

**Registration – Summer Visits 2007**

# **Guide for Voter Registration Visitors**

Electoral Services  
Room 28, Hammersmith Town Hall  
King Street  
London  
W6 9JU  
electoral.servicesl@lbhf.gov.uk  
020 8753 2174  
fax: 020 8753 2007

## Contacting Electoral Services

**Steve Miller**                      steve.miller@lbhf.gov.uk                      020 8753 2175  
Electoral Services Manager

**Zoe Wilkins**                      zoe.wilkins@lbhf.gov.uk                      020 8753 2640  
Deputy Electoral Services  
Manager

*Please note that Zoe is  
seconded to the Electoral  
Commission during this  
exercise*

**Paul Avard**                      paul.avard@lbhf.gov.uk                      020 8753 2369  
Electoral Services Officer

**Stuart Benjamin**                      stuart.benjamin@lbhf.gov.uk                      020 8753 2176  
Electoral Services Officer

**Stella Godfrey**                      stella.godfrey@lbhf.gov.uk                      020 8753 2177  
Electoral Services Officer

Electoral Services  
Room 28  
Hammersmith Town Hall  
King Street  
W6 9JU

Public Helpline  
020 8753 4466

Fax  
020 8753 2229  
(x2229 or x2007 internal)

e-mail: [Electoral.ServicesRecruit@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:Electoral.ServicesRecruit@lbhf.gov.uk)

## Rolling registration

Those of you who have worked for Electoral Services at the annual voter registration canvass will know that it is our job to make sure that every eligible person in the borough is registered to vote.

Usually, we contact all households in the borough during September to November of each year asking residents to register. This is known as the Annual Canvass. Residents can also register during the rest of the year when they move.

Recent changes to the law mean that the Electoral Registration Officer now has a duty to ensure that residents are registered when they move home rather than just at the next Annual Canvass.

We have been contacting everyone who has moved since 1 December 2006, either in to or within the borough, and asked them to register. Those people who did not return their registration forms have been sent up to two reminders. The residents you will visit are those who have not responded to any of our letters.

## The deadlines

You should return your first batch of completed forms to us by **5 July 2007**. The deadline for completion of all forms is **10 July 2007**.

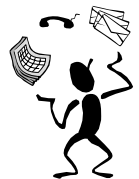
**If you cannot meet the deadlines for carrying out visits, you should let Electoral Services know immediately.**

If you are unable to carry out any of your duties because you are unwell, or because of other unforeseen circumstances, you should phone Electoral Services. If you are working for the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, please remember to phone Electoral Services at the same time that you phone in sick to your workplace, if you are not going to be available to carry out your duties.

## Before you start the visits

There are several things that you can do before you start the visits.

- **Read this manual.**  
If you have any questions or if anything is unclear, please ask Electoral Services.
- **Make sure that you have completed the paperwork that we have sent you**
  - ✓ Have you checked/amended the personal details sheet we sent you?
  - ✓ Have you told us the names of any helpers that you are using?
  - ✓ Have you completed & returned your contract to us?



- ✓ If you work for the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, please check that your ID badge is up-to-date.
- ✓ If you do not work for the council, make sure you get an ID badge from us.

## Registration Visits

### Why are we making personal visits?



By the time you come to collect your visit forms, Electoral Services will have received a response from about 80% of the new residents we have contacted.

Contrary to popular myth, most residents do not try to avoid having their names added to the Voters List.

Some of the most common reasons why they have not responded to the forms we have delivered are:

- People are very busy when they move home – they may have forgotten to re-register
- the people we have sent our forms to for may have already left the property
- the property may be rented and awaiting new tenants
- the resident has forgotten/has not had time/has lost the forms
- the resident cannot read/is confused by the form
- the resident is housebound
- the forms have been mistaken for junk mail and thrown away
- the resident has never received a form (especially in multi-occupied property)
- tenants do not realise they, and not the landlord, are eligible to register
- non-eligible people (especially foreign nationals) do not realise they still have to send back the form, even though they cannot vote
- some people do not realise they can vote, especially Commonwealth citizens
- new residents have already told the council (Council Tax, Housing Benefits, etc) they have moved in

A personal visit from you can make sure that eligible residents do not lose their right to vote, either because they have not fully understood the system, or they have not been able to respond to a previous form.

## Visits – before you start

These are the things you can do before the visit stage begins

- Attend the briefing session
- Read the next few sections of the manual carefully. If you do not understand anything, ask Electoral Services.
- **Make sure that you know who can – and cannot - register to vote.**

- Check that your ID badge is up to date and that you have a Letter of Authorisation to take out with you when you make your visits.
- Remember to let Electoral Services have the name of anyone who is helping you carry out this work.

If you need to make special arrangements to get into particular blocks, remember to contact the management in good time so that their security personnel let you in when you call.

## Briefing

ALL registration visitors will be expected to attend the briefing session.

The briefing session will take place in Committee Room 4 at Hammersmith Town Hall on Monday 25 June 2007 at 5.00pm.



## When you collect your visit forms

You will be given forms for the households that have not responded to our enquiries. Each form shows the names of people who we think are living in the property.

Your job is to find out if the information we have is correct and to register each person to vote. To do this you will need to find out if the people we have listed are living in the property, you will then need to get **EACH** person to sign against their name on the visit form.

It is important to note that, outside of the Annual Canvass period, it is **NOT** possible for one person in household to sign for everyone living there.

You **ALWAYS** keep the visit forms – so please do **NOT** give them to residents, post them through doors, lose them or leave them on the Tube!

### **Health & Safety**

Let a friend or relative know when and where you are visiting - and when you get home safely.

Please be very careful to watch your step – we have had several canvassers suffer trips and falls because of uneven or slippery surfaces, particularly on steps.

Do not attempt to visit properties where you believe that you are at risk of injury – but please return the forms to Electoral Services with an explanation of the circumstances and we will deal with the property direct from the office.

Read the advice from the RSPCA about dogs.

Do not enter anyone's home.

If the weather is sunny, make sure that you wear suitable clothing and/or use sun block. Prolonged exposure to the sun can lead to sunburn and other more serious problems.

# Who can register to vote?

It is very important that you know and understand the rules for registration. Your decision on the doorstep will mean whether or not someone has the vote.

## The 3 tests

Before someone can register to vote, they have to meet 3 tests. These are based on:

- Citizenship
- Age
- Residence

## The tests in detail

- Be resident at an address in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- Be normally resident at that address, even though they may be away temporarily, e.g. on holiday, in hospital, at university or college, reservists called up for service or training.
- Be a British, other Commonwealth, Irish (Eire) or European Union citizen.
- Be 16 or 17 years old, (young people are registered in advance, and can vote from their 18th birthday).

# Citizenship

The **Nationality Checklist** gives the full list of eligible countries whose citizens can register and vote in the United Kingdom.

Special care must be taken with some people because they wrongly think they do, or do not, have British citizenship.

## Residence Permits/Leave of Stay

Some foreign nationals have permits from the Home Office to reside in the United Kingdom. This does not give them the right to vote however long they have lived here.

To be allowed to register to vote they must have been granted British (or another eligible) citizenship. All people applying for, and granted, British citizenship receive a Home Office Certificate of Naturalisation.

## Marriage

- A British person who has married a foreign national retains their British citizenship.
- A female foreign national who married a British citizen **before 1 January 1949 automatically got British citizenship.**
- If married **after 1 January 1949 she remains a foreign national** unless she has applied to the Home Office and been given a Certificate of Naturalisation as a British citizen.

# Nationality checklist

Citizens of the countries listed can vote at elections in the UK. Someone who is NOT a citizen of a country listed is NOT allowed to vote.

**Foreign nationals and refugees – EVEN IF THEY HAVE HOME OFFICE RESIDENCE PERMITS - cannot vote unless they are from a listed country.**

Marriage to a British Citizen does NOT automatically confer British citizenship, if the marriage was after 1948. The spouse needs to have applied for citizenship.

## Commonwealth countries

Antigua & Barbuda	Maldives	Tuvalu
Australia	Malta	United Kingdom
The Bahamas	Mauritius	Uganda
Bangladesh	Mozambique	Vanuatu
Barbados	Namibia	Western Samoa
Belize	Nauru	Zambia
Botswana	New Zealand	Zimbabwe
Brunei	Nigeria	
Canada	Pakistan	<b>British</b>
Cameroon	Papua New Guinea	<b>Dependent</b>
Cyprus	St Christopher & Nevis	<b>Territories</b>
Dominica	St Lucia	Anguilla
Fiji	St Vincent & the	Bermuda
The Gambia	Grenadines	British Antarctic Territory
Ghana	Seychelles	British Indian Ocean
Grenada	Sierra Leone	Territory
Guyana	Singapore	British Virgin Islands
India	Solomon Islands	Cayman Islands
Jamaica	South Africa	Falkland Islands
Kenya	Sri Lanka	Gibraltar
Kiribati	Swaziland	Montserrat
Lesotho	Tanzania	Pitcairn, Henderson,
Malawi	Tonga	Ducie & Oeno Islands
Malaysia	Trinidad & Tobago	St Helena (including
		Ascension & Tristan
		da Cunha)
		Turks & Caicos Islands

Experience shows that citizens of **Australia, New Zealand and South Africa** are the most likely to be unaware that, by law, they have to register

## Hong Kong

At the 'handover' to China, some Hong Kong residents became British Citizens or British Nationals (Overseas) and can register to vote. Those who became citizens of the Peoples Republic of China cannot register.

## Republic of Ireland

Citizens of the Republic of Ireland (Eire) can vote at all elections in the UK.

## European Union countries

Austria	Germany	Poland
Belgium	Greece	Portugal
Bulgaria	Hungary	Romania
Czech Republic	Italy	Slovakia
Denmark	Latvia	Slovenia
Estonia	Lithuania	Spain
Finland	Luxembourg	Sweden
France	The Netherlands	

Union citizens can vote at **local council (including the London Mayor and Assembly) and European Parliament** elections only.

By law, they must register for the **local council vote**; registration for European Parliament elections is voluntary, because their home country may give them voting rights there.

British and Irish citizens, although Union citizens, are allowed to vote in all elections.

Malta and Cyprus joined the European Union on 1 May 2004. However, their citizens already have full voting rights in the UK.

Please note that Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU on 1 January 2007 and their citizens can now register to vote.

## Residence

Residence is usually straightforward, as it is where someone lives, sleeps, eats, etc. It is their "home". But the following may arise:

### Temporarily away

Someone who is not actually at an address can still register there, **provided they are not away for more than 6 months** and their type of work will not prevent them from returning.

## Two homes

People can, and do, live at more than one home. They are allowed to register at both addresses, provided they can establish a considerable degree of permanence of residence at each place.

However, they can only vote once at the same election.

For instance, the courts have ruled that students can register at both their home address and their university/college address.

Another case of double registration is where a person uses one address during most of the working week, and another address at weekends.

## Prisoners

People who are serving a term of imprisonment are **not** allowed to register. Prisoners **held on remand CAN** register because they have not yet been found guilty of an offence. However, remand prisoners have to complete a special registration for and **MUST NOT** be included on your visit form (but you can include a note to let us know about them).

<p>If you are in any doubt whether someone can register to vote or not, take their <b>FULL</b> names, their citizenship and any other relevant information. Electoral Services can then decide if they are eligible to vote or not, or make further enquiries where necessary.</p>
--

## When you are making your visits

### Always :

**Take a black biro with you** and at least one spare so that you can complete the forms. Ink pens wash out in the rain, so please don't use them. We also have problems scanning forms with coloured ink, so please don't use red /green/blue/dayglo pens.

### **Record the time and date you visit each property, every time you visit it**

Always make a note of the date and time that you call at a property. This is invaluable if a resident complains that we have not tried hard enough to register them. Remember to take a watch with you.

**Make sure that you are reasonably dressed** –residents are more likely to respond well to you, and answer your questions, if they think you look respectable. You will also be able to work more effectively if you are dry and comfortable, so take a raincoat or an umbrella as we can't guarantee sunshine! If the weather is sunny, then make sure you wear suitable clothing and/or sun block.

**Take your identity badge and letter of authorisation**, and make sure your helper has their letter too. If you are asked for identification, show your badge and letter. Allow the resident to check your details with Electoral Services, or the Duty Officer at the Town Hall, if they want to.

**Be firm, but friendly and polite.** If someone answers the door to you, you should be able to get most of the information you need. You may have to call back at a later time to get signatures from residents who are not at home. If you do make an appointment to see someone – make sure that you keep it!

**Remember to complete your logbook after each day's work** –it can be very difficult to remember the details when you have finished all of your work.

### Never:

#### **Never use other council records to complete voter registration forms**

Several registration visitors will have access to other council records, such as council tax or housing records as part of their ordinary jobs. These records must **NOT** be used to fill in voter registration forms – we need you to get information from residents themselves.

Never go in to someone's home, even if you are invited.

Never give your visit form away or deliver it through a letterbox.



**If you are not sure about anything, contact Electoral Services!**

## On the doorstep - when a resident answers the door

Please make sure that you are calling at the right house or flat. Confirm the address with the resident if you are not sure (especially if you are dealing with a property that is split into several flats or rooms).



You will be given more details about how to fill in the visit form in a separate handout. However, the key things you need to do are

1. You are only visiting NEW residents – some people may live in the household who are already registered. You will have the most up to date voters list to help you with this. Please make a note of anyone who has gone.
2. Check the “Names From Other Council Records” box and find out if they are living there and write their names on the form under the “Details of Residents” section. If they are no longer living at the address, cross their name through
3. Check if any of the new residents are 16/17 years old – they can still be registered but will not appear on the voters list until they are 18.
4. Check if any of the new residents are over 70 (this makes sure they do not get called for Jury Service)
5. Confirm the nationalities of the new residents. If any of the residents are not eligible because of their nationality, write this on the form.
6. Ask to speak to each eligible new resident in turn as they must all sign the visit form. If any of the residents are not at home or are busy, make an appointment to return when it is convenient.
7. If there is no-one eligible to vote at the address, tell us why – e.g. the house is empty or all the residents are American (or some other non-qualifying nationality)

We need to get the FULL first names of electors, not just their initials. If you give in forms with initials only, Electoral Services will probably tell you to make another visit to the property to get the full information, so make the best use of your time and get all the information we need on the first visit.

If you are in any doubt about whether someone is eligible to vote or not, take their full name, their age, and their nationality write it on the form, together with any other information that you have and ask them to sign it. Electoral Services will then be able to decide if the person should be added to the Voters List or not.

## Language difficulties



You will meet some people who do not speak English. If you cannot speak their language, there are now two options:

Language Line: If you have a mobile telephone, you can use the Language Line translation service. This is simple to use, and will allow you to communicate easily with a non-English speaker. We will reimburse you the cost of the call.

Translation sheet: Show the resident the translation sheet and give them a blank form, after you have written their address on it.

Both the translation sheet and the language line sheet will be given to you when you collect your visit forms, and you should always carry them with you. **Remember to record what happened on your visit form together with a note of the language used. We can then follow up with a translated form.**

## Resident says “already sent it back”

If a resident tells you they have already completed a form, you should explain that it has not yet reached Electoral Services, and ask them to complete one for you on the doorstep just in case the original has gone astray.

## Refusals

Out-and-out refusals to complete a voter registration form are very rare.

You will have to make a judgement about the person you are speaking to, but you can try to persuade people to fill in the form by mentioning the following

- They will not be able to vote if they don't complete a form
- They may have difficulties in obtaining credit if they are not on the Voters List, because banks and shops check information from the Voters list when they decide whether or not to give credit
- They are obliged by law to complete the form and there is a maximum fine of £1000 for not completing it

If this is not successful, you should write down a full description of the person who is refusing to give you the information, together with brief notes of the conversation.

**Please note that simply writing “not interested” is unacceptable.**

If you feel at all threatened, you should leave immediately, and write a note on the form about what has happened.

## Entryphones

If you are calling at a block or house where entry is by entryphone, it is not always clear which buzzer you need to press and you can only find out by trial and error. If this happens, it is a good idea to make a note on your form of the buzzer you need to ring, to avoid annoying other residents again if you have to call back.

Ideally, the resident of the flat that you are calling will come to the front door, or will allow you up to their flat's door and will sign your form for you. However, some residents are reluctant to do this. During the Annual Canvass it is possible to take residents registration information via an intercom or through a window – this is **not** possible during the rest of the year. Each resident **must** sign the visit form.

However, if a property is void (if all the residents are foreign nationals, for example) you can take the information via an entryphone or window.

**Please always make sure that you are speaking to a person who lives in the flat you have a form for, and not someone from another flat.**

**Record the time and date that you called at the property on the visit form.**

## Security guards and receptionists

Sometimes you may be able to persuade a security guard or receptionist to let you in to knock on the doors of flats. Show them your ID badge and Letter of Authorisation, and explain what you are doing.

At other times you may find that guards and receptionists are under very strict instructions not to let any one in at all. Please ask them if they can give you the details of someone who can give you permission to enter the building. You should then contact that person to explain what you are doing and to arrange a time to visit the block again. Sometimes you may need Electoral Services to get in touch with your contact for you to explain why you need to be given access to the building. Please get in touch if you need Electoral Services' help in this way.

## On the doorstep - no one is living in the property

### Empty properties

If a property is empty please tick the "property empty" box on the form. It also helps us if you tell us on the form why you believe the property is empty. You should only use this option if you are certain that there is no one living in the property, i.e. you can see inside and it is obvious that no one lives there or a builder/owner tells you so.

**Record the time and date that you called at the property on the visit form**

## Boarded up properties

If you are happy that the property is empty, tick the property empty box on the form. Write "boarded up" on the form.

**Record the time and date that you called at the property on the visit form**

## Demolished properties

You should not have forms for any properties that have been demolished.

However, if you do have a form for a house that does not exist, please write this clearly on the form, and cross out any names that have been pre-printed on the form.

**Record the time and date that you called at the property on the visit form**

## On the doorstep – no one is at home when you visit

**Record the time and date that you called at the property.** You should keep calling at the property until you get someone in. It is a good idea to vary the times and days that you call – if you always call at the same time and on the same day of the week you are more likely to find that the people who live at the address are always out.

Think carefully about the area where you are making your visits – in some areas you are more likely to have success in the late evenings, and others you may want to visit earlier. Older people may be reluctant to answer their door after dark. Sunday lunchtime is a very good time to call.

## What to say ...

**Make it very clear straightaway who you are and why you are there**

**Don't use jargon:**

**AVOID**

"Electoral Registration Office"

"Hammersmith & Fulham Council"

"Register of Electors"

**USE**

"Elections Office"

"the Council"

"voters list"

## Don't get into arguments

Don't mention they have had forms already - unless they ask you to leave one.

Don't mention the £1000 fine - unless they are a definite refusal.

If you call at a bad time - say you will come back on another day.

If there is doubt, make it clear you are not from a political party.

## Don't take "No" for an answer!

Never come away with "not interested", "don't want to vote" on the form.

Remind them they have to register by law, although it is their choice whether they vote. What if they change their mind and want to vote on polling day? They will not be able to if they do not register now.

Point out that you have to be on the register to get most types of credit/mortgage, and to open a bank account.

## Forms in Office

Every day you will be emailed a list of all the forms we have received in the post that day. You will need to check the list to see if any of the properties you are supposed to visit are on it.

If any of your properties are on the list you should write 'FIO' on the form and not visit. If you have already visited the property before being told that the form had been returned, and registered some of the residents, you will be paid for this work.

## Finally – on 10 July 2007

Return any visit forms you have left to Electoral Services.

Return your logbook, any Letters of Authorisation, Helper's Letters, ID badges (if you do not work for the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham), and any other items lent to you.

## Payments

Payment will be made in the August salaries for council staff (or the pay run nearest 15 August for non-council staff), dependent on satisfactory work and the completion of necessary paperwork. Payment will be made directly into your bank account.



We will send you a sheet to show you how your pay has been calculated shortly before the money is paid into your account.

Pay Rates	
Retainer (if at least 50% of the forms are completed)	£100.00
Per <b>new</b> registered elector (i.e. full name and nationality <b>plus signature</b> )	£2.00
Per void property (i.e. empty, foreign nationals etc)	£2.00

Your notes