

The Association of Electoral Administrators



Pubs, clubs and carpet shops - do you know where your polling station is?

You may not be able to drink inside a pub just yet, but you may be voting in one on 6 May, as over 100 open their doors as polling stations. Electors will cast votes in museums, hair salons and even two carpet shops, as over 35,000 polling stations open from 7am to 10pm across England, Scotland and Wales.

Many polling stations have moved location due to the pandemic, but electors can double-check where their polling station is by using the [Electoral Commission's polling station finder](#), created by Democracy Club and powered by data collected from councils.

Among the usual village halls, schools and libraries votes will be served up in over 50 restaurants and cafes, on display at 30 museums and electors will exercise their vote at over 120 cricket clubs and pavilions, 100 football clubs and even 13 boxing clubs.

Peter Stanyon, chief executive of the Association of Electoral Administrators, said: "This has been a much tougher year than normal to find and book polling stations, because so many community buildings are understandably being used to get people tested for, and vaccinated against, Covid-19.

"Many people may well be voting in different places than they're used to, including some really unusual locations, and there'll be around 600 temporary polling stations set up on places like car parks and community spaces.

"Council electoral administrators have worked their socks off for months to make sure polling stations run just as they always do. Everything will look a little different due to socially distanced queuing and other Covid-safety measures like bringing your own pen or pencil to mark your ballot paper, but the process will be exactly the same."

Democracy Club's CEO Sym Roe said: "We're grateful to local authorities and The Electoral Commission for helping us collect a record-breaking amount of data for our polling station finder. This information allows us and our partners to help millions of people answer one of the most commonly asked questions on polling day: "where do I vote?".

"Voters expect polling station information to be easily accessible online and in a format which they can understand, but councils often do not have the resources to do this. Indeed, many voters are even unsure which

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council they need to contact. Our polling station finder gives voters the information they need, while helping to reduce the load on council electoral services.

“We hope to be able to build on this year's success in order to deliver a UK wide polling station finder for every election in the future. ”

Data

This information was drawn from polling station data provided to Democracy Club by 334 of 371 GB council areas. Figures for the remaining 37 councils were estimated from previous years.

As of 4 May 2021, Democracy Club's polling station finder at [WhereDoIVote.co.uk](https://www.wheredoivote.co.uk) covers over 90% of the GB voting age population, including all of Scotland, Wales and Greater London.

The data provided by councils has no identifying tags and limited consistency in address format. A search for 'school', for example, will bring up 'school road', 'old schoolroom', etc. Many stations are situated in outbuildings or annexes which separate them from the rest of the school building. We have no way of telling how many schools, libraries or other buildings have been closed due to their use as a polling place.

Consequently, although we have done our best to filter and check the data, the aggregate numbers cited below should be treated with caution, and most numbers have been rounded.

Terminology

A polling *place* is the building or area in which a polling *station* is situated. A single polling place can hold multiple polling stations. In Scotland, the term polling place is commonly used on signage, whereas England and Wales prefer polling station.

The term 'local' or 'nearest' polling station is incorrect and misleading, and should be avoided. Voters must vote at the station to which they are assigned.

Polling Stations in Great Britain on 6 May

There are approximately 35,500 polling stations in use across Great Britain on 6 May. These stations are spread across roughly 30,000 unique polling places. There are 4764 stations in Scotland, 2329 in Wales, and 3888 in Greater London.

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The overall number of stations appears to show a slight decline from previous elections. According to research conducted by the Electoral Commission, there were 37,548 GB stations in use during the 2019 European elections, and 38,812 in the 2019 general election.

Estimates for number of polling places which are cited in or near...

Halls (all kinds)	11,000
Village halls	4,500
Schools	3,500-3,800
Community centres	2,700
Church halls	2,000
Nonconformist chapels	1,500
Community halls	500
Libraries	450
Scout halls	400
Town halls	250
Social clubs	200
Cricket clubs/pavilions	120
Hotels	100
Colleges	100
Salvation Army halls	100
Football stadia or clubs	100

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Rugby ¹ stadia or clubs	85
Guide Halls	80
Sports Centres	70
Tennis clubs or courts	55
Universities	40
Golf Clubs	35
Royal British Legion	35
Museums	35
Masonic halls	35
Dance studios	20
Fire stations	20
Synagogues	15
Mosques	10
Hospitals	10

Polling Places detail

There are approximately 600 mobile/temporary polling stations across GB. 'Car park' features in the name of 190 stations.

Pubs: How many pubs are in use is essentially impossible to know without counting them individually. However, the term 'public house' returns 90 unique results, and 'Arms' returns 67.

¹ Excluding results for Rugby Borough Council.

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Food: At least 14 polling stations are situated in restaurants, including three in the Sea Fish Restaurant, Conisbrough. Two stations have the name 'food' in the title: Guild of Fine Food (Gillingham) and Runcorn & District Food Bank.

Politics: A number of addresses incorporate the names of former prime ministers: Gladstone (20), Churchill (19), Peel (15), Attlee (5), Palmerston (5) Disraeli (2). Five venues include the name Fawcett.

Museums and Heritage: Over thirty museums are in use as polling places. Examples include the Museum of Naval Firepower (Gosport), the Museum of English Rural Life (Reading), Biggin Hill Memorial Museum (Bromley), Piddington Roman Villa Museum (Northampton) and The Museum of the Jewellery Quarter (Birmingham). Sheffield Archives, Wigston Record Office, and the Royal Geographical Society are also in use.

Sport: In addition to the venues mentioned above, we have found 13 boxing clubs, five swimming centres, a running track and a ski centre

Military: Nine Army Reserve centres and one regular Army barracks are in use.

Misc: We have also identified six hairdressers, five skittle alleys, three gyms, two carpet shops and a Launderette.

England

Havering Dog Training Centre
Keith`s Discount Carpets, Wigston
Caravan outside Our Plaice Fish & Chip Shop, Halesowen
Caravan adjacent to Chinese Takeaway, New Rowley Road, Dudley

Scotland

Fort William Shinty Social Club
Cowal Dog Training Club, Dunoon
The Ceilidh Hoose, Cearn Shulaisgeir, Stornoway

Wales

The Feel Good Factory, Ynysboeth
Hair-o-dynamics, Pontmorlais

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About the Association of Electoral Administrators

The AEA is the professional and qualifications body for electoral administrators in the UK. Non-governmental and non-partisan, our 2,000 members work in local government and run electoral registration and election services. We advise local authorities and governments, supporting our members to improve how elections are run.

Queries or interview requests should be directed to 07957 424163 or kelly.quigley@aea-elections.co.uk

About Democracy Club

Democracy Club is a Community Interest Company which builds digital tools to support everyone's participation in UK elections. We believe that information about upcoming elections should be easy to find, especially online.

Our free and accessible tools and databases are used by millions of UK voters each year. Democracy Club works closely with local government, and is a data provider to The Electoral Commission.

Democracy Club's vision is of an electoral system which is fit for the digital age.

Queries about the polling station finder or data should be directed to hello@democracyclub.org.uk