

You are in the Types of elections section Home Voter Types of elections Your location: Change England Northern Ireland Scotland Wales Overseas We're showing you content for . Select 'change' to choose a different location. On this page Who can vote in these elections Types of councils Voting in these elections Voting in these elections Voting in these elections Voting in these elections Find your candidates First published: 12 September 2019 Last updated: 17 February 2023 Summary Local councils provide services and facilities in your area. The type of council you have and their responsibilities depends on where you live. Local councillors oversee the work of the council, and set the strategies and priorities. When you vote in local elections, you vote for councillors to represent your ward. Who can vote in these elections If you are eligible to vote, you can vote in local council elections when they're happening in your area. Check if you're eligible to vote Types of councils In the UK, there are different types of councils which are responsible for providing different services and facilities. In some areas, there may be more than one council providing your services and facilities. Types of councils Unitary authorities All councils in Scotland and Wales, and some councils in England, are unitary authorities. This means the council provides all of the services and facilities in the area. Metropolitan district councils Metropolitan district councils provide all local services and facilities. Cities such as Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester have metropolitan district councils. County councils In some parts of England, there is a two-tier council system. In these areas, there will be a county council and a district council. The county council will provide some services and facilities in the area, and the district council will provide others. The county council is often responsible for services and facilities such as schools and learning, libraries, and roads. To find out more about what your county council is responsible for, visit their website. District councils In some parts of England, there is a two-tier council system. In these areas, there will be a county council and a district council. The county council will provide some services and facilities in the area, and the district council will provide others. The district council is often responsible for services and facilities such as collecting Council Tax, housing services and electoral registration. Your district council could also be known as the borough or city council, depending on where you live. To find out more about what your district council is responsible for, visit their website. Town, parish and community councils Some areas also have a town, parish or community council, as well as the other councils in the area. The responsibilities of town, parish and community councils are different in each area. Town, parish and community councils are sometimes responsible for things like community car parks, litter bins and public toilets. Northern Ireland There are 11 local councils in Northern Ireland, which each provide all local services for their area. about the local councils in Northern Ireland London boroughs In London, each borough has a council which provides all of the services and facilities for that area. The Mayor of London and London Assembly work with the London borough councils. about the Mayor London and London Assembly Voting in these elections Local council elections in England use the first-past-the-post system. The ballot paper will list the candidates for your area. You can vote for as many candidates as there are councillor vacancies, by putting a cross [X] in the box next to your choice. For example, if you are represented by three councillors and there are three vacancies, you can vote for three candidates. The ballot paper will explain how many candidates you can vote for. Each councillor sits for a four year term. When the four year term starts and ends for each councillor will depend on

the voting system the council is using. This means that you may not vote for all of the councillors representing you at the same election.

Voting by thirds If your council votes by thirds, a third of councillors are elected every year over a four year period. There are no elections in the fourth year.

Voting by halves If your council votes by halves, half of the councillors are elected every two years.

Voting every four years Some councils, including all of the London boroughs, have local elections every four years, and elect all councillors at the same time.

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Voting in these elections In Northern Ireland, local council elections use the single transferable vote system. Your ballot paper will list the names and political parties of the candidates in your area. You put a '1' in the box next to your first choice candidate, a '2' next to your second choice, a '3' next to your third choice and so on. You can do this for as many or as few candidates as you like. You do not have to put a number beside every name if you don't want to – you can just vote for one candidate. Remember to check and follow the instructions on your ballot paper.

How votes are counted In order to be elected candidates must reach a quota, which is the minimum number of votes needed to be elected. The quota is calculated based on the total number of votes cast and the number of seats available. To count votes, there are several stages. In the first stage, all first choice votes are counted. Any candidate with a number of first choice votes equal to or higher than the quota is elected. If there are still empty spots for candidates, then there is a second stage of counting. Any votes above the quota received by a candidate elected in the first stage of counting, are redistributed to the voter's next choice of candidate. If there are still seats unfilled because not enough candidates have reached the quota, then the candidate with the lowest number of votes is knocked out of the running and their votes are transferred to the voter's next choice of candidate. The process continues until all seats are filled. This means that if your first choice candidate does not get elected or if they are elected with more votes than needed, your vote can still be used to help elect your second choice candidate. Your vote may be transferred a number of times as seats are filled and may play a part in electing several or even all of the candidates.

Voting in these elections Councils have elections every five years and at this time all councillors are elected. The next council elections in Scotland will take place in May 2027. In Scotland, local council elections use the single transferable vote system which means that you vote using numbers. Your ballot paper will list all the candidates standing for election in your council ward. You need to number the candidates in order of choice using 1, 2, 3 and so on. You put a '1' in the box next to your first choice candidate, a '2' next to your second choice, a '3' next to your third choice and so on. You can do this for as many or as few candidates as you like. You do not have to put a number beside every name if you don't want to. Remember to check and follow the instructions on your ballot paper.

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years and at this time all councillors are elected. The next council elections in Scotland will take place in May 2027. In Scotland, local council elections use the single transferable vote system which means that you vote using numbers. Your ballot paper will list all the candidates standing for election in your council ward. You need to number the candidates in order of choice using 1, 2, 3 and so on. You put a '1' in the box next to your first choice candidate, a '2' next to your second choice, a '3' next to your third choice and so on. You can do this for as many or as few candidates as you like. You do not have to put a number beside every name if you don't want to. Remember to check and follow the instructions on your ballot paper.

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Find your candidates Looking for the candidates standing in your area? Enter your postcode to view a list. Your candidates will be available a few weeks before polling day. Enter a postcode [Submit Postcode](#) Your location: [Change England](#) [Northern Ireland](#) [Scotland](#) [Wales](#) [Overseas](#) We're showing you content for . Select 'change' to choose a different location. [Related content](#) [Register to vote](#) All you need to register to vote is 5 minutes and your National Insurance number. [Elections in your area](#) Enter your postcode to find your electoral services team at your local council. You need to send your postal and proxy vote application forms to them. [Which elections you can vote in](#) [Learn more about which elections you can vote in.](#) [Types of elections](#) [about the types of elections in the UK.](#)