

Introduction to standing as a candidate

This document is for people who are thinking of standing for election and who want to know the basics.

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Translations and other formats

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Who can stand for election?

There are rules about who can stand as a candidate at elections in the UK. The rules are different depending on the election. If you are interested in standing as a candidate you can find out about the rules for standing here:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent>

There are two types of candidates at elections in the UK. A candidate can:

- be nominated by a political party, or
- can stand as an independent.

Political parties

Political parties can choose candidates to stand on behalf of the party at elections.

Candidates standing on behalf of a political party can have the following next to their name on the ballot paper:

- the name of the party, or
- a description, and
- a party emblem

The Commission registers political parties in the UK. For more information on setting up a political party, see this document:

[Introduction to registering a political party](#)

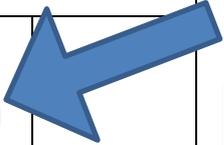
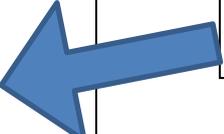
Independent candidates

Candidates do not need to be chosen by political parties to stand for election.

Independent candidates can have a description reading “Independent” and/or ‘Annibynnol’ in Wales or no description at all. Independent candidates do not have emblems.

A sample ballot paper

Candidate 1 has been nominated by a political party so they and uses the party name and an emblem. Candidate 2 has been nominated by a political party and is using the party description. Candidate 3 is standing as an independent. They can therefore use the description “Independent”, or “Annibynno!” in Wales.

VOTE FOR NO MORE THAN 3 CANDIDATES		
1	<p>BAKER Ali Barber 5 Anytown Close, Anytown Apple party</p> 	 <div data-bbox="1125 1102 1385 1171" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Party emblem</div>
2	<p>BOOTS Dusty Boots 63 Acacia Avenue, Anytown Making the UK great</p>	 <div data-bbox="1050 1249 1404 1317" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Party description</div>
3	<p>CLOVER Elizabeth Mary Clover 9 Seymour Court, Anytown Independent</p>	 <div data-bbox="1053 1444 1493 1545" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Independent candidate description</div>
4	<p>GREY Earl Grey 2 Cedar Lane, Anytown Circle party</p> 	

How do I stand for election?

If you wish to stand as a candidate at an election, you need to complete nomination papers. If nomination is valid, your name will appear on a ballot paper.

The Returning Officer is the person responsible for the administration of the election and you must give your completed nomination papers to the Returning Officer to be validly nominated.

Completing nomination papers

A candidate must complete a set of nominating papers before they are officially nominated.

At some elections a candidate needs to have the signatures of a number of electors living in the ward or constituency in which they are standing.

For guidance on standing as a candidate, please click on the link below:

[Standing as a candidate](#)

Paying a deposit

Candidates standing at some elections will need to pay a deposit to their local returning officer before they can stand.

This deposit will be returned to you if you poll more than a certain percentage of votes at the election.

What are the main rules candidates need to follow?

Candidates must follow legal rules on:

- standing for election
- how they campaign,
- how much they can spend, and who they can accept donations from (donations include money, goods and services) in the run-up to elections
- records they must keep, and
- how to report donations after the election.

For guidance on the rules, please click here:

[Guidance for elections](#)

The election agent

Every candidate must have an election agent (you may act as your own agent). This is the person who has legal responsibility for the organisation of your election campaign, especially the financial management.

The role of the Electoral Commission

We are an independent body set up by the UK Parliament. We regulate political funding and spending and set standards for well-run elections.

We produce guidance for candidates and parties standing for election. We also:

- register political parties
- make sure people understand and follow the rules on party and election finance
- publish details of where parties and candidates get money from and how they spend it
- set the standards for electoral registration and running elections and report on how well this is done
- make sure people understand that it is important to register to vote, and know how to vote

If you want to know more, visit us at www.electoralcommission.org.uk