

Welcome to Your Vote Week in Dumfries and Galloway | Electoral Commission    Search  
Welcome to Your Vote Week in Dumfries and Galloway    Your location: Change England  
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'change' to choose a different location. Posted: 9 March 2023 Written by: Finlay (age  
17) and Riley (age 16) from Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council Introduction Schools  
and youth groups across Dumfries and Galloway got involved in Welcome to Your Vote  
Week from 30 January to 5 February 2023. Two members of Dumfries & Galloway Youth  
Council reflect on what they got up to throughout the week and how they started the  
conversation about democracy with other young people. Blog from Finlay and Riley  
Hello, we're Finlay (age 17) and Riley (age 16) from Dumfries and Galloway Youth  
Council, an elected group of 35 young people aged 12-25 from across the region who  
represent the views of youth voice and youth democracy to the regional council and  
other partners. Throughout Welcome to Your Vote Week, young people in Dumfries and  
Galloway participated in a large variety of activities. During Dumfries and Galloway  
Youth Council's weekly meeting, we went through the Welcome to Your Vote Week  
presentation and took part in structured debate on a wide range of issues. The  
materials effectively helped to spark these debates on issues such as traffic around  
schools, compulsory education, and a lively discussion about who has the power to  
make these decisions. Throughout the four localities in Dumfries and Galloway,  
Dumfries and Galloway Council's Youth Work Service spent time with multiple groups  
going through the Welcome to Your Vote Week packs. These packs were used to inform  
young people across Dumfries and Galloway about the role they can play in democracy  
and how important their vote is. Youth Work D&G also did a social media campaign,  
spreading the word about Welcome to Your Vote Week and the voices of young people in  
relation to democracy. The activities and information provided by the Electoral  
Commission during this week has opened up democracy to many young people, and  
especially allowed them to learn about the work of Dumfries and Galloway Youth  
Council. We hope young people will now have the confidence to participate in Youth  
Democracy, and get involved in the upcoming by-elections to the Dumfries and Galloway  
Youth Council, whether it be voting or standing as a candidate themselves. On  
Thursday 2 February, the Youth Council alongside candidates standing in the DG Youth  
Council by-elections as well as members of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health  
Services (CAMHS) Participation Group, attended First Minister's Questions at the  
Scottish Parliament. During the day, we did a self-guided tour and attended a ten-  
minute talk about the history of the Scottish Parliament and devolved powers of the  
Scottish Government. We found the trip to be eye-opening, allowing us to see  
democracy at one of the highest levels in Scotland. We also had the experience to  
observe First Minister's questions in front of our own eyes instead of a screen. It  
was fascinating to see active decisions being made which could impact people. It also  
allowed us to see the value in our vote and the impact it has on our society  
alongside individual communities. Overall, Welcome to Your Vote Week has inspired  
many young people across our region to see democracy in a different light and how  
important their voice can actually be in decision making. We hope this discussion  
keeps going and continues to encourage fellow young people to use their right to vote  
and get involved in the decision-making process. Photo outside the Scottish  
Parliament Members of the Dumfries and Galloway Youth Council outside the Scottish  
Parliament after their visit during Welcome to Your Vote Week Link to resources Young  
people, youth groups and schools can access free learning resources for use all year  
round. Take a look now Your location: Change England Northern Ireland Scotland Wales  
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"Welcome to your vote" campaign | Electoral Commission Search

"Welcome to your vote" campaign Your location: Change England Northern Ireland Scotland Wales Overseas We're showing you content for . Select 'change' to choose a different location. Posted: 8 July 2020 Social Statics "Welcome to your vote"

campaign Earlier this year the Senedd passed a significant new law, known as the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act. One of the important changes included in this new law was to allow 16 and 17 year olds, as well as qualifying foreign citizens, to register and vote in Wales for the first time. This is a big change to our democracy in Wales and to highlight this, we have launched a new campaign called "Welcome to your vote". Put simply, we want to ensure that these new voters firstly understand that they can now take part in our democratic process and then are clear as to how to do so. The campaign will run until the autumn and will specifically target these new groups through advertising on social media, website and digital radio channels. There will be more work between now and next May's Senedd elections, including the publication of education resources and a national pre-election campaign, to ensure that voters in Wales, including the newly enfranchised, are aware of their rights and how they can confidently take part in our democracy. Below are useful answers to some questions you may have about this campaign, the franchise changes and registering to vote. Questions What is the Welcome to your vote campaign? Our Welcome to your vote campaign, launched last week, welcomes the newly enfranchised to democracy in Wales. The campaign uses social media channels (Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat), digital display and digital audio advertising, to encourage the newly enfranchised to register to vote. We want to welcome the newly enfranchised to democracy in Wales. We want them to know they are now eligible to vote and to visit

[www.gov.uk/registertovote](http://www.gov.uk/registertovote) to register. Who are the newly enfranchised groups? 16 and 17 year olds and qualifying foreign citizens are now eligible to register and will be able to vote in the Senedd elections in May 2021. 14 and 15 year olds can also register to vote. If they are 16 years old on the day of the election, they will be able to vote. Who is a "qualifying foreign citizen"? A qualifying foreign citizen is a resident in Wales but isn't a Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the European Union or a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, and has leave to remain or can be treated as having leave to remain. about which elections you can vote in . How do you register to vote? To register to vote, visit [gov.uk/registertovote](http://gov.uk/registertovote) . You will need to provide: name address date of birth email address nationality National Insurance number (if you're 16 or over) If you have any questions about registering to vote or your application, get in touch with your local electoral registration office which is part of your local council. You can find their details on our postcode lookup .

Registering to vote with no fixed address? If you don't have a fixed address, you can still register to vote, by following a different process. about registering to vote without a fixed address . Registering to vote anonymously? If you are concerned about your name and address appearing on the electoral register for safety reasons, then you can register to vote anonymously. about registering to vote anonymously . Where does your data go? The information that you provide when you register to vote is securely transferred to the Electoral Registration Officer at your local authority.

We may also receive a copy of the electoral register, and you can find out more about how we look after the data added to electoral registers in our privacy policy . What is the "open register"? The open register is a version of the electoral register that is mainly used for marketing purposes. When someone registers to vote there is always an option not to be included on the open register. 14 and 15 year olds will not appear on the open register. How you can support our campaign How you can support our

campaign Download our welcome to your vote resources and share these with people in your networks, to help spread the word to our newly enfranchised groups. We're keen to work with as many partners as possible between now and next year's Senedd elections, so please contact us if you'd like to get involved. If you're eligible, please register online to vote - it's quick and easy and it will ensure that you'll be able to take part in next year's elections. We look forward to welcoming you to your vote! 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. Which elections you can vote in Learn more about which elections you can vote in. 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. Senedd

You are in the Resources for 14-18 year olds section Home Welcome to your vote Resources for 14-18 year olds 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 What is campaigning? Types of campaigning How to know what to trust and what is fair Quiz What is campaigning? Types of campaigning How to know what to trust and what is fair Quiz What is campaigning? Types of campaigning How to know what to trust and what is fair Quiz So you know there's an election approaching, but how do you choose who to vote for? The most important thing to remember is that your vote belongs only to you. It's up to you to decide how you want to use it. No one should pressure, blackmail or bribe you to vote a certain way – this is against the law. For all elections, you should choose the candidate that you feel would be the best person to represent you. They might share your views or prioritise issues that you think are important. Political campaigning Campaigning Candidates are the people who have chosen to stand for election. You can usually find out which candidates are standing in your area for upcoming elections. To help decide who to vote for, you should research the candidates standing for election in your local area and what they are standing for. Voting is a serious business and you should be able to access all the information you need so you can make an informed decision about your vote. In the run up to some elections, it can feel like an information overload. It's normal to feel a little overwhelmed when choosing who to vote for. During this period, you'll probably see a lot of adverts from political parties and their candidates, trying to get their messages out and encouraging you to vote for them. This is called campaigning. You should take note of campaigning, ask questions, and do your own research into candidates' policies. What is campaigning? Political campaigning is where political parties and their candidates try to persuade you to vote for them, normally by talking about their policies. This is most noticeable in the run up to elections, but campaigning can take place all year round. Campaigning is a really important and useful part of helping you choose who to vote for. In higher profile elections, such as Scottish Parliament or UK Parliament elections, the larger political parties can spend a lot of money on their campaigns. They have large teams working for them to make sure they reach voters in the best way possible. Although campaigning is mostly done by election candidates, political parties, and their teams, you might see other groups campaigning for a particular political party or candidate. This could be because the group cares about a single issue, such as climate change or the NHS, which they know is a key policy for a particular party or candidate. They want a certain candidate or party to be elected because of their policy on this issue, and they will support them in different ways. Campaigning can be a whole range of things. You've probably seen posters on lamp posts or in a neighbour's window. Or maybe you've noticed leaflets being posted to your home or handed out in the street. But there are lots of other types of campaigning which you'll see in your area and around the country. Types of campaigning Newspapers will run lots of stories during the campaign period, including interviews with candidates. Many newspapers publicly support one of the main political parties. This means you may see a newspaper publishing more positive stories about one political party than any other. There are different rules for journalists who work in TV and radio. Generally, they are not allowed to encourage voters to vote a certain way. They are asked to give an independent view of elections and campaigns. You might also see large posters in your local area. Political parties

often spend money on large billboards or digital posters at train stations and bus stops. In the UK, political parties are not allowed to advertise on TV. Instead, the main political parties are given a set amount of time on TV to put their policies to voters. You're likely to see these on the main TV channels – these are called party election broadcasts. Supporters of political parties and their members might also put small posters in their windows or placards in their front gardens to show their support. You'll also see adverts from political parties and groups of supporters on social media. Sometimes, political parties know who they want to speak to so can easily contact these people through these adverts. This means you might see more adverts for one political party or group than any others. Talking to your candidates You shouldn't be afraid to ask your candidates and their teams questions about issues that are important to you. Candidates might knock on your door, or may have a stand on your high street. This is called canvassing. You're welcome to approach them to ask questions so you can understand their views. It's why they're there – they want to tell you what they're all about, and they'll want to hear what's important to people in your area so they know what to focus on if they get elected. Candidates might also take part in public debates with other candidates in your area. These are called hustings. They usually take place in a local community building and you're welcome to go along. Hustings are often advertised in local newspapers and on community Facebook groups. Depending on the type of election, political parties and candidates might have teams working for them who you can contact to ask questions. You might want to email or call them, or message them on social media. Different candidates will have different options, but a quick online search should give you the details of how to get in touch with candidates and their teams. Manifestos In the lead up to most elections, political parties will publish a document outlining all of their policies and priorities. This is called a manifesto. Manifestos are usually published in the weeks before polling day. They will be available on political parties' websites. Political parties also publish their manifestos in different formats which make sure that everyone can read them, whatever their needs. If you'd like a manifesto in a different format, check the party's website or get in touch with them directly. How to know what to trust and what is fair Campaigning should be transparent. You should know exactly where information is coming from and that it is trustworthy, so you can make an informed decision about who to vote for. The money spent on election campaigns are regulated by the Electoral Commission to make sure they are fair and open. There are limits on how much political parties are allowed to spend during campaigns. If political parties break these rules, they may have to pay fines. Following an election, you can go online and see how much money political parties and candidates spent on campaigning. You can see where parties' larger donations of money came from. This also applies to campaign groups who may not be linked to a specific political party. Printed campaign adverts have to show who paid for them on the advert. This is the law. Social media companies also have their own rules to encourage transparency. For example, when you see paid-for campaign adverts, they will usually say who paid for it. There are rules about what is and isn't allowed in campaigning, and these are shared with political parties and campaign groups so they can keep within the rules. For example, a candidate can't try to get you to vote for them by promising to buy a chocolate bar for everyone in your town if they win, and candidates can't tell lies about another candidate's character or behaviour. And campaigning can't take place in some places, such as inside polling places on polling day. You might also notice that the TV and radio news stop reporting on campaigning on polling day. This is because if it's reported that a

party or candidate is in the lead half way through the day, those who haven't voted yet might be put off from voting at all. This would damage the whole process. Fake news Unfortunately, there can be a lot of information during election periods which can be misleading or just plain untrue. These stories are usually on social media. If they're not fact-checked, they can quickly be shared thousands of times without anyone questioning whether they're factually accurate. Some of the time, you'll be able to easily spot when something isn't true. For example, 'the Prime Minister admits they are an alien' is likely to ring some alarm bells. But other misinformation or 'fake news' isn't as easy to spot. If you see a headline, a list of facts or an article on social media, you should check that it is true before taking it on board or sharing it with your friends. Fact checking You can fact-check by: looking at where the information or article has come from. Have they got a motive for saying something a certain way? Are they a known source of news, or have you never heard of them before? Is there a reference or weblink provided? Is it a screenshot of messages? Could something true have been easily changed to appear a certain way? finding another trusted source which confirms the information. If a reliable news website is also sharing this information, it makes it much more likely that it is real asking for more information. If your friend has shared a screenshot of messages or an article, ask them where they found it and if they can send you any more information. Remember to be respectful. It's easy to miss fake news using a reliable, impartial and trusted fact-checking service. There are a number available for free online. Remember to do your own research on these sites too Register to vote Don't let all your research go to waste – remember to register to vote . Tell us what you think What do you think of these resources? Complete our short survey so we can improve them for the future. It will only take a few minutes to complete. Campaigning Campaigning Candidates are the people who have chosen to stand for election. You can usually find out which candidates are standing in your area for upcoming elections. To help decide who to vote for, you should research the candidates standing for election in your local area and what they are standing for. Voting is a serious business and you should be able to access all the information you need so you can make an informed decision about your vote. In the run up to some elections, it can feel like an information overload. It's normal to feel a little overwhelmed when choosing who to vote for. During this period, you'll probably see a lot of adverts from political parties and their candidates, trying to get their messages out and encouraging you to vote for them. This is called campaigning. You should take note of campaigning, ask questions, and do your own research into candidates' policies. What is campaigning? Political campaigning is where political parties and their candidates try to persuade you to vote for them, normally by talking about their policies. This is most noticeable in the run up to elections, but campaigning can take place all year round. Campaigning is a really important and useful part of helping you choose who to vote for. In higher profile elections, such as UK Parliamentary or Senedd elections, the larger political parties can spend a lot of money on their campaigns. They have large teams working for them to make sure they reach voters in the best way possible. Although campaigning is mostly done by election candidates, political parties, and their teams, you might see other groups campaigning for a particular political party or candidate. This could be because the group cares about a single issue, such as climate change or the NHS, which they know is a key policy for a particular party or candidate. They want a certain candidate or party to be elected, because of their policy on this issue, and they will support them in different ways. Campaigning can be a whole range of things. You've probably seen posters on lamp

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who to vote for. In higher profile elections, such as the Northern Ireland Assembly or UK Parliament elections, political parties can spend a lot of money on their campaigns. They have large teams working for them to make sure they reach voters in the best way possible. Although campaigning is mostly done by election candidates, political parties, and their teams, you might see other groups campaigning for a particular political party or candidate. This could be because the group cares about a single issue, such as climate change or public transport, which they know is a key policy for a particular party or candidate. They want a certain candidate or party to be elected, because of their policy on this issue, and they will support them in different ways. Campaigning can be a whole range of things. You've probably seen posters on lamp posts in the street. Or maybe you've noticed leaflets being posted to your home or handed out in the street. But there are lots of other types of campaigning which you'll see in your area and around Northern Ireland. Types of campaigning

Newspapers will run lots of stories during the campaign period, including interviews with candidates and articles about their policies. . There are different rules for journalists who work in TV and radio. Generally, they are not allowed to encourage voters to vote a certain way. They are asked to give an independent view of elections and campaigns. You might also see posters in your local area. In the UK, political parties are not allowed to advertise on TV. Instead, the main political parties are given a set amount of time on TV to put their policies to voters. You're likely to see these on the main TV channels – these are called party election broadcasts. You'll also see adverts from political parties and groups of supporters on social media. Sometimes, political parties know who they want to speak to so can easily contact these people through these adverts. This means you might see more adverts for one political party or group than any others. Talking to your candidates

You shouldn't be afraid to ask your candidates and their teams questions about issues that are important to you. Candidates might knock on your door, or be out and about on your high street. This is called canvassing. You're welcome to approach them to ask questions so you can understand their views. It's why they're there – they want to tell you what they're all about, and they'll want to hear what's important to people in your area so they know what to focus on if they get elected. Candidates might also take part in public debates with other candidates in your area. These are called hustings. They usually take place in a local community building and you're welcome to go along. Hustings are often advertised in local newspapers and on community Facebook groups. Depending on the type of election, political parties and candidates might have teams working for them who you can contact to ask questions. You might want to email or call them, or message them on social media. Different candidates will have different options, but a quick online search should give you the details of how to get in touch with candidates and their teams. Manifestos

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Campaigning should be transparent. You should know exactly where information is coming from and that it is trustworthy, so you can make an informed decision about who to vote for. The money spent on election campaigns is regulated by the Electoral Commission to make sure they are fair and open. There are limits on how much political parties are allowed to

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messages out and encouraging you to vote for them. This is called campaigning. You should take note of campaigning, ask questions, and do your own research into candidates' policies. What is campaigning? Political campaigning is where political parties and their candidates try to persuade you to vote for them, normally by talking about their policies. This is most noticeable in the run up to elections, but campaigning can take place all year round. Campaigning is a really important and useful part of helping you choose who to vote for. In higher profile elections, such as UK Parliamentary General elections, the larger political parties can spend a lot of money on their campaigns. They have large teams working for them to make sure they reach voters in the best way possible. Although campaigning is mostly done by election candidates, political parties, and their teams, you might see other groups campaigning for a particular political party or candidate. This could be because the group cares about a single issue, such as climate change or the NHS, which they know is a key policy for a particular party or candidate. They want a certain candidate or party to be elected, because of their policy on this issue, and they will support them in different ways. Campaigning can be a whole range of things. You've probably seen posters on lamp posts or in a neighbour's window. Or maybe you've noticed leaflets being posted to your home or handed out in the street. But there are lots of other types of campaigning which you'll see in your area and around the country.

**Types of campaigning**

Newspapers will run lots of stories during the campaign period, including interviews with candidates. Many newspapers publicly support one of the main political parties. This means you may see a newspaper publishing more positive stories about one political party than any other. There are different rules for journalists who work in TV and radio. Generally, they are not allowed to encourage voters to vote a certain way. They are asked to give an independent view of elections and campaigns. You might also see large posters in your local area. Political parties often spend money on large billboards or digital posters at train stations and bus stops. In the UK, political parties are not allowed to advertise on TV. Instead, the main political parties are given a set amount of time on TV to put their policies to voters. You're likely to see these on the main TV channels – these are called party election broadcasts. Supporters of political parties and their members might also put small posters in their windows or placards in their front gardens to show their support. You'll also see adverts from political parties and groups of supporters on social media. Sometimes, political parties know who they want to speak to so can easily contact these people through these adverts. This means you might see more adverts for one political party or group than any others. Talking to your candidates

You shouldn't be afraid to ask your candidates and their teams questions about issues that are important to you. Candidates might knock on your door, or may have a stand on your high street. This is called canvassing. You're welcome to approach them to ask questions so you can understand their views. It's why they're there – they want to tell you what they're all about, and they'll want to hear what's important to people in your area so they know what to focus on if they get elected. Candidates might also take part in public debates with other candidates in your area. These are called hustings. They usually take place in a local community building and you're welcome to go along. Hustings are often advertised in local newspapers and on community Facebook groups. Depending on the type of election, political parties and candidates might have teams working for them who you can contact to ask questions. You might want to email or call them, or message them on social media. Different candidates will have different options, but a quick online search should give you the details of how to get in touch with candidates and their teams. Manifestos In the

lead up to most elections, political parties will publish a document outlining all of their policies and priorities. This is called a manifesto. Manifestos are usually published in the weeks before polling day. They will be available on political parties' websites. Political parties also publish their manifestos in different formats which make sure that everyone can read them, whatever their needs. If you'd like a manifesto in a different format, check the party's website or get in touch with them directly.

How to know what to trust and what is fair Campaigning should be transparent. You should know exactly where information is coming from and that it is trustworthy, so you can make an informed decision about who to vote for. The money spent on election campaigns are regulated by the Electoral Commission to make sure they are fair and open. There are limits on how much political parties are allowed to spend during campaigns. If political parties break these rules, they may have to pay fines. Following an election, you can go online and see how much money political parties and candidates spent on campaigning. You can see where parties' larger donations of money came from. This also applies to campaign groups who may not be linked to a specific political party. Printed campaign adverts have to show who paid for them on the advert. This is the law. Social media companies also have their own rules to encourage transparency. For example, when you see paid-for campaign adverts, they will usually say who paid for it. There are rules about what is and isn't allowed in campaigning, and these are shared with political parties and campaign groups so they can keep within the rules. For example, a candidate can't try to get you to vote for them by promising to buy a chocolate bar for everyone in your town if they win, and candidates can't tell lies about another candidate's character or behaviour. And campaigning can't take place in some places, such as inside polling stations on polling day. You might also notice that the TV and radio news stop reporting on campaigning on polling day. This is because if it's reported that a party or candidate is in the lead half way through the day, those who haven't voted yet might be put off from voting at all. This would damage the whole process.

Fake news Unfortunately, there can be a lot of information during election periods which can be misleading or just plain untrue. These stories are usually on social media. If they're not fact-checked, they can quickly be shared thousands of times without anyone questioning whether they're factually accurate. Some of the time, you'll be able to easily spot when something isn't true. For example, 'the Prime Minister admits they are an alien' is likely to ring some alarm bells. But other misinformation or 'fake news' isn't as easy to spot. If you see a headline, a list of facts or an article on social media, you should check that it is true before taking it on board or sharing it with your friends.

Fact checking You can fact-check by: looking at where the information or article has come from. Have they got a motive for saying something a certain way? Are they a known source of news, or have you never heard of them before? Is there a reference or weblink provided? Is it a screenshot of messages? Could something true have been easily changed to appear a certain way? finding another trusted source which confirms the information. If a reliable news website is also sharing this information, it makes it much more likely that it is real asking for more information. If your friend has shared a screenshot of messages or an article, ask them where they found it and if they can send you any more information. Remember to be respectful. It's easy to miss fake news using a reliable, impartial and trusted fact-checking service. There are a number available for free online. Remember to do your own research on these sites too

Register to vote Don't let all your research go to waste – remember to register to vote. Tell us what you think What do you think of these resources? Complete our short survey so we can

improve them for the future. It will only take a few minutes to complete. Your location: Change England Northern Ireland Scotland Wales Overseas We're showing you content for . Select 'change' to choose a different location.

are in the Resources for 14-18 year olds section Home Welcome to your vote Resources for 14-18 year olds 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 At the polling place By post Someone else can vote on your behalf How voting systems work Quiz At the polling station By post Someone else can vote on your behalf How voting systems work Quiz At the polling station By post Someone else can vote on your behalf Quiz At the polling station By post Someone else can vote on your behalf How voting systems work Quiz You've made up your mind who to vote for and you want to vote – great! But how do you go about casting your vote? How to vote How to vote There are three different ways you can vote. You can choose the way that suits you. These are: voting in person at the polling place voting by post asking someone you trust to vote on your behalf (by proxy) Before the day of the election, known as polling day, you'll receive a card, called a poll card. Everyone who's registered to vote in your household will receive their own poll card. Your poll card tells you where and when you can vote. Unless you've arranged otherwise, it will be assumed that you want to vote in person at the polling place. Remember to register to vote. You don't need to register to vote for every election, only if you've recently moved house or changed your name. At the polling place On polling day, you'll need to go to your polling place. It's usually a public building like a nearby school or village hall, but polling places have popped up in all kinds of places like pubs and lifeboat stations. Polling places are always open from 7am until 10pm. As long as you're in the queue to vote by 10pm, you'll be allowed to vote. You can't choose which polling place to vote at – you have to go to your assigned polling place. You can't choose to vote at a polling place near your college or workplace, for example. Your polling place might not be the closest polling place to your house, so it is important that you double check on your poll card. If you're unsure, contact the elections team at your council and they will be able to help. Find their contact details . Inside the polling place, there will be people who are working for the Returning Officer at your council. There's usually one person in charge who is called the Presiding Officer, and one or two other people called Poll Clerks. When you enter the polling place, tell them your name and address so they can check that you're on the electoral register. You can show them your poll card if it helps, but you don't need your poll card to vote. They will cross your name off their list so they know who has voted, and hand you your ballot paper. Take your ballot paper into a polling booth. These are private, screened areas designed so that no one else can see how you vote. If it's busy, you may have to wait for a free booth. Make sure you give people plenty of space, so everyone can cast their vote in secret. Mark who you want to vote for on the ballot paper. Different elections work in different ways so it's important that you understand how to fill in your ballot paper correctly. Some elections ask for one cross in one box. Others might ask you to rank candidates with numbers. There's a chance that you'll be voting in different elections on the same day, so you may be given more than one ballot paper. Take your time to read everything carefully. There will be instructions on the ballot paper and on posters in the polling place. If you make a mistake and need a new ballot paper, don't worry – just speak to a member of staff and they can give you a replacement ballot paper, as long as you haven't already put one in the ballot box. Don't write anything else on your ballot paper, or your vote may not be counted. There will be a pencil in the polling booth, but you can use your own pen or pencil if you prefer. When you've filled in your ballot paper fold it and put it into a ballot box. These are large boxes which will

be clearly labelled and obviously placed. At the end of the day, the ballot box will be taken away for the votes to be counted. Your vote will be kept safe and will always stay secret. And that's it. At the polling place Asking for help Just ask a member of staff if you're unsure about anything or if you need assistance. They will explain the process and will be happy walk you through it before you vote. If you have a visual impairment, you can ask for a large print ballot paper, or a special voting device to help you cast your vote. If you can't fill in the ballot paper yourself, you can ask polling place staff to mark the ballot paper for you, or you can ask someone you trust, like a parent or carer. You're also allowed to ask someone you trust, like a parent or a friend, to come with you to the polling place to support you whilst you vote. Taking photos Taking photos inside a polling place is not allowed as you may accidentally reveal how you or someone else has voted. You're very welcome to take as many photos and videos as you like outside the polling place and share these on social media, but remember to be respectful of other voters. s at the polling place There might be people outside your polling place who belong to a political party. These people are called tellers. They are allowed to be outside the polling place, and may ask for the number on your poll card. This is so they can check who has voted, and remind people who haven't voted yet to do so. You do not have to give them any information if you don't want to. Other campaigners may be near the polling place, which is allowed. But there must not be any campaigning taking place inside the polling place. By post If you know that you won't be able to get to your polling place on polling day, you might want to consider a postal vote. This could be because you're away on holiday or because your work, school or college schedule makes it hard to get to the polling place when it's open. You can also choose to vote by post simply because it would be more convenient for you. You can apply to vote by post for a single election, a specific period, or until you choose to change it. You need to apply for a postal vote with your electoral registration office no later than 11 working days before polling day – but the sooner the better. Download a postal vote application form now or, you can ask your electoral registration office to send one to you. You will need to supply your signature on your application form, and again when you vote. This is to confirm who you are. A postal vote pack will be sent to you before the election. Follow the instructions, put everything back in the freepost, pre-addressed envelope and post it to the council to be counted. If you run out of time to post your vote, it can be returned to your polling place on polling day. You can return it yourself, or ask someone you trust to return it for you. By post Here are some things to bear in mind if you decide to vote by post: a postal vote can be sent to your home address or any other address you choose postal votes are usually sent about a week before polling day postal votes can be sent to other countries, but you need to consider if there would be time for you to receive and return your ballot paper by polling day if you have been sent a postal vote pack, you cannot vote in person at a polling place postal votes have to be received by your council or polling place before polling places close at 10pm on the day of the election Someone else can vote on your behalf You can ask someone you trust to vote on your behalf. You could ask a parent or carer, brother or sister, or close friend. This is called a proxy vote and your trusted person is referred to as your proxy. You'd need to tell your proxy who you'd like to vote for and they would need to go to your polling place to vote for you. This may be different from their own. If you choose to vote by proxy, you need to register for this no later than six working days before polling day. Download a proxy vote application form now or you can ask your electoral registration office to send one to



you. Unlike a postal vote, you need to provide a reason to vote by proxy for a single election. You can usually only apply for a proxy vote for individual elections. However, you can apply to vote by proxy in all upcoming elections for these reasons: you are unable to go to the polling place due to physical incapacity you are an overseas voter you are away because you are studying you have to make a journey by sea or air from your registered address to your polling place you are in a certain occupation, for example, the armed forces Someone such as a doctor must sign your form if you are applying on medical grounds, or your employer if on employment grounds. If you change your mind and wish to vote in person, you can still do so, as long as your proxy has not already voted on your behalf. If your proxy can't get to the polling place, they can apply to vote for you by post. This is called a postal proxy.

**How voting systems work** Different elections have different systems to elect representatives. This means you might be asked to mark 'X' next to your chosen candidate in one election, but might need to rank your candidates in order of preference in others. This could even be on two ballot papers on the same day. Each system has a different name and can seem complicated. The system used to elect your representatives can have an impact on how you are represented, so it's good to get an understanding of how each one works.

**How the Scottish Parliament is elected** The Scottish Parliament uses the Additional Member System to elect its members. There are 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament: 73 constituency members and 56 regional members. When you vote in a Scottish Parliamentary election you have two votes. You don't have to vote for the same political party for both votes, but you can if you want to. With the first vote, you choose between candidates standing for election in your constituency by marking 'X' next to your choice. The candidate who receives more votes than any other candidate will be the winner. The winning candidate becomes a Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) and will represent your constituency. Then you cast a second vote to choose a political party or individual candidate to represent your regional You show your choice of political party by marking 'X' next to your chosen political party. There are seven regional members for each of the eight electoral regions in Scotland. The formula used to calculate the results of regional seats is complicated, even for people who run elections! To work out how many regional positions, or 'seats', each party wins, the number of votes each party gets in the regional ballot is divided by the number of constituency seats the party has won, then one is added. One is added so that parties which have not won any constituencies can be included in the calculation for the regional seats. After this calculation, the party that ends up with the highest result wins the first regional seat. To work out which parties win the remaining seats this calculation is done again, but each time any additional seats that won are added in. As there are seven seats per region, this is done seven times. It can sometimes take a while to get the full results. The regional seats each political party wins are filled by the candidates in the order they appear on the regional ballot paper. This order is decided by the political party. It's important to remember that you don't directly elect the First Minister. They are chosen by MSPs. Usually, the First Minister is the leader of the political party with the most seats, but in theory, anyone can be nominated.

**How the UK Parliament is elected** MPs are elected to the House of Commons using a system called First Past the Post. You vote for one candidate in your constituency by marking 'X' next to their name. There are 650 constituencies across the UK. Most candidates will be standing for a party. Simply, the candidate with the most votes in your constituency is elected and becomes your Member of Parliament. The political party which has most MPs elected across the whole of the UK, wins the

election and becomes the Government. They have what's called a majority, meaning they have the largest number of MPs. It's important to remember that you don't vote for the Prime Minister. Instead, members of each political party elect their own leader. If their party wins the majority, their leader becomes Prime Minister and that person chooses who takes other senior Government positions, such as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary. How councils are elected Councillors are elected using a system called Single Transferable Vote. Like the Additional Member System, calculating the results can be a little complicated. 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 preference candidate, a '2' next to your second preference, a '3' next to your third preference and so on. You can do this for all the people you want to vote for. You do not have to put a number beside every name if you don't want to – you can just vote for one candidate. In the first stage, the first preference votes are counted and a quota is calculated. The quota is the minimum number of votes a candidate must have to be elected. Any candidate with a number of first preference votes equal to or higher than the quota is elected. If there are still empty spots for representatives, the excess votes from those elected are transferred to second preference candidates. If there are still seats unfilled because not enough candidates have reached the quota, candidates with the lowest number of votes are knocked out of the running and their votes are transferred to second preference candidates. The process continues until all seats are filled. So, if your first preference candidate does not get elected or if they are elected with a large majority, your vote can still be used to help elect your second preference 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. Remember to check and follow the instructions on your ballot paper. Tell us what you think What do you think of these resources? Complete our short survey so we can improve them for the future. It will only take a few minutes to complete. How to vote How to vote There are three different ways you can vote. You can choose the way that suits you. These are: voting in person at the polling station voting by post asking someone you trust to vote on your behalf (by proxy) Before the day of the election, known as polling day, you'll receive a card, called a poll card. Everyone who's registered to vote in your household will receive their own poll card. Your poll card tells you where and when you can vote. Unless you've arranged otherwise, it will be assumed that you want to vote in person at the polling station. Remember to register to vote . You don't need to register to vote for every election, only if you've recently moved house, have never registered for the first time, or have changed your name. At the polling station On polling day, you'll need to go to your polling station. It's usually a public building like a nearby school or village hall, but polling stations have popped up in all kinds of places like pubs and lifeboat stations. Polling stations are always open from 7am until 10pm. As long as you're in the queue to vote by 10pm, you'll be allowed to vote. You can't usually choose which polling station to vote at – you have to go to your assigned polling stations. You can't choose to vote at a polling station near your college or workplace, for example. Your polling station might not be the closest polling station to your house, so it is important that you double check on your poll card. If you're unsure, contact the elections team at your council and they will be able to help. Find their contact details . Inside the polling station, there will be people who are working for the Returning Officer from your local council. There's usually one person in charge who is called the Presiding Officer, and a few other people called Poll Clerks. When you enter the polling

station, tell them your name and address so they can check that you're on the electoral register. You can show them your poll card if it helps, but you don't need your poll card to vote. They will cross your name off their list so they know who has voted, and hand you your ballot paper. Take your ballot paper into a polling booth. These are private, screened areas designed so that no one else can see how you vote. If it's busy, you may have to wait for a free booth. Make sure you give people plenty of space, so everyone can cast their vote in secret. Mark who you want to vote for on the ballot paper. There's a chance that you'll be voting in different elections on the same day, so you may be given more than one ballot paper. Take your time to read everything properly. There will be instructions on the ballot paper and on posters in the polling station. Different elections work in different ways so it's important that you understand how to fill in your ballot paper correctly. If you make a mistake and need a new ballot paper, don't worry – just speak to a member of staff and they can give you a replacement ballot paper, as long as you haven't already put it in the ballot box. Don't write anything else on your ballot paper, or your vote may not be counted. There will be a pencil in the polling booth, but you can use your own pen or pencil if you prefer. When you've filled in your ballot paper, fold it and put it into a ballot box. These are large boxes which will be clearly labelled and obviously placed. At the end of the day, the ballot box will be taken away for the votes to be counted. Your vote will be kept safe and will always stay secret. And that's it. At the polling station Asking for help Just ask a member of staff if you're unsure about anything or if you need assistance. They will explain the process and will be happy to walk you through it before you vote. If you have a visual impairment, you can ask for a large print ballot paper, or a special voting device, to help you cast your vote. If you can't fill in the ballot paper yourself, you can ask polling station staff to mark the ballot paper for you, or you can ask someone you trust, like a parent or carer. You're also allowed to ask someone you trust, like a parent or a friend who is over 18 and able to vote in the election, to come with you to the polling station to support you whilst you vote. Taking photos Taking photos inside a polling station is not allowed as you may accidentally reveal how you or someone else has voted. You're very welcome to take as many photos and videos as you like outside the polling station and share these on social media, but remember to be respectful of other voters. s at the polling station There might be people outside your polling station who belong to a political party. These people are called tellers. They are allowed to be outside the polling station, and may ask for the number on your poll card. This is so they can check who has voted, and remind people who haven't voted yet to do so. You do not have to give them any information if you don't want to. Other campaigners may be near the polling station, which is allowed. But there must not be any campaigning taking place inside the polling station. By post If you know that you won't be able to get to your polling station on polling day, you might want to consider a postal vote. This could be because you're away on holiday or because your work, school or college schedule makes it hard to get to the polling station when it's open. You can also choose to vote by post simply because it would be more convenient for you. You can apply to vote by post for a single election, a specific period, or until you choose to change it. You need to apply for a postal vote with your local elections team no later than 11 working days before polling day – but the sooner the better. Download a postal vote application form now or, you can ask your local elections team to send one to you. You will need to supply your signature and date of birth on your application form, and again when you vote. This is to confirm who you are. A postal vote pack will be sent to you before the election. Follow the

instructions, put everything back in the freepost, pre-addressed envelope and post it to the council to be counted. If you run out of time to post your vote, it can be returned to your polling station on polling day. You can return it yourself, or ask someone you trust to return it for you. By post Here are some things to remember if you decide to vote by post: a postal vote can be sent to your home address or any other address you choose postal votes are usually sent about a week before polling day postal votes can be sent to other countries, but you need to consider if there would be time for you to receive and return your ballot paper by polling day if you have been sent a postal vote pack, you cannot vote in person at a polling station postal votes have to be received by your council or polling station before polling stations close at 10pm on the day of the election Someone else can vote on your behalf You can ask someone you trust to vote on your behalf. You could ask a parent or carer, brother or sister, or close friend. This is called a proxy vote and your trusted person is referred to as your proxy. You'd need to tell your proxy who you'd like to vote for and they would need to go to your polling station to vote for you. This may be different from their own. If you choose to vote by proxy, you need to register for this no later than six working days before polling day. Download a proxy vote application form now or you can ask your local elections team to send one to you. Unlike a postal vote, you need to provide a reason to vote by proxy for a single election. You can usually only apply for a proxy vote for individual elections. However, you can apply to vote by proxy in all upcoming elections for these reasons: you are unable to go to the polling station due to physical incapacity you are an overseas voter you are away because you are studying you have to make a journey by sea or air from your registered address to your polling station you are in a certain occupation, for example, the armed forces Someone such as a doctor must sign your form if you are applying on medical grounds, or your employer if on employment grounds. If you change your mind and wish to vote in person, you can still do so, as long as your proxy has not already voted on your behalf. If your proxy can't get to the polling station, they can apply to vote for you by post. This is called a postal proxy. How voting systems work Different elections have different systems to elect representatives. Each system has a different name and can seem complicated. The system used to elect your representatives can have an impact on how you are represented, so it's good to get an understanding of how each one works. How the Senedd is elected The Senedd uses the Additional Member System to elect its members. There are 60 Members of the Senedd: 40 constituency members and 20 regional members. When you vote in a Senedd election, you have two votes. You don't have to vote for the same political party for both votes, but you can if you'd like. With the first vote, you choose between candidates standing in your Senedd constituency by marking 'X' next to their name. The candidate who receives more votes than any other candidate will be elected to represent you in the Senedd. Then you cast a second vote to choose a political party or individual candidate to represent your regional constituency. You'll see a list of political parties with the names of the candidates underneath. You show your choice of political party by marking 'X' next to your chosen political party. There are four regional members for each of the five electoral regions in Wales. The formula used to calculate the results of regional seats is complicated, even for people who run elections! To work out how many regional positions, or 'seats', each party wins, the number of votes each party gets in the regional ballot (your second vote) is divided by the number of constituency seats the party has won (your first vote), then one is added. One is added so that parties which have not won any constituencies can be included in the calculation for

the regional seats. After this calculation, the party that ends up with the highest result wins the first regional seat. To work out which parties win the remaining seats this calculation is done again, but each time any additional seats won are added in. As there are four seats per region, this is done four times. It can sometimes take a while to get the full results. The regional seats each political party wins are filled by the candidates in the order they appear on the regional ballot paper. This order is decided by the political party. The political party which wins the most seats across Wales forms the Government. Or sometimes, political parties or independents come together to form a Government. How the UK Parliament is elected MPs are elected to the House of Commons using a system called First Past the Post. You vote for one candidate in your constituency by marking 'X' next to their name. There are 650 constituencies across the UK. Most candidates will be standing for a party. Simply, the candidate with the most votes in your constituency is elected and becomes your Member of Parliament. The political party which has most MPs elected across the whole of the UK wins the election and becomes the Government. They have what's called a majority, meaning they have the largest number of MPs. It's important to remember that you don't vote for the Prime Minister. Instead, members of each political party elect their own leader. If their party wins the majority, their leader becomes Prime Minister and that person chooses who takes other senior Government positions, such as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary. How local councils are elected Like UK Parliament elections, the First Past the Post system is used to elect local councillors. On your ballot paper, you'll see a list of candidates and you'll be asked to mark 'X' next to your chosen candidate. The candidate with the most votes becomes your representative. Some areas have two or more people representing them but the system works the same – the candidates with the most votes are the winners. Remember to check and follow the instructions on your ballot paper.

How to vote There are three different ways you can vote. These are: voting in person at the polling station voting by post asking someone you trust to vote on your behalf (by proxy) Before the day of the election, known as polling day, you'll receive a card, called a poll card. Everyone who's registered to vote in your household will receive their own poll card. Your poll card tells you where and when you can vote. Unless you've arranged otherwise, it will be assumed that you want to vote in person at the polling station. Remember to register to vote . You don't need to register to vote for every election, only if you've recently moved house, have never registered before, changed your name, or if you're asked to by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland. At the polling station On polling day, you'll need to go to your polling station. It's usually a public building like a nearby school or village hall, but polling stations have popped up in all kinds of places like pubs and lifeboat stations. Polling stations are always open from 7am until 10pm. As long as you're in the queue to vote by 10pm, you'll be allowed to vote. You can't choose which polling station to vote at – you have to go to your assigned polling station. You can't choose to vote at a polling station near your college or workplace, for example. Your polling station might not be the closest polling station to your house, so it is important that you double check on your poll card, or you can check by entering your postcode on the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland's website . Inside the polling station, there will be a few members of staff. There's usually one person in charge who is called the Presiding Officer, and one or two other people called Poll Clerks. Remember to take a correct form of photo ID with you when you go to the polling station. This could be your driving licence or your passport, or you can apply for a free Electoral Identity Card from the Electoral

Office for Northern Ireland . Accepted ID includes: a UK, Irish or EEA driving licence, including provisional licences a UK, Irish or EU passport (EU passports are not accepted at UK Parliamentary elections) an Electoral Identity Card a Translink Senior SmartPass a Translink 60+ SmartPass a Translink War Disabled SmartPass a Translink Blind Person's SmartPass Don't worry if your ID is out of date – you can still use it at the polling station. When you enter the polling station, the staff will check your name and address to make sure you're on the electoral register. You can show them your poll card if it helps, but you don't need your poll card to vote. They will then check your ID. They will cross your name off their list so they know who has voted, and hand you your ballot paper. Take your ballot paper into a polling booth. These are private, screened areas designed so that no one else can see how you vote. If it's busy, you may have to wait for a free booth. Make sure you give people plenty of space, so everyone can cast their vote in secret. Mark who you want to vote for on the ballot paper. Different elections work in different ways so it's important that you understand how to fill in your ballot paper correctly. Some might ask you to rank candidates with numbers. Other elections ask for one cross in one box. There's a chance that you'll be voting in different elections on the same day, so you may be given more than one ballot paper. Take your time to read everything properly. There will be instructions on the ballot paper and on posters in the polling station. If you make a mistake and need a new ballot paper, don't worry – just speak to a member of staff and they can give you a replacement ballot paper, as long as you haven't already put it in the ballot box. Don't write anything else on your ballot paper, or your vote may not be counted. There will be a pencil in the polling booth, but you can use your own pen or pencil if you prefer. When you've filled in your ballot paper, fold it and put it into a ballot box. These are large boxes which will be clearly labelled and obviously placed. At the end of the day, the ballot box will be taken away for the votes to be counted. Your vote will be kept safe and will always stay secret. And that's it. At the polling station Asking for help Just ask a member of staff if you're unsure about anything or if you need assistance. They will explain the process and will be happy to walk you through it before you vote. If you have a visual impairment, you can ask for a large print ballot paper, or a special voting device, to help you cast your vote. If you can't fill in the ballot paper yourself, you can ask polling station staff to mark the ballot paper for you, or you can ask someone you trust, like a parent or carer. You're also allowed to ask someone you trust, like a parent or a friend, to come with you to the polling place to support you whilst you vote. Taking photos Taking photos inside a polling station is not allowed as you may accidentally reveal how you or someone else has voted. You're very welcome to take as many photos and videos as you like outside the polling station and share these on social media, but remember to be respectful of other voters. s at the polling place s may be outside polling stations on polling day, but there must not be any campaigning taking place inside the polling station. By post If you know that you won't be able to get to your polling station on polling day, you may be able to vote by post. This could be because of illness or disability, because you're away on holiday or because your work, school or college schedule makes it hard to get to the polling station when it's open. You can usually only apply to vote by post for a single election, but you can apply for a permanent postal vote in some situations. Postal vote packs can only be sent within the UK, so if you live outside of the UK, you may want to consider voting by proxy. You need to apply for a postal vote no later than 11 working days before polling day – but the sooner the better. If you need to vote by post, you'll need to apply to the Electoral Office for Northern

Ireland. You can find the form on their website. You will need to supply your date of birth, signature, and your Digital Registration Number (DRN) if you registered to vote online. This is to confirm who you are. You'll be asked for some of this information again when you vote. If you registered to vote online, you'll be sent a DRN when you are added to the electoral register. If you don't have your DRN, you can ask the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland for a reminder . A postal vote pack will then be sent to you before the election. Follow the instructions, put everything back in the freepost, pre-addressed envelope and post it to the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland to be counted. By post Here are some things to bear in mind if you decide to vote by post: a postal vote can be sent to your home address or another address you choose, as long as it is within the UK. postal votes are usually sent about a week before polling day if you have been sent a postal vote pack, you cannot vote in person at a polling station. You also cannot leave your postal vote ballot paper at a polling station. postal votes have to be received by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland before polling stations close at 10pm on the day of the election Someone else can vote on your behalf If you can't get to the polling station on polling day, you may be able to ask someone you trust to vote on your behalf. You could ask a parent or carer, brother or sister, or close friend. This is called a proxy vote and your trusted person is referred to as your proxy. As with a postal vote, if you need to vote by proxy, you have to apply to the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland and you'll need to give an accepted reason, such as being on holiday, or a disability. If you vote by proxy, you'd need to tell your proxy who you'd like to vote for and they would need to go to your polling station to vote for you. This may be different from their own. Your trusted person will need to take a correct form of ID with them to the polling station so they can vote on your behalf. This should be their own ID rather than yours. You must apply to vote by proxy no later than 11 working days before polling day. You can download an application form on the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland's website . Like with a postal vote, you'll be asked to supply your Digital Registration Number (DRN), if you registered to vote online. You can usually only apply for a proxy vote for individual elections. However, you can apply to vote by proxy in all upcoming elections for reasons to do with employment, education or disability. Someone such as a doctor must sign your form if you are applying on medical grounds, or your employer if on employment grounds. If you change your mind and wish to vote in person, you can still do so, as long as your proxy has not already voted on your behalf. If your proxy can't get to the polling station, they can apply to vote for you by post. This is called a postal proxy. Tell us what you think What do you think of these resources? Complete our short survey so we can improve them for the future. It will only take a few minutes to complete. Overseas voters We're showing you content for England. Select 'change' to see information for other parts of the UK. How to vote There are three different ways you can vote. You can choose the way that suits you. These are: voting in person at the polling station voting by post asking someone you trust to vote on your behalf (by proxy) Before the day of the election, known as polling day, you'll receive a card, called a poll card. Everyone who's registered to vote in your household will receive their own poll card. Your poll card tells you where and when you can vote. Unless you've arranged otherwise, it will be assumed that you want to vote in person at the polling station. Remember to register to vote . You don't need to register to vote for every election, only if you've recently moved house, have never registered for the first time, or have changed your name. At the polling station On polling day, you'll need to go to your polling station. It's usually a public building like a

nearby school or village hall, but polling stations have popped up in all kinds of places like pubs and lifeboat stations. Polling stations are always open from 7am until 10pm. As long as you're in the queue to vote by 10pm, you'll be allowed to vote. You can't choose which polling station to vote at – you have to go to your assigned polling stations. You can't choose to vote at a polling station near your college or workplace, for example. Your polling station might not be the closest polling station to your house, so it is important that you double check on your poll card. If you're unsure, contact the elections team at your council and they will be able to help. Find their contact details . Inside the polling station, there will be people who are working for the Returning Officer from your local council. There's usually one person in charge who is called the Presiding Officer, and a few other people called Poll Clerks. When you enter the polling station, tell them your name and address so they can check that you're on the electoral register. You can show them your poll card if it helps, but you don't need your poll card to vote. Remember to take a correct form of photo ID with you when you go to the polling station. This could be your driving licence or your passport, or you can apply for a free voter ID document , which is known as a Voter Authority Certificate. Learn more about accepted forms of photo ID . The staff will cross your name off their list so they know who has voted, and hand you your ballot paper. Take your ballot paper into a polling booth. These are private, screened areas designed so that no one else can see how you vote. If it's busy, you may have to wait for a free booth. Make sure you give people plenty of space, so everyone can cast their vote in secret. Mark who you want to vote for on the ballot paper. There's a chance that you'll be voting in different elections on the same day, so you may be given more than one ballot paper. Take your time to read everything properly. There will be instructions on the ballot paper and on posters in the polling station. Different elections work in different ways so it's important that you understand how to fill in your ballot paper correctly. If you make a mistake and need a new ballot paper, don't worry – just speak to a member of staff and they can give you a replacement ballot paper, as long as you haven't already put it in the ballot box. Don't write anything else on your ballot paper, or your vote may not be counted. There will be a pencil in the polling booth, but you can use your own pen or pencil if you prefer. When you've filled in your ballot paper, fold it and put it into a ballot box. These are large boxes which will be clearly labelled and obviously placed. At the end of the day, the ballot box will be taken away for the votes to be counted. Your vote will be kept safe and will always stay secret. And that's it. At the polling station Asking for help Just ask a member of staff if you're unsure about anything or if you need assistance. They will explain the process and will be happy to walk you through it before you vote. If you have a visual impairment, you can ask for a large print ballot paper, or a special voting device, to help you cast your vote. If you can't fill in the ballot paper yourself, you can ask polling station staff to mark the ballot paper for you, or you can ask someone you trust, like a parent or carer. You're also allowed to ask someone you trust, like a parent or a friend who is over 18 and able to vote in the election, to come with you to the polling station to support you whilst you vote. Taking photos Taking photos inside a polling station is not allowed as you may accidentally reveal how you or someone else has voted. You're very welcome to take as many photos and videos as you like outside the polling station and share these on social media, but remember to be respectful of other voters. s at the polling station There might be people outside your polling station who belong to a political party. These people are called tellers. They are allowed to be outside the polling station, and may ask for the



number on your poll card. This is so they can check who has voted, and remind people who haven't voted yet to do so. You do not have to give them any information if you don't want to. Other campaigners may be near the polling station, which is allowed. But there must not be any campaigning taking place inside the polling station.

**By post** If you know that you won't be able to get to your polling station on polling day, you might want to consider a postal vote. This could be because you're away on holiday or because your work, school or college schedule makes it hard to get to the polling station when it's open. You can also choose to vote by post simply because it would be more convenient for you. You can apply to vote by post for a single election, a specific period, or until you choose to change it. You need to apply for a postal vote with your electoral registration office no later than 11 working days before polling day – but the sooner the better. Download a postal vote application form now or, you can ask your electoral registration office to send one to you. You will need to supply your signature and date of birth on your application form, and again when you vote. This is to confirm who you are. A postal vote pack will be sent to you before the election. Follow the instructions, put everything back in the freepost, pre-addressed envelope and post it to the council to be counted. If you run out of time to post your vote, it can be returned to your polling station on polling day. You can return it yourself, or ask someone you trust to return it for you.

**By post** Here are some things to bear in mind if you decide to vote by post: a postal vote can be sent to your home address or any other address you choose postal votes are usually sent about a week before polling day postal votes can be sent to other countries, but you need to consider if there would be time for you to receive and return your ballot paper by polling day if you have been sent a postal vote pack, you cannot vote in person at a polling station postal votes have to be received by your council or polling station before polling stations close at 10pm on the day of the election Someone else can vote on your behalf You can ask someone you trust to vote on your behalf. You could ask a parent or carer, brother or sister, or close friend. This is called a proxy vote and your trusted person is referred to as your proxy. You'd need to tell your proxy who you'd like to vote for and they would need to go to your polling station to vote for you. This may be different from their own. If you choose to vote by proxy, you need to register for this no later than six working days before polling day. Download a proxy vote application form now or you can ask your electoral registration office to send one to you. Unlike a postal vote, you need to provide a reason to vote by proxy for a single election. You can usually only apply for a proxy vote for individual elections. However, you can apply to vote by proxy in all upcoming elections for these reasons: you are unable to go to the polling station due to blindness or other disability you are an overseas voter you are away because you are studying you have to make a journey by sea or air from your registered address to your polling station you are in a certain occupation, for example, the armed forces Someone such as a doctor must sign your form if you are applying on medical grounds, or your employer if on employment grounds. If you change your mind and wish to vote in person, you can still do so, as long as your proxy has not already voted on your behalf. If your proxy can't get to the polling station, they can apply to vote for you by post. This is called a postal proxy.

**How voting systems work** How the UK Parliament is elected MPs are elected to the House of Commons using a system called First Past the Post. You vote for one candidate in your constituency by marking 'X' next to their name. There are 650 constituencies across the UK. Most candidates will be standing for a party. Simply, the candidate with the most votes in your constituency is elected and becomes your Member of Parliament. The political

party which has most MPs elected across the whole of the UK, wins the election and becomes the Government. They have what's called a majority, meaning they have the largest number of MPs. It's important to remember that you don't vote for the Prime Minister. Instead, members of each political party elect their own leader. If their party wins the majority, their leader becomes Prime Minister and that person chooses who takes other senior Government positions, such as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary.

How local councils are elected Like UK Parliament elections, the First Past the Post system is used to elect local councillors. On your ballot paper, you'll see a list of candidates and you'll be asked to mark 'X' next to your chosen candidate or candidates. The candidate with the most votes becomes your representative. Some areas have two or more people representing them but the system works the same – the candidates with the most votes are the winners. Remember to check and follow the instructions on your ballot paper.

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content for . Select 'change' to choose a different location. Introduction We are a politically impartial and independent organisation. Learn more about our role . Our impartiality means that you can be confident that, whatever your subject area, using our political literacy resources will allow you to deliver an unbiased and accurate lesson or workshop. The lesson plans are mapped to the curriculum and can be delivered to KS3/4 learners. Introduction We are a politically impartial and independent organisation. Learn more about our role Our impartiality means that you can be confident that, whatever your subject area, using our political literacy resources will allow you to deliver an unbiased and accurate lesson or workshop. The lesson plans are mapped to the curriculum for S4-6 and wider outcomes, such as Unicef's Rights Respecting School Awards and Sustainable Development Goals.

Introduction We are a politically impartial and independent organisation. Learn more about our role Our impartiality means that you can be confident that, whatever your subject area, using our political literacy resources will allow you to deliver an unbiased and accurate lesson or workshop. The lesson plans are mapped to the curriculum and can be delivered to KS3/4 learners. Download resources Educators' notes and lesson plans This six-week scheme of work explores different elements of democracy and politics, including how to register to vote and to what to expect on polling day. Young people will have the chance to design and implement their own campaign. You can use the full six-week programme, or choose the lessons which suit your group. The lesson plans can also to be delivered during an off-timetable or drop down day. England Educators Notes Lesson plan 1: Your vote (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 2: Our democracy (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 3: People power (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 4: Campaigning (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 5: Campaign planning (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 6: Democracy in action (PowerPoint) Short activities Use the 5-15 minute activities in youth groups or form time to start to conversation about democracy. If you don't normally teach democratic education, you can use the short activities as lesson starters. Short activities (PowerPoint) Assembly resources Use this resource to introduce young people to politics, democracy and elections. School assembly resource (PowerPoint) Further resources Take a look at more videos, quizzes and information for young people Download resources Educators' notes and lesson plans This six-week scheme of work explores different elements of democracy and politics, including how to register to vote and to what to expect on polling day. Young people will have the chance to design and implement their own campaign. You can use the full six-week programme, or choose the lessons which suit your group. The lesson plans can also to be delivered during an off-timetable or drop down day. Northern Ireland Educators Notes 2022 Northern Ireland Educators Notes Lesson plan 1: Your vote (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 2: Impact of voting (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 3: How to vote (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 4: Campaigning (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 5: Campaign planning (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 6: Campaign presenting (PowerPoint) Short activities Use the 5-15 minute activities in youth groups or form time to start to conversation about democracy. If you don't normally teach democratic education, you can use the short activities as lesson starters. Short activities (PowerPoint) Assembly resources Use this resource to introduce young people to politics, democracy and elections. School assembly resource Further resources Take a look at more videos, quizzes and information for young people Download resources Educators' notes and lesson plans This six-week scheme of work explores different elements of democracy and politics,

including how to register to vote and to what to expect on polling day. Young people will have the chance to design and implement their own campaign. You can use the full six-week programme, or choose the lessons which suit your group. The lesson plans can also to be delivered during an off-timetable or drop down day. Scotland Educator Notes Lesson plan 1: Your vote (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 2: Our democracy (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 3: People power (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 4: Campaigning (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 5: Campaign planning (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 6: Democracy in action (PowerPoint) Short activities Use the 5-15 minute activities in youth groups or registration time to start to conversation about democracy. If you don't normally teach democratic education, you can use the short activities as lesson starters. Short activities (PowerPoint) Assembly resources Use this resource to introduce young people to politics and democracy and elections in Scotland. Assembly (PowerPoint) Further resources Take a look at more videos, quizzes and information for young people Download resources Educators' notes and lesson plans This six-week scheme of work explores different elements of democracy and politics, including how to register to vote and to what to expect on polling day. Young people will have the chance to design and implement their own campaign. You can use the full six-week programme, or choose the lessons which suit your group. The lesson plans can also to be delivered during an off-timetable or drop down day. Wales Educator Notes Wales Educators Notes Lesson plan 1: Your vote (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 2: Our democracy (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 3: People power (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 4: Campaigning (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 5: Campaign planning (PowerPoint) Lesson plan 6: Democracy in action (PowerPoint) Short activities Use the 5-15 minute activities in youth groups or form time to start to conversation about democracy. If you don't normally teach democratic education, you can use the short activities as lesson starters. Short activities (PowerPoint) Assembly resources Use this resource to introduce young people to politics and democracy and elections in Wales. Assembly (PowerPoint) Further resources Take a look at more videos, quizzes and information for young people Teacher training We will be launching teacher training resources soon. Sign up to our newsletter for updates. Teacher training The Digital Dialogue: Wales programme offers free teacher CPD, three hours of teaching resources and online engagements with local and national politicians. Funded by the Welsh Government, and designed to support the new curriculum, the programme brings together students and their local politicians through video conferencing, building understanding and relationships on both sides that will lead to real and tangible changes in their communities. We will be launching teacher training resources soon. Sign up to our newsletter for updates. Your location: Change England Northern Ireland Scotland Wales Overseas We're showing you content for . Select 'change' to choose a different location.

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are in the Resources for 14-18 year olds section Home Welcome to your vote Resources for 14-18 year olds 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 Your vote Your vote Welcome to your vote Your vote Who does what? Scottish Parliament's responsibilities Who represents you in the Scottish Parliament? MSPs' responsibilities Councils Councils' responsibilities UK Parliament Who represents you in the UK Parliament? MPs' responsibilities Remember to register to vote Quiz Who does what? The Senedd The Senedd's responsibilities Who represents you in the Senedd? Your MSs' responsibilities Local councils Councils' responsibilities UK Parliament Who represents you in the UK Parliament? MPs' responsibilities Remember to register to vote Quiz The Northern Ireland Assembly The Northern Ireland Assembly's responsibilities Who represents you in the Northern Ireland Assembly? Local councils Who represents you in your local council? UK Parliament Who represents you in the UK Parliament? MPs' responsibilities Remember to register to vote Quiz Local councils Types of local councils Who represents you in your local council? UK Parliament Who represents you in the UK Parliament? MPs' responsibilities Remember to register to vote Quiz What can you vote for? There are different things that influence which elections you're allowed to vote in. Generally, these are your age, your nationality and where you live. And rules are different in different parts of the UK. Overseas voters We're showing you content for England. Select 'change' to see information for other parts of the UK. Your vote Your vote Welcome to your vote Your vote Find out what you can vote in Who does what? Scottish Parliament You can vote in Scottish Parliament elections when you're 16. What's your local hospital like? How are you finding your school or college course? Are you thinking of running your own business one day? The Scottish Parliament makes decisions about all of these issues. The Scottish Parliament, as we know it today, was set up in 1999, but the first Parliament in Scotland was created over 600 years ago. Scottish Parliament's responsibilities Responsibilities held by the Scottish Parliament are called devolved matters. They include: health education training local government housing tourism economic development Who represents you in the Scottish Parliament? The people who represent you in the Scottish Parliament are called Members of the Scottish Parliament, or MSPs for short. You elect your MSPs every five years. There are 129 elected MSPs in the Scottish Parliament and every person in Scotland is represented by eight of them. Each MSP looks after a particular area in Scotland. 73 MSPs are constituency MSPs, representing local areas. 56 are regional MSPs who look after a much bigger parliamentary area, known as a region. You are represented by one constituency MSP and seven regional MSPs. Your MSPs divide their time between work at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh and local work in the area they represent. You can contact any of the MSPs who represent you to ask questions about issues that are important to you. You can speak over the phone, by email, or face to face when they hold an open meeting in your area, known as a surgery. You can find their contact details on Scottish Parliament's website You can visit the Scottish Parliament website for information about visiting. You can also watch debates and meetings on Scottish Parliament TV MSPs' responsibilities Your MSPs might: look at the work and policies of the Scottish Government to check that they are serving the people of Scotland take issues forward on behalf of the people they represent respond to letters and emails from local people respond to an issue in their area by asking an official question in the Scottish Parliament hold regular open meetings with constituents to discuss the problems in their area, known as a

surgery debate issues vote on changes in the law sit on committees to look at issues in more detail Councils You can vote in council elections when you're 16. How often is your rubbish collected? What are the roads in your area like? Do you like your local sports facilities? Your council makes decisions about all of these issues and many more that affect you on a daily basis. It deals with matters that directly impact your specific local area and is responsible for local services. You might also hear councils be called local government or local authorities. Councils' responsibilities Councils are responsible for: education services youth and leisure facilities planning decisions, for example, if your neighbour wanted to build an extension on their home social housing managing parks and other public places social services such as foster care, help for disabled people, or care for the elderly local roads and footpaths rubbish and recycling libraries checking up on and supporting local businesses running local elections Councils In most councils, a small number of councillors form a group called a cabinet or executive. This is the top decision-making group of the council. Their decisions are guided by broad policies or plans that have been agreed by the council as a whole. If you want to make a complaint or bring up an issue with your elected representatives, you need to know which council is responsible for your area. Find your council . Who represents you in your council? The people elected to represent you in your council are called councillors. The area covered by your council is divided into smaller areas called wards. Your ward could be represented by up to five councillors. Your councillors might: be involved in working out how much to spend on local services develop future plans for your area help you to deal with any concern with local services the council provides You can contact your councillors to ask them questions about what's happening in your area, or express a concern you may have. You can contact any of the councillors who represent you, and you'll usually find their contact details on your council's website. You could also attend a council meeting in the public gallery at your local town or city hall and watch how decisions are made. So you know what to expect, it might be useful to ask a councillor to explain what happens in a council meeting before you go. UK Parliament When you turn 18, you're able to vote in UK Parliament elections. The UK Parliament makes some decisions that affect Scotland. These are called reserved matters and include things like: defence foreign affairs immigration anything to do with the monarchy The UK Parliament is made up of two chambers – the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The public vote for the people who sit in the House of Commons. UK Parliament The UK Parliament makes decisions about how the UK is run and makes laws that affect everyone's lives. Its roles includes: providing the funds to do government work by voting for tax protecting the public and the rights of individuals looking closely at government policy and actions - this is known as scrutinising debating the major issues of the day Who represents you in the UK Parliament? The person who represents you in the House of Commons is called a Member of Parliament, or MP for short. Every person in the UK is represented by one MP who covers a large area, called a constituency. The UK is divided into 650 constituencies, and Scotland is represented by 59 MPs. You elect your MP every five years. Your MP usually splits their time between work at the Houses of Parliament in Westminster in London and local work in your area. As with MSPs, you can contact your MP to ask them questions. Find out how to get in touch by visiting the UK Parliament's website You can also watch debates and meetings in UK Parliament, either from the public gallery or via a live stream on Parliament Live TV MPs' responsibilities Your MP might: support a campaign to change the law help address the issues of people living in your area by holding regular open meetings help make a law

by speaking in a debate in the House of Commons or sitting on a committee in the UK Parliament ask an official question in the House of Commons find out what the people in your area think about a particular issue Remember to register to vote If you're not registered, you can't vote. It's as simple as that. In Scotland, you can register to vote when you're 14. But you can only start to vote in some elections when you turn 16. Luckily, you don't need to register before every election. You need to register if: you've never registered to vote before you've just become old enough to register You need to register to vote again if: you've moved house recently you've changed your name for any reason You'll stay registered to vote as long as you live at that address and don't change your name. When you become old enough to vote in different elections, your record will be updated automatically. Registering to vote takes just five minutes if you do it online. If you're 16 or older, all you'll need is your National Insurance number. If you're under 16, you won't be asked to supply a National Insurance number. Remember to register to vote Register to vote now. Register to vote A little while after you've registered, you'll appear on the electoral register. This is a list of everyone in your area who is registered to vote. These lists are managed by your local electoral registration office. You can't check online to see if you're registered to vote, but if you have any questions about the electoral register or registering to vote, you should contact your electoral registration office. They'll be happy to help. Find their contact details . Armed forces If you're 14 to 17 and one of your parents is in the armed forces, you will be able to register to vote as a service voter. This means that if your family is posted to a different country, or if you move around a lot, you'll still be able to vote in elections in Scotland. You'll just need to remember to renew this every year. Living abroad If you're thinking about living in another country outside of the UK one day, even for a little while, you'll still be able to vote in UK Parliament elections. As long as you've been registered to vote in the UK, and have been eligible to vote in UK Parliament elections in the last 15 years, you'll be allowed to continue voting to choose your MP. If you leave the UK before you are old enough to vote, you'll still be able to register to vote if one of your parents has been registered to vote in UK Parliament elections in the last 15 years. Tell us what you think What do you think of these resources? Complete our short survey so we can improve them for the future. It will only take a few minutes to complete. Who does what? The Senedd You can vote in Senedd elections when you're 16. How are you finding your school or college course? What's your local hospital like? Is it easy to get where you want to go by train? The Senedd, (Welsh Parliament), makes decisions about these issues. The Senedd passes laws, sets some taxes, and makes decisions about a range of issues that affect the people of Wales. Responsibilities held by the Senedd are called devolved matters. The Senedd's responsibilities The Senedd's responsibilities include: education, training and universities housing, including tackling homelessness protecting the environment and conserving wildlife and natural habitats the NHS setting some taxes promoting the culture and heritage of Wales, including the Welsh language developing transport promoting agricultural schemes and rural development funding for local councils Who represents you in the Senedd? The people who represent you in the Senedd are called Members of the Senedd, or MSs for short. You elect your MSs every five years. There are 60 elected MSs and every person in Wales is represented by five of them. Each MS looks after a particular geographic area in Wales. One of your MSs represents your Senedd constituency and the other four represent a much bigger area called a region. The five regions in Wales are: Mid and West Wales North Wales South Wales West South Wales Central South Wales East You can



contact any of the MSs who represent you to ask questions about issues that are important to you. You can speak over the phone, by email, or face to face when they hold an open meeting in your area, known as a surgery. You can find their contact details on the Senedd's website. You can visit the Senedd's website for information about visiting. Or, you can watch debates and meetings live, or catch up later.

**Your MSs' responsibilities** Your MS might: debate and pass laws which affect Wales make decisions about taxes ask questions and look closely at Welsh Government policies to hold them to account respond to a problem in your area by asking the responsible politician, known as a minister, an official question hold a regular open meeting with people in their area to discuss the problems in your area sit on Senedd committees to look at issues in more detail influence how schools and hospitals are run in Wales

**Local councils** You can vote in local council elections when you're 16. How often is your rubbish collected? What are the roads in your area like? Do you like your local sports facilities? Your local council makes decisions about all of these issues and many more that affect you on a daily basis. It deals with matters that directly impact your specific local area and is responsible for local services. You might also hear local councils be called local government or local authorities.

**Councils' responsibilities** Councils are responsible for: education services youth and leisure facilities planning decisions, for example, if your neighbour wanted to build an extension on their home social housing managing parks and other public places social services such as foster care, help for people with disabilities, or care for the elderly local roads and footpaths rubbish and recycling libraries checking up on and supporting local businesses registering voters and running elections

**Councils** A small number of councillors form a cabinet or executive. This is the top decision-making group of the council but all decisions they make are guided by broad policies or plans that have been agreed by the council as a whole. If you want to make a complaint or bring up an issue with your elected representative, you need to know which council is responsible for your area. Find your council. Who represents you in your local council? The people elected to represent you in your local council are called local councillors. You and others in your area elect them for a four year period. The area covered by your local council is divided into smaller areas called wards. Your ward could be represented by up to four local councillors. You may also have community councillors who represent you. Your local councillor might: be involved in working out how much to spend on local services develop future plans for your area help you to deal with any concern with local services the council provides discuss and set council tax

**Many councillors work full or part-time in other jobs on top of their work as a councillor. Councillors receive some money to cover costs but are mostly unpaid. You can contact your local councillors to ask them questions about what's happening in your area, or express a concern you may have. You can usually find their contact details on your council's website. You could also attend a council meeting in the public gallery at your local town or city hall and watch how decisions are made. So you know what to expect, it might be useful to ask a local councillor to explain what happens in a council meeting before you go.**

**UK Parliament** When you turn 18, you're able to vote in UK Parliament elections. The UK Parliament makes some decisions that affect Wales. These are called reserved matters and include things like: defence foreign affairs immigration anything to do with the monarchy It is made up of two chambers – the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The public vote for the people who sit in the House of Commons.

**UK Parliament** The UK Parliament makes decisions about how the UK is run and makes laws that affect everyone's lives. Its roles includes: providing the funds to do government work by voting for tax

protecting the public and the rights of individuals looking closely at government policy and actions - this is known as scrutinising debating the major issues of the day Who represents you in the UK Parliament? The person who represents you in the House of Commons is called a Member of Parliament, or MP for short. Every person in the UK is represented by one MP who covers a large area, called a constituency. The UK is currently divided into 650 constituencies, and Wales has 40 constituencies, represented by 40 MPs. You elect your MP every five years. Your MP usually splits their time between work at the Houses of Parliament in Westminster in London and local work in your area. As with MSs, you can contact your MP to ask them questions. Find out how to get in touch by visiting the UK Parliament's website. You can also watch debates and meetings in UK Parliament, either from the public gallery or via a live stream on Parliament Live TV. MPs' responsibilities Your MP might: support a campaign to change the law help address the issues of people living in your area by holding regular open meetings help make a law by speaking in a debate in the House of Commons or sitting on a committee in the UK Parliament ask an official question in the House of Commons find out what the people in your area think about a particular issue Remember to register to vote If you're not registered, you can't vote. It's as simple as that. In Wales, you can register to vote when you're 15, or in some cases 14. But you can only start to vote in Senedd and local council elections when you turn 16. Luckily, you don't need to register before every election. You need to register if: you've never registered to vote before you've just become old enough to register You need to register to vote again if: you've moved house recently you've changed your name for any reason You'll stay registered to vote as long as you live at that address and don't change your name. When you become old enough to vote in different elections, your record will be updated automatically. Registering to vote takes just five minutes if you do it online. If you're 16 or older, all you'll need is your National Insurance number. If you're under 16, you won't be asked to supply a National Insurance number Register to vote Register to vote now Register to vote A little while after you've registered, you'll appear on the electoral register. This is a list of everyone in your area who is registered to vote. These lists are managed by your local electoral registration office. You can't check online to see if you're registered to vote, but if you have any questions about the electoral register or registering to vote, you should contact your electoral registration office. They'll be happy to help. Find their contact details . Living at two addresses Some people split their time between two addresses. For example, you might be a student living away from home, or split your time between two parents' homes. If this is you, you may be able to register to vote at two addresses, as long as your addresses are in different council areas. This doesn't mean you get two votes though. You must only vote at one address in Senedd elections and UK Parliament elections but you can choose which area to vote in. It's against the law to vote more than once in the same election. In local council elections, you'll be able to vote at both addresses as long as you're voting in different council areas. Armed forces If you're 14 to 17 and one of your parents is in the armed forces, you will be able to register to vote as a service voter. This means that if your family is posted to a different country, or if you move around a lot, you'll still be able to vote in elections in Wales. You'll just need to remember to renew this every year. Living abroad If you're thinking about living in another country outside of the UK one day, even for a little while, you'll still be able to vote in UK Parliamentary elections. As long as you've been registered to vote in the UK, and have been eligible to vote in general elections in the last 15 years, you'll be allowed to continue voting for your MP. If you leave the

UK before you are old enough to vote, you'll still be able to register to vote if one of your parents has been registered to vote in UK general elections in the last 15 years. Tell us what you think What do you think of these resources? Complete our short survey so we can improve them for the future. It will only take a few minutes to complete. The Northern Ireland Assembly You can vote in Northern Ireland Assembly elections where you're 18. How are you finding your school or college course? What's your local hospital like? Is it easy to get where you want to go by bus or train? The Northern Ireland Assembly makes decision about all these issues. The Northern Ireland Assembly's responsibilities The Northern Ireland Assembly passes laws and makes decisions about a range of issues that affect the people of Northern Ireland. Responsibilities held by the Northern Ireland Assembly are called devolved or transferred matters. They include: health and social services the environment education and training historic buildings and culture transport and roads Who represents you in the Northern Ireland Assembly? The people who represent you in the Northern Ireland Assembly are called Members of the Legislative Assembly, or MLAs for short. You usually elect you MLAs every five years. There are 90 MLAs and you are represented by five of them. Your MLA might: debate and pass laws which affect Northern Ireland sit on committees to look at issues in more details hold a regular open meeting with people in their area to discuss the problems in your area respond to a problem in your area by asking the responsible politician, known as a minister, an official question You can contact any of the MLAs who represent you to ask questions about issues that are important to you. You can speak over the phone, by email, or face to face when they hold an open meeting in your area. You can find their contact details on the Northern Ireland Assembly's website where you can also find information about visiting Northern Ireland Assembly's building in Stormont. Or, you can watch debates and meetings live or on catch-up . Local councils You can vote in local council elections when you're 18. How often is your rubbish collected? Do you like your local sports facilities? Your local council makes decisions about these issues and many more that affect you on a daily basis. It deals with matters that directly impact your specific local area and is responsible for local services. You might also hear local councils be called local government or local authorities. There are 11 local councils in Northern Ireland, made up of 462 councillors who are elected every four years. You are usually represented by three to seven councillors. If you want to make a complaint or bring up an issue with one of your local councillors. Find your council . Who represents you in your local council? The people elected to represent you in your local council are called local councillors. You and others in your area elect them for a four year period. The area covered by your local council is divided into smaller areas called wards. Your local councillor might: be involved in working out how much to spend on local services develop future plans for your area help you to deal with any concern with local services the council provides Many councillors work full or part-time in other jobs on top of their work as a councillor. You can contact your local councillors to ask them questions about what's happening in your area, or express a concern you may have. You can usually find their contact details on your council's website. You could also attend a council meeting in the public gallery at your local town or city hall and watch how decisions are made. So you know what to expect, it might be useful to ask a local councillor to explain what happens in a council meeting before you go. UK Parliament The UK Parliament makes some decisions that affect Northern Ireland. Decision for the whole of the UK include: defence foreign affairs immigration The UK Parliament is made up of two chambers – the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The public vote for the

people who sit in the House of Commons. UK Parliament The UK Parliament makes decisions about some aspects of how the UK is run and makes laws that affect our lives. Its roles include: providing the funds to do UK Government work by voting for tax protecting the public and the rights of individuals looking closely at UK Government policy and actions - this is known as scrutinising debating the major issues of the day Who represents you in the UK Parliament? The person who represents you in the House of Commons is called a Member of Parliament, or MP for short. Every person in the UK is represented by one MP who covers a large area, called a constituency. The UK is currently divided into 650 constituencies, and Northern Ireland is represented by 18 MPs. You normally elect your MP every five years. Your MP may split their time between work at the Houses of Parliament in Westminster in London and local work in your area. Some MPs in Northern Ireland choose not to take their seats in the UK Parliament, in a practise known as abstentionism. As with MLAs, you can contact your MP to ask them questions. Find out how to get in touch by visiting the UK Parliament's website You can also watch debates and meetings in UK Parliament, either from the public gallery or via a live stream on Parliament Live TV

**MPs' responsibilities** Your MP might:

- support a campaign to change the law
- help address the issues of people living in your area by holding regular open meetings
- help make a law by speaking in a debate in the House of Commons or sitting on a committee in the UK Parliament
- ask an official question in the House of Commons
- find out what the people in your area think about a particular

**Remember to register to vote** If you're not registered, you can't vote. It's as simple as that. In Northern Ireland, you can register to vote if you'll be 17 by the 30 November that year. But you can only start to vote when you turn 18. Luckily, you don't need to register before every election. You need to register if:

- you've never registered to vote
- before you've just become old enough to register
- You need to register to vote again if:
- you've moved house recently
- you've changed your name for any reason
- you're invited to register to vote by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

**Northern Ireland canvass** Every 10 years, a piece of work is carried out to make sure that the electoral register in Northern Ireland is up to date. This is called the canvass. All voters are asked to register to vote so that their details are accurate. Register to vote now Registering to vote takes just five minutes if you do it online. All you need is your National Insurance number. Register to vote now. Registering to vote A little while after you've registered, you'll appear on the electoral register. This is a list of everyone in your area who is registered to vote. It's managed by the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland. You can't check online to see if you're registered to vote. If you have any questions about the electoral register or registering to vote, you should contact the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

**Living at two addresses** Some people split their time between two addresses. For example, you might be a student living away from home, or split your time between two parents' homes. If this is you, you may be able to register to vote at two addresses, as long as your addresses are in different council areas. This doesn't mean you get two votes though. You must only vote at one address in Northern Ireland Assembly elections and UK Parliament elections but you can choose which area to vote in. It's against the law to vote more than once in the same election. In local council elections, you'll be able vote at both addresses as long as you're voting in different council areas.

**Armed forces** If you're 16 or 17 and one of your parents is in the armed forces, you will be able to register to vote as a service voter. This means that if your family is posted to a different country, or if you move around a lot, you'll still be able to vote in elections in Northern Ireland. You'll just need

to remember to renew this every year whilst you're under 18. Living abroad If you're thinking about living in another country outside of the UK one day, even for a little while, you'll still be able to vote in UK Parliamentary elections. As long as you've been registered to vote in the UK, and have been eligible to vote in general elections in the last 15 years, you'll be allowed to continue voting for your MP. If you leave the UK before you are old enough to vote, you'll still be able to register to vote if one of your parents has been registered to vote in UK general elections in the last 15 years. Postal votes can't be sent outside of Northern Ireland, so if you're an overseas or service voter, you'll need to apply for a proxy vote. Take a look at 'how to vote'. Tell us what you think What do you think of these resources? Complete our short survey so we can improve them for the future. It will only take a few minutes to complete. Local councils You can vote in local council elections when you're 18. How often is your rubbish collected? What are the roads in your area like? Do you like your local sports facilities? Your local council makes decisions about all of these issues and many more that affect you on a daily basis. It deals with matters that directly impact your specific local area and is responsible for local services. You might also hear local councils be called local government or local authorities. Councils' responsibilities Councils are responsible for: education services youth and leisure facilities planning decisions, for example, if your neighbour wanted to build an extension on their home social housing managing parks and other public places social services such as foster care, help for people with disabilities, or care for the elderly local roads and footpaths rubbish and recycling libraries checking up on and supporting local businesses registering voters and running elections Types of local councils There are different types of councils in England. The type of council you have depends on where you live. If you live in one of the larger cities in England, like London, Birmingham, or Manchester, you will have a London borough or metropolitan district council. These types of councils cover all local services. If you live in a medium-sized town or city, like Nottingham or Middlesbrough, it's likely that your council will be a unitary authority. A unitary authority is very similar to a metropolitan district council and will look after all of your area's services. They may cover a bigger area than just one town or city. For example North Lincolnshire and North Somerset are both unitary authorities. Typically, if you live in a rural or semi-rural area, your local government will be split into two. You'll have a county council and a district council. A county council covers a large area, like Norfolk or Surrey, and is usually responsible for around 80% of local services like schools, roads and social services. A district council is responsible for more locally-based services like rubbish and recycling, tourism, and support for local businesses. Things work a little bit differently everywhere so you may find that your area isn't exactly like this. Find out what kind of councils you have . As well as these councils, there are thousands of parish and town councils in England. These councils look after services for a small area, like allotments, public halls, pathway lighting and litter bins. They often need permission from the larger council in your area to provide certain services. Some areas also have an elected mayor who has powers in their area. Other areas may only have a civic mayor who is ceremonial with has no real powers and is not elected. You might see them opening new roads or businesses or holding open days at council offices. A small number of councillors form a cabinet or executive. This is the top decision-making group of the council but all decisions they make are guided by broad policies or plans that have been agreed by the council as a whole. If you want to make a complaint or bring up an issue with your elected representative, you need to know which council is responsible

for your area and which council is responsible for that service. Find your council . Who represents you in your local council? The people elected to represent you in your local council are called local councillors. You and others in your area elect them for a four year period. The area covered by your local council is divided into smaller areas called wards. Your local councillor might: be involved in working out how much to spend on local services develop future plans for your area help you to deal with any concern with local services the council provides discuss and set council tax Many councillors work full or part-time in other jobs on top of their work as a councillor. Councillors receive some money to cover costs but are mostly unpaid. You can contact your local councillors to ask them questions about what's happening in your area, or express a concern you may have. You can usually find their contact details on your council's website. You could also attend a council meeting in the public gallery at your local town or city hall and watch how decisions are made. So you know what to expect, it might be useful to ask a local councillor to explain what happens in a council meeting before you go. UK Parliament When you turn 18, you're able to vote in UK Parliament elections. The UK Parliament make decisions which affect the whole of the UK, as well as some which are specific only to England. Decision for the whole of the UK include: defence foreign affairs immigration anything to do with the monarchy Decisions only for England include: education, training and universities protecting the environment and conserving wildlife and natural habitats the NHS developing transport links across England funding for local councils The UK Parliament is made up of two chambers – the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The public vote for the people who sit in the House of Commons. UK Parliament The UK Parliament makes decisions about how the UK is run and makes laws that affect everyone's lives. Its roles includes: providing the funds to do government work by voting for tax protecting the public and the rights of individuals looking closely at government policy and actions - this is known as scrutinising debating the major issues of the day Who represents you in the UK Parliament? The person who represents you in the House of Commons is called a Member of Parliament, or MP for short. Every person in the UK is represented by one MP who covers a large area, called a constituency. The UK is currently divided into 650 constituencies. You elect your MP every five years. Your MP usually splits their time between work at the Houses of Parliament in Westminster in London and local work in your area. You can contact your MP to ask them questions. Find out how to get in touch by visiting the UK Parliament's website . You can also watch debates and meetings in UK Parliament, either from the public gallery or via a live stream on Parliament Live TV . MPs' responsibilities Your MP might: support a campaign to change the law help address the issues of people living in your area by holding regular open meetings help make a law by speaking in a debate in the House of Commons or sitting on a committee in the UK Parliament ask an official question in the House of Commons find out what the people in your area think about a particular issue Remember to register to vote If you're not registered, you can't vote. It's as simple as that. In England, you can register to vote when you're 16, but you can only start to vote when you turn 18. Luckily, you don't need to register before every election. You need to register if: you've never registered to vote before you've just become old enough to register You need to register to vote again if: you've moved house recently you've changed your name for any reason You'll stay registered to vote as long as you live at that address and don't change your name. When you become old enough to vote in different elections, your record will be updated automatically. Registering to vote takes just five minutes if you do it online and all you'll need

is your National Insurance number. Register to vote Register to vote now .

Registering to vote A little while after you've registered, you'll appear on the electoral register. This is a list of everyone in your area who is registered to vote. These lists are managed by your local council's elections team. You can't check online to see if you're registered to vote, but if you have any questions about the electoral register or registering to vote, you should contact your electoral registration office. They'll be happy to help. Find their contact details .

Living at two addresses Some people split their time between two addresses. For example, you might be a student living away from home, or split your time between two parents' homes. If this is you, you may be able to register to vote at two addresses, as long as your addresses are in different council areas. This doesn't mean you get two votes though. You must only vote at one address in UK Parliament elections but you can choose which area to vote in. It's against the law to vote more than once in the same election. In local council elections, you'll be able vote at both addresses as long as you're voting in different council areas.

Living abroad If you're thinking about living in another country outside of the UK one day, even for a little while, you'll still be able to vote in UK Parliamentary elections. As long as you've been registered to vote in the UK, and have been eligible to vote in UK Parliamentary general elections in the last 15 years, you'll be allowed to continue voting for your MP. If you leave the UK before you are old enough to vote, you'll still be able to register to vote if one of your parents has been registered to vote in UK general elections in the last 15 years.

Tell us what you think What do you think of these resources? Complete our short survey so we can improve them for the future. It will only take a few minutes to complete.

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Overseas voters We're showing you content for England. Select 'change' to see information for other parts of the UK. Introduction We want to show young people that politics and democracy impacts everything around them. From how long they stay in education to the rules of renting, from 5G availability to how often bins are collected. Discussing these topics, and encouraging young people to think about how they can make their voices heard, can help them to become engaged voters and citizens for years to come. We want to provide young people with the knowledge and understanding they need to create change in their communities. We want to give them confidence to vote, and to understand that their vote matters. Tell us what you think about these resources in this short survey.

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Resources Education resources Find lesson places, activities and assembly resources to use with pupils. Date published: 19 July 2023 Welcome to Your Vote Week 2024

Register your interest for Welcome to your Vote Week, taking place in January 2024.

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Summary Schools, Universities and youth groups across the UK are being called on to  
take part in Welcome to Your Vote Week in January 2024, to help young people  
participate in upcoming elections. Register your interest below. Interest form

Welcome to your vote Week 2024 - interest form Your name Email address Are you a....

Are you a.... - None - Young person Youth group educator Teacher Elected

representative University employee University student Other... Enter other... Leave this

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what to expect in elections, and how to actually cast your vote, so you feel  
confident to take part in upcoming elections in your area and know that your vote  
matters. Pass on what you've learned to your friends and family so you can encourage  
as many people as possible to get involved, get informed and use their vote. Your  
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and how your vote is counted Date published: 30 October 2020 Welcome to your vote  
Voting and politics can sometimes feel confusing. There can be a lot of unclear and  
old-fashioned words and explanations and it's easy to feel a bit overwhelmed. This  
guide will help you to feel more confident and knowledgeable about elections in your  
area. Politics can sometimes be difficult to talk about. There are a lot of different  
views on big and small subjects. It can sometimes feel that you're the only one who  
thinks a certain way and you may feel worried about sharing your opinions. It's easy  
to avoid talking about tricky topics but the more we talk about them, the more we can  
learn and the bigger impact we can make. When talking about politics it's always  
important to be respectful of other views. You may think differently to your parents  
or carers, brothers and sisters, or your friends. Having a free flowing discussion  
about politics is great and it's ok to try and persuade someone to your way of  
thinking. Remember to respect the person you're speaking to and to listen to what  
they have to say too. It's good to feel passionately about something, but it's also  
good to remember to treat people fairly. Your location: Change England Northern  
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