

It's easy to vote

This easy guide tells you how to vote in **England, Scotland and Wales**.

You can vote if you are 18 or over.

Why should I vote?

Your vote helps to choose the people who make decisions on issues that affect you.

These people decide things that affect everyone such as how schools, hospitals and buses are run. So it is important that everyone has a say in who is elected.

1 How do I start?

The **register of electors** is a list of everyone who is registered to vote. You must be on the register to be able to vote.

You need to fill in a registration form. A registration form is sent to every home each autumn, but you can register to vote at any time. If you're not registered, contact your local electoral registration officer. You can download a form at www.rollingregistration.co.uk

2 What is a poll card?

If you are on the register of electors, you will be sent a card just before an election. This is called a **poll card**. It tells you where and when to vote.

3 Where do I vote?

On election day, go to the **polling station**. The polling station is often a school or local hall near where you live. 'Polling' is another word for voting.

If you are visually impaired you can bring a companion to the polling station to assist you.

Tell the staff inside the polling station your name and address so they can check that you're on the register. You can show them your poll card, but you do not need it to vote.

4 What is a ballot paper?

The staff at the polling station will give you a list of the people you can vote for. This is called a **ballot paper**. It will be stamped with an official mark.

You may be given more than one ballot paper if there is more than one election on the same day.

If you are visually impaired you can ask to use a special voting template, which is placed over your ballot paper, so you can vote on your own in secret.

A large print version of the ballot paper is also available, but you must mark your vote on the original ballot paper.

5 How do I vote?

Go into a **polling booth** so that no one can see how you vote. You will be asked to put a cross (X) in the box next to the person or party you want to vote for.

Do not write anything else on the paper or your vote may not be counted.

6 What do I do next?

Fold the ballot paper in half and put it in the **ballot box**. If you are not clear what to do, ask the staff at the polling station to help you. Do not let anyone see your vote.

Can I vote by post?

Yes. If you want to vote by post, you need to fill in a postal vote form. Contact your local electoral registration officer or download a form at **www.postalvotes.co.uk**

You can also pick one up at selected post office branches.

7 What happens after I've voted?

When voting is over the votes are counted. The winner or winners are the people with the most votes. These people are responsible for representing **you**.

You can tell them what you think about issues that affect you, by phone, by letter or by email. You can also ask to meet and speak to them in person.

Find out more

If you live in England and Wales, contact the electoral services office at your council.

If you live in Scotland, contact your local electoral registration officer or council.

You can find the contact details in your phone book.

Visit **www.rollingregistration.co.uk** for information on registering to vote and to download a registration form.

Visit **www.postalvotes.co.uk** for information on voting by post and to download an application form.

Other formats

This leaflet is available on audiotape, in Braille and in various languages. For more information visit **www.electoralcommission.org.uk**

The Electoral Commission is an independent body set up by the UK Parliament in 2000. We aim to gain public confidence and encourage people to take part in the democratic process within the United Kingdom by modernising the electoral process, promoting public awareness of electoral matters, and regulating political parties.

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