

# Postal voting guide ...your questions answered

ISSUED BY THE ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER

## What about postal voting fraud?

Some people are worried about postal voting fraud. We take these concerns very seriously. However, we must stress that there has never been any evidence of organised postal voting fraud in Hammersmith & Fulham.

Here are some safeguards we have in place

- Every request for a postal vote is checked against our computer records of electors. You cannot get a postal vote unless you are on the Voters List. You can only get one postal voting pack at 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. You also have to sign any request to cancel or change your postal vote.
- We write back to everyone who arranges a postal vote.
- We are sending this guide to everyone on the postal voters list.
- The declaration of identity, with witness, is there to prevent fraud.
- Signatures on declarations and original requests can be cross-checked.

## What you can do

- ✓ Let us know if your postal voting pack does not arrive.
- ✓ Keep your voting pack in a safe place if you are not voting straight away.
- ✓ When you vote, keep it secret.
- ✓ If you can, post it back yourself.
- ✓ Don't give your pack to someone else 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.

The Returning Officer's staff never come round to collect postal votes.



## Need further help?

Electoral Services helpline

020 8753 4466

(including Typetalk)

Monday to Friday 8.00am - 8.00pm  
Saturday 9.00am - 1.00pm

Visit our website:

www.lbhf.gov.uk



If you would like any part of this document interpreted into your own language, please phone 020 8753 4040.

**Russian**  
Если вы хотите, чтобы какая-либо часть этого документа была устно переведена на ваш язык, пожалуйста, позвоните по телефону 020 8753 4040.

**Polish**  
Jeśli chciałbyś jakaś część tego dokumentu przetłumaczyć na język ojczysty, to proszę zadzwonić pod numer 020 8753 4040.

**French**  
Si vous souhaitez qu'une partie de ce document soit traduite dans votre langue, veuillez appeler le 020 8753 4040.

**Spanish**  
Si desea alguna parte de este documento en su propio idioma, llame al 020 8753 4040.

**Albanian**  
Nese do deshironi ndonje pjese te ketij dokumenti te perkthyer ne gjuhan tuaj, telefononi 020 8753 4040.

**Amharic**  
የዚህ ሰነድ አንድን ክፍል በደንበኞችዎ ቋንቋ ለማብራራት ለግብይት አገልግሎት ስልጠና ይደውሉ፡ 020 8753 4040

**Portuguese**  
Se desejar qualquer parte deste documento interpretada no seu idioma, telefone por favor para 020 8753 4040.

**Somali**  
Haddii aad jeclaan laheyd in qeyb dokumentigan ka mid ah luqaddaada ama alkaaga laguugu furjumo, laadlan teleefoon u soo dir 020 8753 4040

**Punjabi**  
ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੋਈ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਭਾਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ 'ਚ ਸਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਟੈਲੀਫ਼ਾਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਟੈਲੀਫ਼ਾਨ ਕਰੋ 020 8753 4040.

**Gujarati**  
જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજના કોઈપણ ભાગનું સ્વેચ્છાભાવે તમારી મોતાની ભાષામાં જોડવું છે તો, મહેરબાની કરી કૌટુંબી કક્ષા 020 8753 4040.

**Hindi**  
यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज के किसी भी हिस्से या किसी हिस्से का अनुवाद अपने भाषा में चाहिए, तो कृपया टेलीफोन करें 020 8753 4040.

**Urdu**  
اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کے کسی بھی حصے کا ترجمہ آپ کی زبان میں چاہیے تو براہ مہربانی ٹیلی فون کریں: 020 8753 4040

**Farsi**  
اگر شما میخواهید هر بخشی از این سند به زبان شما برایتان ترجمه شفاهی بشود لطفاً با شماره تلفن 020 8753 4040 تماس بگیرید.

**Arabic**  
إذا كنت ترغب بالحصول على ترجمة فورية لأي جزء من هذه الوثيقة، يرجى الاتصال بـ : 020 8753 4040

## When will I get my postal voting pack?

Some key things have to happen before we can send you your ballot paper.

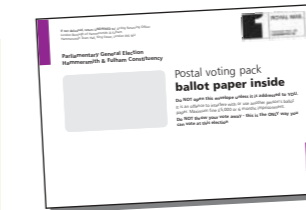
- 1 Candidates tell the returning officer they are standing.
- 2 Ballot papers have to be printed.
- 3 Existing postal voters can change or cancel their arrangements.

At a General Election, we cannot send out the first batch of postal voting packs until about eight working days before election day. They are sent by first class post.

People can still arrange to vote by post up until six working days before election day. We aim to send out their packs within 24 hours of receiving their applications.



## Watch out for the pack!



If your pack does not arrive by the Friday before election day we can give you a new one. Just contact Electoral Services as soon as possible, but before 5.00pm on the day before the election, at the latest.

Replacements cannot be given to you in a polling station, nor on election day.

If you are not voting straight away, please keep your pack in a safe place. If you lose it, the law says we cannot give you a new one.



## Can I vote at the polling station instead of using my postal vote?

The simple answer is NO

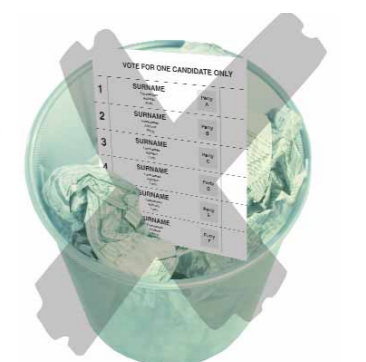
If you get a postal voting pack you cannot change your mind and go to vote at a polling station instead.

You can only use the ballot paper sent to you in your pack.

You cannot get a ballot paper at a polling station because, of course, your paper has already been issued to you.

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

If you want to vote in person at the polling station, you will have to cancel your postal vote. This must be done by 5.00pm 11 working days before election day.



## In your postal voting pack we will send you:

- ✓ Declaration of identity
- ✓ Ballot paper
- ✓ Ballot paper envelope
- ✓ Return envelope

### What is the declaration of identity?



This is a security statement. It tells us that you - the voter - received your ballot papers safely. You have to sign it in front of a witness, who also signs and gives their address.

Your witness can be anyone who knows you - including a relative. They are only saying that you are the person the postal voting pack was sent to. Your witness is not witnessing HOW you vote - you should do that on your own in secret.

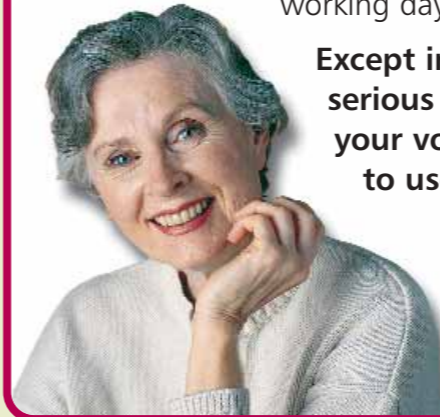
Your vote cannot be counted if:

- ✗ You do not return the declaration of identity
- ✗ You do not sign it
- ✗ Your witness does not sign and give their name and address

### Can someone else use my postal vote for me?

If you have a disability, you can ask someone you trust to help you fill in your postal vote. 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 (before 5.00pm 11 working days before election day).



**Except in these cases, it is a serious voting 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.**

### 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 back to us (you cannot fax your votes). Your ballot papers have to reach us by 10.00pm 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 straight away for more advice.

### How do I return my postal vote?

Postal voting - like voting in person - is not compulsory.

But, if you do vote, your postal vote must reach the returning officer by 10.00pm on election day for it to be counted. You can do this:

- By post (no stamp needed)
- By hand at Hammersmith Town Hall
- By hand, on election day, at any polling station in the constituency



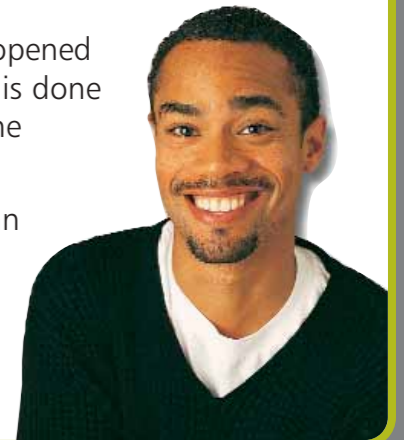
### What happens when you get my postal vote?

All returned postal votes are put into special ballot boxes, until it is time to open the envelopes.

There are special opening sessions before polling day. These are to make sure it is you - the voter - who has filled in your postal vote, but also to keep your vote secret.

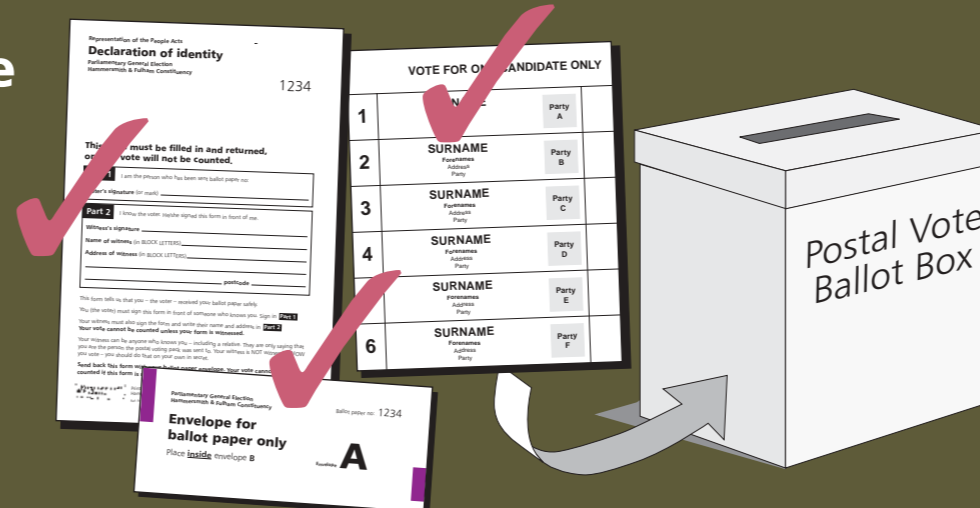
Thousands of postal votes are opened at the same time. The opening is done according to electoral law by the Returning Officer's staff.

Candidates and their helpers can watch to make sure the rules are followed. Everyone present has to keep the proceedings secret.



### How we open your postal vote

- 1 We take out the declaration of identity and check it has been filled in correctly.
- 2 We check the ballot paper numbers on the declaration and the ballot paper envelope are the same.
- 3 The declarations and ballot paper envelopes are separated. The declarations are sealed in special packets. From now on, no one can tell how you voted.



- 4 We take the ballot paper out of the envelope, and check the number is the same as on the envelope.
- 5 Votes are not counted at this stage. The ballot papers are put into ballot boxes, which are kept in locked storage until polling stations close on election day. The boxes go to the counting of votes and are opened in the same way as the boxes from polling stations.

Representation of the People Act  
**Declaration of identity**  
 Parliamentary General Election  
 Hammersmith & Fulham Constituency  
 1234

This form must be filled in and returned, or your vote will not be counted.

**Part 1** I am the person who has been sent ballot paper no. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Voter's signature (in mark) \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 2** I know the voter. He/she signed this form in front of me.  
 Witness's signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of witness (in BLOCK LETTERS) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address of witness (in BLOCK LETTERS) \_\_\_\_\_  
 postcode \_\_\_\_\_

This form tells us that you - the voter - received your ballot paper safely. You (the voter) must sign this form in front of someone who knows you. Sign in **Part 1**. Your witness must also sign the form and write their name and address in **Part 2**. Your votes cannot be counted unless your form is witnessed. Your witness can be anyone who knows you - including a relative. They are only saying that you are the person the postal voting pack was sent to. Your witness is NOT witnessing HOW you vote - you should do that on your own in secret. Send back this form with your ballot paper envelope. Your vote cannot be counted if this form is not filled in or it is missing.

Printed and published by the Acting Returning Officer  
 Hammersmith Town Hall, King Street, London, W6 6SA.  
 Tel: 020 8996 9000 or 020 8996 9001

**VOTE FOR ONE CANDIDATE ONLY**

1	SURNAME Forenames Address Party	Party A
2	SURNAME Forenames Address Party	Party B
3	SURNAME Forenames Address Party	Party C
4	SURNAME Forenames Address Party	Party D
5	SURNAME Forenames Address Party	Party E
6	SURNAME Forenames Address Party	Party F

Parliamentary General Election  
 Hammersmith & Fulham Constituency  
**Envelope for ballot paper only**  
 Place inside envelope B  
 Envelope A

Parliamentary General Election  
 Hammersmith & Fulham Constituency  
 Acting Returning Officer  
 London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham  
 King Street  
 London  
 W6 6SA  
 Envelope B