

GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF COMMONLY USED NAMES

If you commonly used name which differs from your given/birth name, you can ask for this to be used instead. (For example, if your full name is Philip, and you are known as “Phil”). You could then write your name as “Phil” in the commonly used forename box on the nomination paper, if you would rather that name appear on the ballot paper instead.

You cannot use your first name as a commonly used name, so that only your first name and surname appear on a ballot paper, thus excluding your middle name.

Legislation makes it clear that a commonly used name is one which is different from any other forename or surname. This means that a forename in its original format cannot be used as a commonly used name. If you wish to use a commonly used forename and/or surname, then these must be different from your full name as it appears on the nomination form. (For example, in the case of “**Andrew John Smith**”, he **could not** use “**Andrew Smith**” as his commonly used name, although he would be able to use “**Andy Smith**” (if Andy was the name by which he is commonly known).

You can request to use a commonly used forename, surname or both. You may also use initials as part of your commonly used name if you are commonly known by them.

Any commonly used name(s) would then appear on:

- the **statement of persons nominated**
- the **notice of poll**
- the **ballot paper**

The Returning Officer will disallow commonly used names that are likely to mislead or confuse electors, or which are deemed to be obscene or offensive. If the name(s) are not permissible, the Returning Officer will write to the candidate stating the reason for rejection. In those cases, the candidate’s actual name will be used instead.

If either the commonly used forename or surname box on the nomination paper is left blank, then your actual forename or surname, depending on which commonly used name box has been left blank, will be used.

It is an offence to give a false statement on your nomination form, so if you choose to provide a commonly used name, you must ensure that it is a forename or surname which you commonly use.

Having provided this guidance, if the candidate insists on using a commonly used name in such a way that it does not meet with the requirements, the nomination paper will be taken on face value, but it may be open to challenge.