

2017

Easy Read Guide to Voting in the General Election



The
Electoral
Commission

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1

What is voting?

This section explains what voting is and how it works

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



People with a learning disability have as much right to vote as anyone else. Don't let anyone else tell you different.

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 the general election 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 affect their lives.



The next General Election will be on the 8 June 2017.

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 Member of Parliament (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.

2

Registering to vote

This section explains how someone can register to vote



This section explains how to **register to vote**.

It is important that you register to vote. You cannot vote unless you register.

You can find out more about voting on the Mencap website:

www.mencap.org.uk/voting-and-registering-vote



Elections allow you to choose who you want to run the country and your local area.

If you live in England, Scotland or Wales you can register to vote online at **www.gov.uk/register-to-vote**.

If you live in Northern Ireland you will need to contact the Northern Ireland Electoral Office at **www.eoni.org.uk/Register-To-Vote/Register-to-vote-change-address-change-name**

You need to register by **Monday 22 May 2017**.

You need to register to vote every time you move home.



- **At a polling station** - Before an election you will be posted a poll card.

Your poll card will tell you where your nearest polling station is. Your local polling station is where you can vote in person.

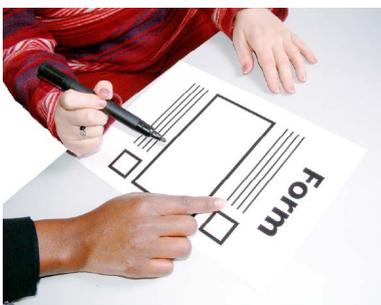
Polling stations are often at churches, community centres and schools. However they can be in all sorts of places.



- **By post** - You will need to contact your local electoral services team who will send you a form.

You should fill out the postal vote application form and send it back to your local electoral services team.

Before elections, you will receive a ballot paper in the post.



- **By proxy** - Voting by proxy means choosing someone else to vote for you. You need to fill in a new form to choose who will vote for you. This person can visit a polling station or apply for a postal vote in order to vote on your behalf.



What happens next?

Once you have registered to vote, you can vote in the General Election.



Need help?

You can find out more about voting on the Mencap website:

www.mencap.org.uk/voting-and-registeringvote

If you have any questions you can call the Mencap election hotline on **0207 696 6009**.

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Voting by post

This section explains how someone can apply for a postal vote.



This guide explains **how to apply to vote by post.**

You can find out more about voting on the Mencap website:

www.mencap.org.uk/voting-and-registeringvote

This guide includes a link to the form you will need to fill in to register to vote.

You need to register to vote every time you move home. To do this, you can register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote



You should call your local electoral services team at your Local Authority and say you would like to vote by post.

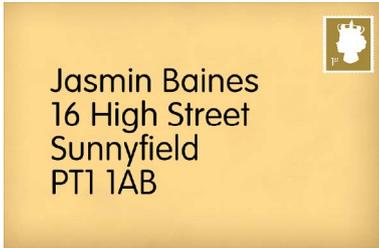
You will be sent another form.

You can also call **0800 3 280 280.**

If you live in Northern Ireland you will need to contact the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland.

You can contact them and find the application form at **www.eoni.org.uk/home.**

You can also contact **EONI** on **0800 4320 712.**



Completing the Postal Vote Application

Address

First, fill out the Address section.

You will need to write the address where you are registered to vote.



About You

Next, fill out the About You section.

Write your name and your title (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms).



How long do you want a postal vote for?

Fill out the 'How long do you want a postal vote for?' section.

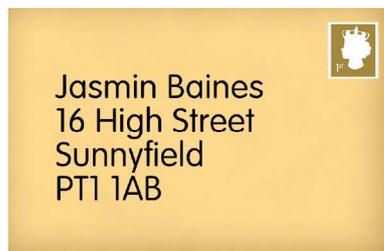
You will need to say for how long you would like to vote by post.

You can vote by post until further notice. This means you will later say when you don't want to vote by post anymore.

You can choose to vote by post for a certain length of time. For example, you could say you only want to vote by post between 2017 and 2022.

You can choose to vote by post for a specific election. You will need to give the date and name of the election.

Contact information
email: campaigns@mencap.org.uk
telephone: 0207 696 6009



Address for Postal Ballot Paper

Next, fill out the 'Address for postal ballot paper' section.

Write the address you would like your ballot paper to be sent to.



Declaration

Finally, fill out the 'Your declaration' section.

Write your date of birth and sign in the box.

If you can't sign get in touch with your local electoral services team and they can help.

Post your form to the address provided.

If you live in Northern Ireland the application form is different. You may want to ask someone to help you complete the form.



What happens next

Before elections, you will receive a postal ballot pack and a ballot paper that shows you who you can vote for.

The postal ballot pack will tell you where you should post the paper.

If you live in England, Scotland or Wales you can also take your postal ballot pack to your local polling station on election day.

Need help?

You can find out more about voting on the Mencap website:

www.mencap.org.uk/voting-and-registeringvote

If you get stuck or have any questions, you can call the Mencap team on **0207 696 6009**.



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Voting by proxy

This section explains how someone can apply to vote by proxy
(this means someone votes on behalf of someone else)

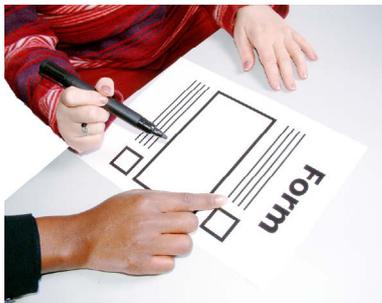


This guide explains **how to apply to register to vote by proxy.**

Registering by proxy means that you choose someone to vote on your behalf.

You can find out more about voting on the Mencap website:

www.mencap.org.uk/voting-and-registering-vote



If you live in England, Wales or Scotland you should call your local electoral services team to say you would like to vote by proxy.

You will be sent a form called 'Application to vote by proxy due to disability'. The form will be very similar to the electoral registration form.

If you live in Northern Ireland you can find the application form at **<http://www.eoni.org.uk/Vote/Voting-by-post-or-proxy>**.

You can also contact the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland on 0800 4320 712

If you live in Northern Ireland the application form is different. You may want to ask someone to help you complete the form.



Now fill in the following sections

About You

First, fill out the 'About you' section. You do not have to write your telephone number or your email address.

You will need to write the address where you are registered to vote.



About Your Proxy

Next, fill out the details of the person you have chosen as your proxy.

How long do you want a proxy vote for?

Next, fill out the 'How long do you want a proxy vote for' section.



You will need to say for how long you would like to vote by proxy.

You can choose to vote by proxy until further notice. This means you will say when you don't want to vote by proxy anymore.

You can choose to vote by proxy for a certain length of time. For example, you could say you only want to vote by proxy between 2017 and 2022.

You can vote by proxy for a specific election. You will need to give the date and the name of the election.



Why do you want a proxy vote?

Next, fill out the 'Why do you want a proxy vote' section.

You can vote by proxy for many reasons including

- You are registered blind
- You get the higher rate of the mobility component of the personal independence payment
- You need to work away from home.

You can also explain why you think you should have a proxy vote.

You will need someone to support your explanation. The following people can support your application:

- A doctor, dentist, pharmacist or nurse
- A social worker
- A manager of a residential care home.



Need help?

You can find out more about voting on the Mencap website:

www.mencap.org.uk/voting-and-registering-vote

If you get stuck or have any questions, you can call the Mencap team on **0207 696 6009**.



5

Voting at a polling station

This section explains how someone votes at a polling station



Polling stations are often at churches, community centres and schools. However they can be in all sorts of places.



Polling stations are open from 7am to 10 pm.

It can be useful to take your poll card with you.

When you arrive at a polling station, you will be asked to give your name and address.



5.4

Voting at a polling station



If you live in Northern Ireland you need to take a correct form of photo ID with you to the polling station. This can be:

A UK, Irish or European driving licence

A UK or Irish passport

Electoral Identity card

A Translink 60+ or Senior smart pass.

Your ID does not need to be current. This means that even if it is out of date you can still use it to vote.

No other forms of photo ID can be accepted at the polling station.

You will be given a ballot paper. This is a form that shows who you can vote for.

You should put a cross next to the name of the candidate you want to vote for.

There will be people working at the polling station. You can ask them to help you read and understand your ballot paper. **They can also help you fill in your ballot paper.**

You can go to a polling station with a support worker. **They can also help you fill in your ballot paper.**

Everyone who is registered to vote has the right to vote.





You can find out more about voting on the Mencap website:

www.mencap.org.uk/voting-and-registering-vote

If you get stuck registering to vote or need help understanding voting, you can call the Mencap team on **0207 696 6009**.

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Terms we use in this guide

This section explains specific useful words, like councillor, ballot box, polling station etc. which you will come across in this guide

Electoral Register

The electoral register is the list of everyone that is allowed to **vote** in **elections**. You need to be on the electoral register to be able to vote.

Government

The **Government** is usually the **political party** that gets the most amount of **MPs** at the **General Election**. Sometimes political parties form a Coalition Government. This is when political parties work together to form a Government.

Member of Parliament

Members of Parliament (**MPs**) are **politicians** who are elected to represent your area at the Houses of Parliament. They help make decisions that affect the whole country.

Snap Election

A **snap election** is when MPs agree that an election should take place earlier than planned.

Parliament

Parliament is the name for both the House of Commons and House of Lords

Political Parties

A **political party** is a group of people who think the country should be run in a certain way.

Politicians are usually in political parties. There are also candidates that are independent from political parties.

Politician

Politicians are **elected** by people **voting** for them. They make important decisions that can impact on most people's lives. Different politicians have different ideas about the best ways to run the country.

Polling station

A **polling station** is a place where you go to **vote**. Polling stations are often at churches, community centres and schools however they can be in all sorts of places. You will be told where your nearest polling station is on your poll card.

UK General Election

A **General Election** decides which **political party or parties** will govern the country. The political party that has the most **MPs** elected usually wins the election. They will usually become the **government**.

Voting

Voting means that you and other people choose who represents you on a **council** or in **parliament**. In politics, voting happens during an **election**. Voting is very important. It is one of the best ways to get your voice heard by some of the most important people in the country.

Notes



The Electoral Commission

Contact information
email: campaigns@mencap.org.uk
telephone: **0207 696 6009**