

How to stand for election

Check Eligibility

You can be a Councillor for more than one council at the same time: for example Dorset Council and a Parish/Town Council.

You can be a Councillor if you have a full-time job; by law your employer must allow you to take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours to perform your duties as a Councillor.

You do not need to belong to a political party to stand for election and can stand as a candidate to become a Parish/Town Councillor if:

You are over 18 or over on the day you submit your nomination paper and are a British, Commonwealth or European Union Citizen* and at least one of the following:

- ◆ a registered local government elector in the parish area in which you wish to stand as a candidate
- ◆ Occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election
- ◆ Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the parish area
- ◆ You have lived in the parish area or within three miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election

*This is expected to change for European Citizens in 2025

Disqualifications

A person is disqualified from being elected or being a Councillor if:

- ◆ You work for the parish council or hold a paid office under the parish council
- ◆ You are subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim orders
- ◆ You have been sentenced to a term imprisonment of three months or more (including a suspended sentence), without the option of a fine, during the five years before polling day
- ◆ You have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which covers corrupt or illegal practices)
- ◆ You are subject to the notification requirement of, or under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003

IMPORTANT:

The full range of disqualifications is complex and if you are in any doubt about whether you are disqualified, you must do everything you can to check that you are not disqualified before submitting your nomination papers.

The Returning Officer will not be able to determine whether or not you are disqualified.

3. Standing for election—eligibility