



Inclusion Ireland

The National Association for People
with an Intellectual Disability.

An Easy-to-Read Guide to Voting





What is an Election?

An Election is when people living in a country vote on who they want to work on their behalf.



Why Should I Vote?

It is your right to vote. If you don't vote, then you don't have a say in who the TDs are. That means you don't have a say in healthcare, social welfare, the law, education, employment and many more areas. Choose someone who you think will work hard on your behalf.



Article 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that is your right to vote in an accessible way equal to everyone else.



Nobody can tell you that you do not have the capacity to vote. Not even at a polling station. If they believe that you are not able to vote, then it is up to them to prove it. They can't stop you voting and they must treat you like every other voter.



Who Can I Vote For?

People living in Ireland can vote for different people to do different jobs.



Councillors – work in your community. Everybody living in Ireland can vote for Councillors.



TDs – This stands for Teachta Dála. TDs represent people from areas around the country called constituencies.



TDs are members of Dáil Éireann. Dáil Éireann is the parliament in Ireland.



TDs represent people from their area or constituency at national level. Irish and British people living here can vote for TDs.



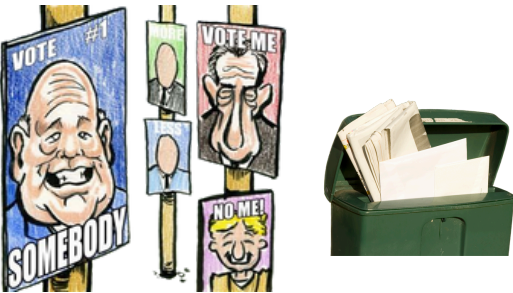
MEPs – This stands for Member of the European Parliament. They work in the **European Union**, with representatives from other countries around Europe such as France, Britain, Germany and many more.

All people from the European Union living here can vote for MEPs.



The President – the President is the head of state in Ireland.

The President holds his or her role for no more than 7 years. The President lives in Áras an Uachtaráin and also does a lot of his or her work from there.



Leading up to an Election you will see posters of the people who want to be elected. These people are called **candidates**. You will also get leaflets in your letterbox.



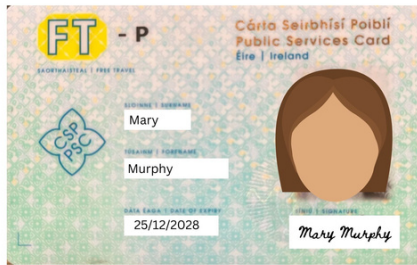
The candidates call to people's houses to look for votes and hear suggestions. This is called canvassing. Political parties will put out manifestos. These are a list of things they will do if they are elected.

Some candidates have no political parties. They are called **Independents**.

How do I register to vote?



You can register to vote at www.checktheregister.ie. This website will also give you information on postal voting and special votes.



You will need to know your Eircode and your PPS number to do this.

I'm not registered

Apply online to register

Scroll down the page and click this green button.



Fill in the form with your details.

If you are over 18 years old, your name will be added to the register.

If you are over 16 years old, you can pre-register. This means that your name will be added to the register when you turn 18 years old.

How do I vote?

Most people vote at a polling station, usually in a school or hall near where you live.



Before the election a polling card will come in the post to your home. This will tell you the election date, where your polling station is and what time it is open.



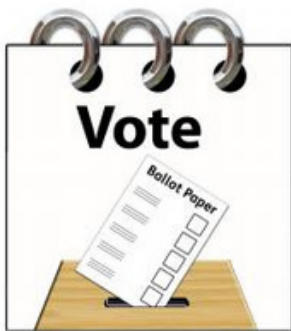
Bring ID with you to the polling station as you may be asked for it.



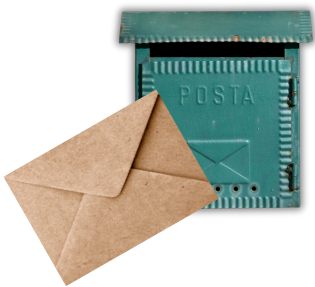
You will get a piece of paper called a ballot paper. The names and photos of the candidates will be on the ballot paper. You fill in the ballot paper by writing numbers in the boxes beside the names of the candidates.



You put number 1 for your first choice. You can choose one person if you want, or you can choose as many as you want. If you choose more than one you put the numbers 1,2,3,4 etc. in the boxes beside their names.



You place your ballot paper in a box with all the other votes and they are counted later on. You don't put your name or address or any personal information on the ballot paper and voting is kept secret.



If you are unable to leave your home to vote due to disability or illness you can apply to **postal vote**.



If you live in a residential service and cant leave due to disability or illness then you can apply to go on the **Special Voters list**.

You can find the form to apply for **postal vote** or to be on the **Special Voters** list at www.checktheregister.ie or at your local City or County Council offices.



Are there any supports for Voters?

Yes. There are some supports available for people who may need support.



The polling station should be accessible, meaning that everyone can get in and out and use it well. If the polling station is not accessible, then a person can vote at another place.



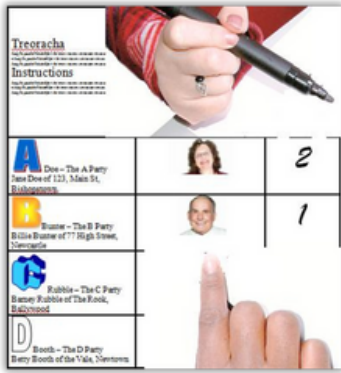
If you need to vote in another place you must write to your Returning Officer. They need to receive your request at least one week before the election.



The form for this is available to download at www.checktheregister.ie or from your local authority. Your local authority is you County or City Council.



You can [find your Returning Officer's contact details here](https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/68176-irelands-returning-officers/)
<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/68176-irelands-returning-officers/>



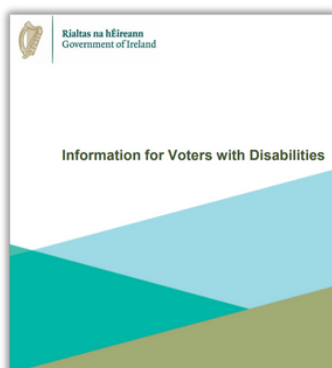
People who have sight problems or difficulty reading or writing can get a **companion** to help mark the ballot paper. The companion **cannot decide for you**. They can only help you read the ballot paper and write down **your** choice.



You can also be supported by the **Presiding Officer** if you choose to providing you do not arrive in the final 2 hours of voting. Then you may not be able to receive support.



If you have difficulty making up your mind about who to vote for, it's ok to talk to your friends, family members or other people you trust, but the **choice** is **yours** to make.



If you are not happy with your experience at the polling station with regard to accessing your right to vote you can contact the Returning Officer for your county.

For more information about voting you can check out this information leaflet.



Referendum:

A referendum is another type of vote. In a referendum you don't vote for people to represent you, you vote "YES" or "NO" to a change in our Constitution.

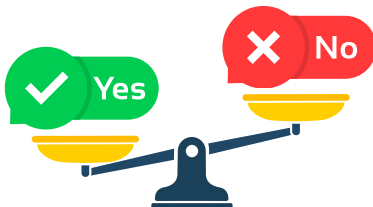


The Constitution sets out the rights of people and has basic laws. Any time the government make a new law they must make sure that it doesn't disagree with the laws in the Constitution.



If the government bring in a new law and they have to change the constitution, then we have to have a referendum to agree to it.

When you vote in a referendum you will be asked to put an X in the box beside the word "YES" if you agree with the change or put an X in the box beside the word "NO" if you don't agree. You would vote in a referendum in the same way as you would vote in an election, in a polling station and in a voting booth in secret.



The referendum will only change the constitution if more than 50% (half) of people voting say "YES".



Useful Links



Inclusion Ireland

The National Association for People with an Intellectual Disability.

Inclusion Ireland works towards the full inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities by supporting people to have their voices heard and advocating for rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Check out our website for accessible information on rights, news and events. www.inclusionireland.ie



An Coimisiún Toghcháin
The Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission for all sorts of information about voting, elections and referendums. **[For guidance on accessible voting click here.](#)**



Houses of the
Oireachtas
Tithe an Oireachtais

www.oireachtas.ie for information about the Government of Ireland including new laws, committees, politicians and more.

checktheregister.ie



Rialtas Áitiúil Éireann
Local Government Ireland

www.checktheregister.ie lets you check if you are on the register to vote and register or update your details if needed.



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