



Getting our Congregation Election-ready!

Practical ways for Churches to facilitate Voter Registration for VRC Accreditation

Your church can achieve the Voter Registration Champion accreditation in one fell swoop by setting up a ballot box to collect Voter Registration Verifications from your congregation on 'Election Sunday'. You can designate any Sunday that suits you to be 'Election Sunday' - but make sure it is ahead of the deadline for electoral registration – 18 June for the General Election on 4 July 2024.

What resources will you need:

- One cardboard ballot box with a hole in the top to serve as the ballot box;
- A printed Voter Registration Champion Verification leaflet for each attendee [template below];
- A laptop with internet connection to enable people to register: www.gov.uk/register-to-vote
- A stack of paper Voter Registration forms for people who may not want to register online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-to-vote-if-youre-living-in-the-uk>
- For verifying eligibility to register to vote, access to the website: <https://canivote.org.uk>
- Pens.



What will you need to do?

In order to meet the Voter Registration Champion accreditation criteria, you will need to engage the whole congregation on at least one Sunday, and ask each person present to verify that they are either:

- already registered to vote;
- pledged to register to vote ahead of the deadline;
- ineligible to vote, or otherwise have a good reason not to register.

At an appropriate point in the service, an announcement needs to be made that the church is seeking to become an accredited Voter Registration Champion, and that to do so you need to make sure the congregation is election-ready! This means making sure that everyone within the congregation who can is registered to vote ahead of the deadline, that everyone knows about the photo ID they'll need to take to the ballot box, and that everyone is encouraged to turn out to vote on polling day.

At this point you can run through the information on the Voter Registration Champion Verification leaflet that each member of the congregation will have. You can do this quickly and with the minimum of fuss, or you can liven it up with a discussion, a sketch to illustrate the issues, or a video or PowerPoint to deepen people's understanding.

At the end of the session, you need to ask each member of the congregation to complete the 'tear off' section of the Voter Registration Champion Verification leaflet and put it in the ballot box. Explain that the aim is to get 100% of people present to complete the form – even if they are not able to vote. The idea is to do this as a whole-congregation activity – you can use your own judgement about the degree to which you include children in the activity.

At the conclusion of the announcement, you could either have people get up and 'vote' by putting their form in the ballot box, or have a child circulate with the box, or catch people as they leave.

At the end you need to tally your forms, compare it to the number of people in the congregation that day, and check that you have hit the 90% threshold. Remember to keep a record of your numbers to help us measure the impact!

As soon as you have a plan in place to run an 'Election Sunday' you can then accredit as a Voter Registration Champion via our website: www.voterchampion.org.uk. For more information or support check our website or contact voterchampion@citizensuk.org.





1. Voter registration

If you are not registered to vote, you won't be able to vote at the next general election. The deadline to register is midnight, 18 June.

We are working with Citizens UK's Voter Registration Champions scheme to make sure that 300,000 eligible voters don't lose their right to vote because they aren't registered.

It is easy to register to vote – there's a simple online form or you can fill in a paper version and send it to your council.

Register now: www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

2. Voter ID

The rules have changed for the general election – if you don't take photo ID to the polling station you won't be able to vote. The deadline to apply for a free photo ID (called a Voter Authority Certificate) is 5pm, 26 June.

Check whether you have the right ID here:
www.gov.uk/how-to-vote/photo-id-youll-need

Not everyone will have the right ID. You can apply for a free photo ID document from your local council up to a few weeks before election day by going to: www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate



3. Voter turnout

Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy. If people don't vote they won't get a say on who gets to make decisions that affect their lives. Put the date of the election, 4 July, in your diary; work out where your local polling station is (it will be near home), and how you'll find time to vote that day (polling stations open from 7am - 10pm). You can also apply to your local council for a postal vote (deadline 5pm, 19 June) or proxy vote (5pm, 26 June) if you won't be able to vote in person.



I am certain that I am already registered to vote in the place I want to vote.



I am not registered to vote but I will register in time for the election.



I am not eligible to vote or have another good reason not to register.

