

A guide to polling day - information for media use | Electoral Commission    Search  
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First published: 28 April 2023 Last updated: 28 April 2023 A guide to polling day  
We've pulled together a guide to polling day to help media with reporting. Please  
feel free to use all, or some of the below in your articles. Local elections in  
England On Thursday 4 May 2023, 230 local authorities across England will be holding  
local elections. People will be voting to choose their local councils, and in some  
areas they will also be voting in mayoral elections. Where is my polling station? If  
you have registered to vote, you will receive a poll card through the post from your  
local council. It will tell you where your polling station is. Make sure you check  
your poll card before heading out to vote, in case your polling station has changed  
since you last voted. You can also find out where your polling station is on our  
website , by entering your postcode. Polling stations are open from 07.00 until  
22.00. You can vote at any time within this window. And don't forget, you need to go  
to your designated polling station; you can't go to a different one, for example,  
near where you work. Do I need to take anything with me? Yes, you now need to bring  
an accepted form of photographic ID in order to receive your ballot paper. The full  
list of accepted forms is available on the Electoral Commission website . You can  
bring your poll card with you on the day, but this isn't necessary, and it won't be  
accepted as a form of ID. You can also bring your own pen or pencil if you prefer,  
but there will be pencils at the polling station as well. What if I do not want my ID  
to be checked in public? You can ask to have your ID checked in private. You can also  
request that a female member of staff checks your ID. This request will be granted if  
possible. If you wear a face covering for any reason, such as a mask worn for medical  
reasons or a face veil worn on religious grounds, you will be asked to momentarily  
remove it so polling station staff can check your photo ID looks like you. Face  
coverings can be worn for the rest of the voting process. How do I complete the  
ballot paper? Take your time: read the ballot paper carefully and complete it in line  
with the instructions. Don't write anything else on the paper, or your vote may not  
be counted. If you make a mistake, don't worry – as long as you haven't already put  
it in the ballot box, just let the polling station staff know and they can give you a  
replacement ballot paper. What if I need help? If you're not sure what to do, or need  
any help, just ask the staff at the polling station – they will be happy to assist  
you. What if I have access issues? Changes introduced in the Elections Act permit  
disabled voters to choose anyone who is over 18 to accompany them in the polling  
station to help them vote. If you have a disability which means you can't fill in the  
ballot paper yourself, you can ask the presiding officer – the person in charge of  
the polling station - to mark the ballot paper for you, or you can take someone along  
with you to help you. If you have any questions about what will be available at the  
polling station, you can contact your local council. Should I tell anyone who I voted  
for? Your vote is yours and yours alone: you do not need to tell anyone how you  
voted. Exit polls are sometimes conducted, where people – usually private companies  
working for newspapers or broadcasters – ask voters leaving the polling station who  
they voted for to help them predict what the outcome might be. You do not need to  
respond to their questions if you don't want to. Political discussion is not allowed  
inside and immediately around the polling station and staff will ask you to stop so  
that there's no risk of influencing other voters. If you want to debate your vote  
with friends or family, do it away from the polling station. What are 'tellers'? Why  
are they asking for the number on my poll card? You might see people outside the  
polling station who ask you for the number on your poll card. These people are called

'tellers', and are volunteering on behalf of candidates or parties. They will use the information you give them to check who has voted, and to remind people who haven't yet voted, to do so. They are allowed to be there and to ask for the information, but you don't have to give them any information if you don't want to. If you are concerned about the conduct of a teller, speak to a member of staff at the polling station. Can I take selfies or other photos while I'm voting? You shouldn't take photos inside the polling station as it might put the secrecy of the ballot at risk. You are more than welcome to take photos outside the polling station and share them on social media to encourage your friends and family to vote. Can I take my friend / partner / children / parents / dog? You can go along to the polling station with whomever you like, but only those registered to vote at that station will be able to go inside. You must not be accompanied into the polling booth by another adult, unless you have a disability, in which case you can take someone in to help you, or you can ask one of the polling station staff for their help. Children are welcome at polling stations. While your child must not mark the ballot paper for you, you will be allowed to take them into the polling booth with you. With the exception of assistance dogs, animals are not usually allowed inside polling stations, so will need to be secured outside if you do decide to take them with you. Related content Our Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find out more about them Registers of unincorporated associations Download and view the registers of unincorporated associations