

Communicating the voting process and support available | Electoral Commission
Guidance for Returning Officers - Assistance with voting for disabled voters You
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Communicating the voting process and support available There are a range of ways that
you can provide and promote information about the voting process and support
available to voters. The communications work you carry out can help to overcome some
of the known barriers for disabled voters and can make a real difference to helping
them participate with confidence. We will provide a suite of resources which can
support you to promote information about the voting process and support available,
including resources which will signpost to guidance on accessible communications. We
will be working directly with disability organisations nationally to inform the
resources we provide, and will look to build on these resources year-on-year as part
of our ongoing evaluation and improvement work. We will update this guidance with
links once the resources are available. Providing information on the location of
polling stations Feedback from organisations representing disabled people is that
some voters find it difficult to access information on polling station locations. We
provide, in partnership with Democracy Club, a postcode look-up tool on our website .
To increase the visibility of this information, you should promote the postcode
search tool as widely as possible. You could embed the tool on your own website,
using the widget we've made available, or add a link to our website. You could also
share the link with existing internal networks or external organisations you are
working with and encourage them to share it with their stakeholders. Additionally,
you could include the link on the notice of situation of polling stations. Should you
need any further information or support in using the search tool, please visit
Democracy Club's website . Providing advance information on voting at the polling
station To help overcome concerns and anxiety about what voting at the polling
station will be like, in addition to any information you display on public notice
boards, you could provide a dedicated page on your website that contains accessible
content to help voters who want to know more about voting at the polling station.
Your accessible web content could include: information about the assistance and
support available at the polling station including: awareness that a companion
assisting a voter can be anyone over the age of 18 and if they have completed the
declaration, can accompany a voter into the booth to assist them that a Presiding
Officer is able to help a voter the type of equipment that will be available and how
to make a request for additional equipment to be provided to meet a particular need
information about what to expect when voting at the polling station including: links
to videos about voting in BSL and Makaton easy guides to voting videos by Mencap when
the station is likely to be busy and when it is likely to be quiet availability of
quiet space We will be developing a resource presenting information about voting
written in an accessible way. You can use this resource to develop your own
accessible web content to engage and raise awareness with voters. We will also host a
range of voter facing resources and information about the voting process on our
website which you can point electors to via a link to on your web pages. We will

update this guidance with links to the resources once they are available. Including additional information on poll cards and making the information accessible Although the content that must be included on poll cards is prescribed in legislation, you may also add further information that you think is appropriate. 1 The only exception to this is for Northern Ireland local elections where the poll card is prescribed exactly and makes no allowance for any other information to be included. 2 The Elections Act 2022 introduces other changes to the electoral process that need to be communicated to voters in advance of the poll. This will mean that for relevant elections the poll card may need to become a letter to enable the relevant information to be included. Using a different format of the poll card would also provide an opportunity for you to include additional information to voters about their polling station and the accessibility of the voting process. You could include a link to an accessible web page or provide a QR code on the poll card letter that takes the voter directly to a web page that provides information about the voting process or the equipment that will be available. As some voters find the information provided on the poll card inaccessible, you should also think about how you can make the information contained on the poll card more accessible by additionally publishing it in an alternative way. For example you could: put the poll card information on your website in an accessible format, compatible with screen readers make easy-read or large print versions available on request, and publicise this via the poll card itself and on your website send poll card and other information directly to an elector in their preferred format as well as by post, for example if you know that they need information to be communicated electronically in an accessible format More information about proactively using local data to contact individuals about their preferred formats for poll cards can be found in Communicating information directly to disabled voters Sending these additional communications could also provide an opportunity to raise awareness about what will happen on polling day, what to expect in the polling station and the equipment that will be available. Providing accessible sample ballot papers Some voters may find it useful to look at the ballot paper in advance of going to the polling station to help them to prepare for the process of voting. You could provide sample ballot papers on your website to support this, and ensure that any you do provide are accessible to electors who use screen readers. Providing information to political parties, candidates and agents about accessible voting at polling stations You should include information in the briefings you provide for candidates and agents about the support and equipment available at polling stations as well as how to make a request. Candidates and agents may know individual voters who require support or specific equipment and can help ensure that they are aware of the support that is available for them and how they can access it. 1. Rule 28(3)(e) Sch.1 Representation of the People Act 1983 ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. Rule 25(3) Sch.5 Electoral Law Act (NI) 1962 ■ Back to content at footnote 2 Last updated: 29 March 2023 Book traversal links for Communicating the voting process and support available Communicating information directly to disabled voters Working with local networks and civil society organisations in your area