

This guide will explain what **voting** is and why it is **important**.



It's important to remember that you must register to vote in order to vote!

The people that run the country are called politicians.

They make important decisions that can affect some people's lives.

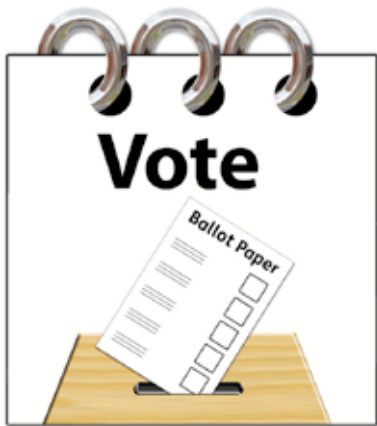


For example, the Government makes important decisions that can change:

- Hate crime laws
- How people with a learning disability get support
- How people with a learning disability get healthcare.



Different politicians have different ideas about the best way to run the country.



Politicians are elected. This means people get to decide which politicians they would like to run the country.

People call this an election.

You can decide which politicians run the country by voting.

Voting is one of the best ways for people to have their voice heard by people in power.

Politicians are usually part of a political party. There are lots of political parties. Each party is made up of politicians who agree on how the country should be run. You can also vote for candidates who are not part of a political party. They stand as independent candidates.

In England, some political parties are:

- The Conservative Party
- The Green Party
- The Labour Party
- The Liberal Democrats
- The UK Independence Party.

In Northern Ireland, some political parties are:

- Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
- Democratic Unionist Party
- Green Party in Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Conservatives
- Progressive Unionist Party
- Sinn Féin
- Ulster Unionist Party
- UK Independence Party.

In Wales, some political parties are:

- Welsh Conservative Party
- Welsh Green Party
- Welsh Labour
- Welsh Liberal Democrats
- Plaid Cymru
- UK Independence Party.

In Scotland, some political parties:

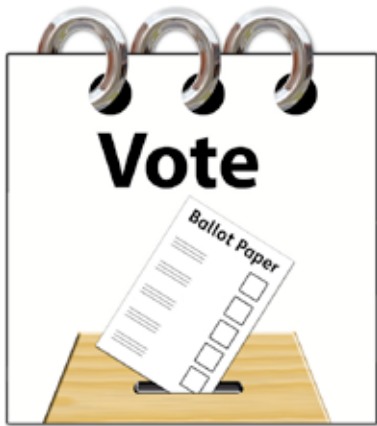
- Conservative and Unionist Party
- Labour Party
- Scottish Green Party
- Scottish National Party
- Scottish Liberal Democrats
- UK Independence Party.



People with a learning disability have the same rights to vote as everybody else. If you are over 18 years old you may be able to vote.



People with a learning disability should vote so they have a say about things that effect their lives.



The next General Election will be on the 7 May 2015.

In this election you can vote for who you would like to make some of the most important decisions in the country.

People will vote to choose who they would like to be their local MP.

MPs make important decisions that affect the whole country. Most MPs are part of a political party.

The party with the highest number of MPs usually forms the Government.

The leader of the winning party then becomes Prime Minister.