

# STATES OF JERSEY



Jersey

## **DRAFT ELECTIONS (JERSEY) AMENDMENT LAW 202- (P.28/2025): AMENDMENT**

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Lodged au Greffe on 25th April 2025  
by Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity  
Earliest date for debate: 13th May 2025

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**STATES GREFFE**

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**PAGE 14, ARTICLE 4 –**

For Article 4 substitute –

**4 Article 5 (entitlement to be registered) amended**

- (1) This Article amends Article 5.
- (2) In paragraph (1)(c)(i), for “2 years” there is substituted “1 year”.
- (3) In paragraph (3)(a), for “becomes resident” there is substituted “becomes ordinarily resident”.

DEPUTY H.L. JEUNE OF ST. JOHN, ST. LAWRENCE AND TRINITY

## REPORT

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This amendment proposes reducing the residence requirement for voting in Jersey from two years to one. The goal is simple: to strengthen democratic participation, ensure fairer representation, and bring Jersey's electoral policies more in line with modern democratic values.

During the 2022 elections, I met many residents while canvassing who were frustrated – they wanted to vote, they cared about the issues, but they hadn't lived here long enough to be eligible. They were engaged, interested, and ready to take part, but the two-year rule shut them out.

Having moved to several countries myself over the years, I know what it's like to arrive somewhere new and start learning how things work – getting involved, following local politics, attending Parish Hall Assemblies (or equivalent), or simply getting a feel for the place. That early curiosity and enthusiasm are powerful, but they can fade if we don't give people a way to engage meaningfully from the start.

The *2022 Jersey General Election – CPA BIMR Election Observation Mission: Final Report*<sup>1</sup> highlighted that while our voter registration process is generally inclusive, the two-year residency requirement still leaves out many who live and work here – especially foreign workers. This amendment responds to Recommendation 4 of that report, which called for broader electoral participation on an equal basis. It also complements the recent proposal by the PPC to extend voting rights to the prison population.

If someone has chosen to make Jersey their home and contributes to our Island – economically, socially, and culturally – they should have a say in how it's run. Shortening the residency requirement to one year is a small but meaningful step toward a more inclusive democracy.

### In short:

#### 1. Strengthening Democracy and Inclusion

- A shorter residence requirement ensures that more individuals who live, work, and contribute to Jersey's society can participate in the democratic process.
- Many newcomers integrate quickly and should have the right to influence policies that directly impact their lives.

#### 2. Encouraging Civic Engagement

- Reducing the qualification period would encourage greater voter turnout and engagement in local democracy.
- Many individuals become invested in their community within their first year of residence, and prolonging their exclusion discourages political participation.

#### 3. Recognizing Economic and Social Contribution

- New residents contribute immediately to Jersey's economy through taxes, employment, and community involvement.
- Key workers, professionals, and young people moving to Jersey to fill essential roles in healthcare, education, and other sectors should have a say in how the Island is governed.

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<sup>1</sup> [final-report-2022-jersey-eom.pdf](#)

## 5. Addressing Disenfranchisement

- The current two-year rule disproportionately affects new residents, weakening their sense of belonging and investment in Jersey's future.
- A one-year requirement strikes a balance between ensuring voter stability and allowing fair representation of all contributing residents.

### Where this sits with other jurisdictions

Jersey would not be an outlier with this amendment, the Isle of Man Registration of Electors Act 2020<sup>2</sup> establishes a qualifying person (i.e. a person who qualifies to become a "registered person" and who, once registered, becomes an "eligible elector"). A qualifying person must have had their usual place of abode on the Island for the whole of the preceding 12 months.

Voting rights in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland depend on a combination of nationality and residence qualifications.

UK Residence qualifications:

*"Residence has a particular meaning in electoral law. In most cases it will be straightforward and will be a person's normal residential address.*

*There is no minimum time period someone must be resident at an address to apply to register to vote but a person must be resident at the address."*<sup>3</sup>

Nationality qualifications:

*"Citizens of the UK, Ireland, and Commonwealth nations can register to vote for UK Parliament elections as long as they meet other residence and qualifying requirements.*

*Citizens of other nations cannot vote in UK Parliament elections regardless of how long they have been resident in the UK. This includes EU citizens."*<sup>4</sup>

Commonwealth nations qualifications:

*"A qualifying Commonwealth citizen is someone who is resident in the UK and who has leave to remain in the UK or does not require leave to remain."*<sup>5</sup>

There are special category voters with no UK address.

## Conclusion

Reducing the residence requirement for voting from two years to one year will strengthen democratic engagement, ensure fair representation, and reflect the contributions of new residents to Jersey's society.

## Financial and staffing implications

It is not considered that the financial implications would be in excess of the existing budget for the AVR project, as this amendment would solely require a change to system parameters.

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<sup>2</sup> [Registration of Electors Act 2020](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Who can vote in UK elections?](#), p. 14

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 16

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 17

### **Children's Rights Impact Assessment**

A Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been prepared in relation to this proposition and is available to read on the States Assembly website.