

# New measures to allow proxy voting in local elections for those self-isolating with coronavirus

Individuals who need to self-isolate because of coronavirus will still be able to vote in the local elections, following a planned amendment to emergency proxy voting rules published in Parliament.

The move is one of a number of measures the government is putting in place to allow for fair and COVID-secure participation in the upcoming council and mayoral elections in England, and the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales.

The legislation, which has been [laid before Parliament](#), will allow anyone who is self-isolating due to COVID-19 to access an emergency proxy vote, up to 17:00 on election day.

Minister of State for the Constitution & Devolution, Chloe Smith, said:

These elections can and will be delivered in a COVID-secure way and the extended proxy voting rules are a key part of this.

The new rules will mean that voters who have tested positive for COVID-19, or are self-isolating, can still have their say in these elections without having to leave their home.

The new legislation allows:

- All those who are unable to attend a polling station as a result of COVID-19, including those who are shielding, to appoint a proxy beyond the usual deadline.
- All those with an existing proxy arrangement to appoint a new proxy up until 17:00 on polling day if their proxy is affected by COVID-19 and are unable to act as a proxy.

On Friday 5 February, the government confirmed that the polls scheduled for 6 May 2021, including council and mayoral elections in England and Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in England and Wales, will go ahead as planned.

The government has also published a [Delivery Plan](#) setting out guidance on how the polls will be delivered in a COVID-19 secure and effective way, which included preliminary changes to proxy voting rules. As usual, anyone can also secure a postal vote in advance of the May elections. The deadline for all

postal voting applications is 17:00 on Tuesday 20 April. Anyone who wants to vote by post is encouraged to apply to do so as early as possible and not wait until the deadline.

Now more than ever, people deserve to have their say as we build back better, on issues ranging from local health provisions, to safer streets, to the level of council tax, and the pandemic calls for a more flexible approach to voting.

The government continues to work closely with the electoral community and public health bodies to resolve challenges and ensure that everyone who is entitled to vote is able to do so in a COVID-secure way. The government will be engaging with political parties on wider election guidance. This includes the additional new measures on the nominations procedure, published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

These measures will support the holding of important elections in a way that minimises the risk to public health and instills confidence amongst electors that every effort is being made to ensure the polls remain COVID-secure.

We will also be amending the coronavirus regulations to enable a broader range of campaign-related activity from 8 March, but it is essential that this still takes place in a COVID-secure way, in line with the guidance and the law. The Government will be publishing further guidance for candidates, their agents and political parties on campaigning in the elections in due course, and is engaging with the Parliamentary Parties Panel on this guidance to ensure the views of political parties are taken into account.

## Notes to editors

- This [legislation](#) is expected to be debated in the House of Commons and House of Lords next month and if approved is likely to come into force in early April.
- The Scottish Government has amended legislation to allow those who are following Government advice or the advice of a medical professional in relation to Covid-19 to apply for emergency proxies when voting in Scottish Local Government and Parliamentary Elections.
- The Welsh Government has enacted similar emergency proxy voting measures in relation to Senedd elections.