

# Citizenship and eligibility to register

Citizens of Commonwealth countries, British Overseas Territories (previously known as British Dependent Territories) and European Union member states are eligible register to vote, providing all other qualifications are met.

## Commonwealth countries

Antigua and Barbuda	Jamaica	St Vincent & The Grenadines
Australia	Kenya	Samoa
The Bahamas	Kiribati	Seychelles
Bangladesh	Lesotho	Sierra Leone
Barbados	Malawi	Singapore
Belize	Malaysia	Solomon Islands
Botswana	Maldives	South Africa
Brunei Darussalam	Malta	Sri Lanka
Cameroon	Mauritius	Swaziland
Canada	Mozambique	United Republic of Tanzania
Cyprus	Namibia	Tonga
Dominica	Nauru	Trinidad & Tobago
Fiji Islands	New Zealand	Tuvalu
The Gambia	Nigeria	Uganda
Ghana	Pakistan	United Kingdom
Grenada	Papua New Guinea	Vanuatu
Guyana	St Kitts & Nevis	Zambia
India	St Lucia	Zimbabwe

Please note that suspension of, or withdrawal of a country from the Commonwealth does not affect the registration and voting rights of citizens of that country.

## 'Qualifying Commonwealth Citizen'

The term 'qualifying Commonwealth citizen' was inserted into section 4 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 by section 1 of the RPA 2000 and such a person living in the UK is entitled to register to vote.

A 'qualifying Commonwealth citizen' must either have the right of abode here (i.e. "not a person who requires leave") or have leave to enter/remain.

Again, if the ERO has doubts about an individual's eligibility s/he has powers to require evidence, in the form of a statutory declaration, according to the provisions of regulation 24(2)(d)(ii) of the Representation of the People Regulations 2001.

## British Overseas Territories

Anguilla	Montserrat
Bermuda	Pitcairn Island
British Antarctic Territory	St Helena
British Indian Ocean Territory	St Helena dependencies (Ascension Island, Tristan da Cunha)
British Virgin Islands	South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands
Cayman Islands	Turks and Caicos Islands
Falkland Islands	
Gibraltar	

## European Union member states

Austria	Germany	Malta*
Belgium	Greece	The Netherlands
Cyprus*	Hungary	Poland
Czech Republic	Ireland	Portugal
Denmark	Italy	Slovakia
Estonia	Latvia	Slovenia
Finland	Lithuania	Spain
France	Luxembourg	Sweden

\*Cyprus and Malta are also Commonwealth countries, so citizens can also register to vote in elections for the Westminster parliament and the various devolved institutions, as appropriate.

There has been confusion in the past as to the status of citizens of the Republic of Northern Cyprus. For registration purposes, the whole of Cyprus is considered to be a Commonwealth country. If an Electoral Registration Officer is in any doubt as to whether a person from Cyprus should be registered, they should ask for confirmation of the type of passport that they have. Provided that the person has a passport from either the Republic of Cyprus or the Republic of Northern Cyprus, they are entitled to be included in the register of electors as Commonwealth citizens. However, anyone claiming to be from Cyprus, but with a Turkish passport is not entitled to register.

## Hong Kong

Special citizenship arrangements were made in respect of Hong Kong, prior to its transfer to Chinese administration on 1 July 1997. These were set out in Home Office Circular RPA 416. Further information on Special Cases in relation to Commonwealth Countries and British Dependent Territories and the 1999 European Elections was included in Home Office Circular RPA 421. Both the Home Office Circulars referred to are still current. They explain that former Hong Kong citizens may possess one of a variety of forms of citizenship as British Dependent Territories citizens, British Nationals Overseas or British Overseas citizens. Paragraph 14 of RPA 421 explained that:

“British Nationals (Overseas), British Overseas Citizens and British Dependent Territories citizens are all Commonwealth citizens within the meaning of the British Nationality Act 1981 and are entitled to register as electors, provided they also fulfil the age and residence requirements for such registration”