

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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