

## Boards of Guardians (Wikipedia)

Boards of guardians were ad hoc authorities that administered Poor Law in the United Kingdom from 1835 to 1930.

Boards of guardians were created by the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834, replacing the parish Overseers of the Poor established under the old poor law, following the recommendations of the Poor Law Commission. Boards administered workhouses within a defined poor law union consisting of a group of parishes, either by order of the Poor Law Commission, or by the common consent of the parishes. Once a union was established it could not be dissolved or merged with a neighbouring union without the consent of its board.

Each board was composed of guardians elected by the owners and bona fide occupiers of land liable to pay the poor rate. Depending on the value of the property held, an elector could cast from one to three votes. Electors could nominate proxies to cast their vote in their absence. Where property was held by a corporation or company, its governing body could nominate an officer to cast its vote or votes.

Each civil parish in the union was represented by at least one guardian, with those with larger populations or special circumstances having two or more. The exact constitution of each board was determined by the Commissioners.