section 6 of this Act, but such a person may, in respect of a particular parliamentary election, apply to the registration officer—

- (a) for his ballot paper to be sent to a different address in the United Kingdom, or
- (b) to vote by proxy,

if he is shown in the record so kept as voting by post at parliamentary elections.]

(3) The registration officer shall grant an application under subsection (2) above if it meets the prescribed requirements.

(4) The registration officer shall, in respect of each parliamentary ^{F11}. . . election, keep a special list (“the absent voters list”) consisting of—

- (a) a list of—
 - (i) those whose applications under subsection (1) above to vote by post at the election have been granted, together with the addresses provided by them in their applications as the addresses to which their ballot papers are to be sent, and
 - (ii) those who are for the time being shown in the record kept under section 6 of this Act as voting by post at [^{F12}parliamentary elections](excluding those so shown whose applications under subsection (2) above to vote by proxy at the election have been granted), together with the addresses provided by them in their applications under that section or, as the case may be, subsection (2) above as the addresses to which their ballot papers are to be sent, and
- (b) a list (“the list of proxies”) of those whose applications under this section to vote by proxy at the election have been granted or who are for the time being shown in the record kept under section 6 of this Act as voting by proxy at

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[^{F12}parliamentary elections], together with the names and addresses of those appointed as their proxies.

[But in the case of a person who has an anonymous entry, the list mentioned in ^{F13}(4A) subsection (4)(a) or (b) must contain only—

- (a) the person's electoral number, and
- (b) the date on which the person's entitlement to remain registered anonymously will terminate under section 9C(1A) of the principal Act (in the absence of a further application under section 9B of that Act).]

(5) A person applying to vote by post must provide an address in the United Kingdom as the address to which his ballot paper is to be sent.

[^{F14}(6) For the purposes of this section, a person is to be treated as a person who is or will be digitally registered if the person meets the condition in subsection (6A) or the condition in subsection (6B).]

[A person meets the condition in this subsection if—

- ^{F14}(6A)
- (a) the person's registration in the register of parliamentary electors is or will be pursuant to an application submitted through the UK digital service, and
 - (b) where, since the submission of that application, any form has been completed in respect of the person in connection with a canvass under section 10 of the principal Act, the last such form was submitted through the UK digital service.]

[A person meets the condition in this subsection if—

- ^{F14}(6B)
- (a) the last form to be completed in respect of the person in connection with a canvass under section 10 of the principal Act was submitted through the UK digital service, and
 - (b) where, since the submission of that form, any application for registration in the register of parliamentary electors has been made in respect of the person, the last such application was submitted through the UK digital service.]

(7) In this section—

“digital registration number” has the same meaning as in section 10B(1) of the principal Act;

“the UK digital service” has the same meaning as in section 10ZF of the principal Act, and [^{F15}references to a form or application] submitted through the UK digital service shall be construed in accordance with subsection (4) of that section.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** S. 7 repealed (E.W.S.) (16.2.2001) by 2000 c. 2, s. 15(2), **Sch. 7 Pt. II**; S.I. 2001/116, **art. 2(1)** (subject to transitional provisions in art. 2(3)-(5))
- F2** Words in s. 7(1) repealed (16.2.2001) by 2000 c. 2, s. 15, **Sch. 6 para. 15(2)(a)**, **Sch. 7 Pt. III**; S.I. 2001/116, **art. 2(1)** (subject to transitional provisions in art. 2(3)-(5))
- F3** Words in s. 7(1)(b) repealed (16.2.2001) by 2000 c. 2, s. 15, **Sch. 6 para. 15(2)(b)**, **Sch. 7 Pt. III**; S.I. 2001/116, **art. 2(1)** (subject to transitional provisions in art. 2(3)-(5))
- F4** S. 7(1)(b): word "and" omitted (1.12.2002) by virtue of 2002 c. 13, s. 3(3)(a); S.I. 2002/1648, **art. 4(1)** (with art. 4(2))
- F5** S. 7(1)(ba)-(bc) inserted (1.12.2002) by 2002 c. 13, s. 3(3)(a); S.I. 2002/1648, **art. 4(1)** (with art. 4(2))

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- F6** Words in s. 7(1)(bb) inserted (31.5.2018) by The Representation of the People (Electronic Communications and Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 2018/699), regs. 1(2), **3(5)(a)**
- F7** S. 7(1)(bba) inserted (31.5.2018) by The Representation of the People (Electronic Communications and Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 2018/699), regs. 1(2), **3(5)(b)**
- F8** S. 7(1ZA) inserted (31.5.2018) by The Representation of the People (Electronic Communications and Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2018 (S.I. 2018/699), regs. 1(2), **3(6)**
- F9** S. 7(1A)(1B) inserted (1.12.2002) by 2002 c. 13, s. **3(3)(b)**; S.I. 2002/1648, art. **4(1)** (with art. 4(2))
- F10** S. 7(2) substituted (16.2.2001) by 2000 c. 2, s. 15(1), **Sch. 6 para. 15(3)**; S.I. 2001/116, art. **2(1)** (subject to transitional provisions in art. 2(3)-(5))
- F11** Words in s. 7(4) repealed (16.2.2001) by 2000 c. 2, s. 15, Sch. 6 para. 15(4)(a), **Sch. 7 Pt. III**; S.I. 2001/116, art. **2(1)** (subject to transitional provisions in art. 2(3)-(5))
- F12** Words in s. 7(4)(a)(b) substituted (16.2.2001) by 2000 c. 2, s. 15(1), **Sch. 6 para. 15(4)(b)**; S.I. 2001/116, art. **2(1)** (subject to transitional provisions in art. 2(3)-(5))
- F13** S. 7(4A) inserted (15.9.2014) by The Anonymous Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 2014 (S.I. 2014/1116), arts. 1(1), **5(4)**
- F14** S. 7(6)-(6B) substituted for s. 7(6) (6.7.2020) by The Representation of the People (Electronic Communications and Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 (S.I. 2020/581), regs. 1(2), **10(2)**
- F15** Words in s. 7(7) substituted (6.7.2020) by The Representation of the People (Electronic Communications and Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 (S.I. 2020/581), regs. 1(2), **10(3)**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** S. 7 applied with modifications by S.I. 1986/2250, regs. 2, 3, 5, **Sch. 1 Pt. III**
S. 7 applied (with modifications) (4.5.1996) by S.I. 1996/1220, art. 3(1)(a)(b)(5)-(8), **Sch. 1**
S. 7 applied (with modifications) (31.7.1997) by 1997 c. 61, s. 3, **Sch. 3 para. 13** Table 3
S. 7 applied (with modifications) (25.4.1998) by S.I. 1998/1126, art. 6(1), **Sch. 2**
S. 7 applied (with modifications) (19.3.1998) by S.I. 1998/746, art. 12, **Sch. 1** Table 3
S. 7 applied (with modifications) (22.5.1998) by S.I. 1998/1287, art. 3(1)(3), **Sch. 1**
- C2** S. 7 applied (with modifications) (1.8.2001) by S.I. 2001/2599, art. 3, Sch. 1 (as substituted (10.2.2009) by S.I. 2009/256, arts. 1(2), 3(1)(2), **Sch. 1**)

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to :

- s. 67 power to amend by [2022 c. 37 Sch. 2 para. 12\(1\)\(b\)](#)

Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 15(1)(d)(e) inserted by [2012 c. 11 s. 2\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 15(3ZA) inserted by [2012 c. 11 s. 2\(4\)](#)