

2021

Easy Read Guide to Voting in the
May Senedd and Police Crime
Commissioner elections in Wales



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's **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.



On Thursday 6 May 2021, there will be Senedd and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in Wales.

This is the first time that 16 and 17 year olds and foreign citizens can vote in the Senedd election.

The Senedd and Police and Crime Commissioner make important decisions that can affect people's lives.



This booklet explains what you need to know before the elections, and tells you where you can find further information

Senedd elections



The Senedd has powers to make laws for Wales on a range of areas including health, the economy, education, housing, transport, and varying some taxes.



The Senedd is made up of 60 Members of the Senedd (MS) who are elected by the people of Wales to represent them.

40 MS represent Wales' constituencies (your local area) and 20 MS represent five regions: North Wales, Mid and West Wales, South Wales West, South Wales East, and South Wales Central.



For more information about the Senedd and to see a map of your constituency or region, go to **senedd.wales/find-a-member-of-the-senedd**

Contact information
email: helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk
telephone: **0808 8000 300**



In elections people with a learning disability have the same rights to vote as everybody else.

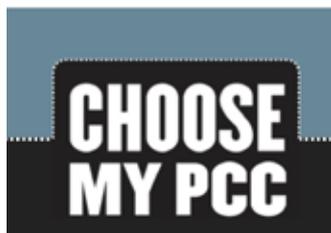


People with a learning disability should vote so they have a say about things that affect their lives.



Police and Crime Commissioner election

A Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) oversees your local police force and ensures they are prioritising what matters to you.



To find out who is standing for election in your police force area and to see information from candidates, visit **[choosemypcc.org.uk](https://www.choosemypcc.org.uk)**



To find out more about the PCC role, visit **[electoralcommission.org.uk/voter](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voter)**

Contact information
email: **helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk**
telephone: **0808 8000 300**



Can I vote in the Senedd election?

You can vote in the Senedd election if you are registered to vote in Wales, will be **16 years old or over** on Thursday 6 May, and are:

- a British or Irish citizen, or
- a Commonwealth citizen who has leave to remain in the UK, or does not require such leave, or
- a citizen of a European Union country, or
- a qualifying foreign citizen who has permission to enter or stay in the UK, or who does not need such permission



Can I vote in the Police and Crime Commissioner election?

You can vote in the Police and Crime Commissioner election if you are registered to vote in Wales, will be **18 years old or over** on Thursday 6 May, and are:

- a British or Irish citizen, or
- a Commonwealth citizen who has leave to remain in the UK, or does not require such leave,
- or a citizen of a European Union country



If you are 16 or 17 years old, or a foreign national, you will not be able to vote in the Police and Crime Commissioner election. British citizens living overseas can't vote in either of these elections.

Contact information
email: helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk
telephone: **0808 8000 300**

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Registering to vote

This section explains how you can register to vote



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

It is important that you register to vote. If you are not registered to vote you won't be able to vote in an election.

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

www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-mencap/elections

People living in Wales can register to vote online at **www.gov.uk/register-to-vote**



You have to be registered to vote by midnight on Monday 19 April 2021 to vote in these elections.

It's important that you register to vote as early as possible.

If you've never registered or have recently moved house, register to vote online at **www.gov.uk/register-to-vote** or call **0800 3 280 280** for more information.



Information is correct at the time of print on 9 February 2021. For the latest information about the elections and Covid-19 safety measures, go to **electoralcommission.org.uk/voter** or call your local council.

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

Contact information
email: **helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk**
telephone: **0808 8000 300**



There are three ways you can vote and you should pick the one that works best for you.

At your polling station on Thursday 6 May 2021

You will be sent a poll card telling you where your polling station is. You don't need your poll card to vote and if you lose it, or don't receive it, you can contact your local council to find out where your polling station is.

Polling stations are open from 7am to 10pm.



By post

To apply to vote by post, complete a postal vote application form and send it to your local electoral registration office to arrive by 5pm on Tuesday 20 April 2021.

You will receive your ballot papers by post. Complete and return your ballot papers, making sure you leave enough time for them to arrive by 10pm on Thursday 6 May 2021.

By proxy (allowing somebody you trust to vote on your behalf)

To apply to vote by proxy, complete an application form and send it to your local electoral registration office to arrive by 5pm on Tuesday 27 April 2021.



In an emergency where you cannot go to the polling station in person, you can apply for an emergency proxy up to 5pm on Thursday 6 May 2021.

Contact information
email: helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk
telephone: **0808 8000 300**

For more information, or to get to a postal or proxy application form, go to **electoralcommission.org.uk/voter** or call our helpline on **0800 3 280 280**.



Need help?

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

www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-mencap/elections

If you have any questions you can call the Wales Learning Disability Helpline on **0808 8000 300**.

Contact information
email: **helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk**
telephone: **0808 8000 300**

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Voting by post

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

How do I vote in a Police and Crime Commissioner election?



The ballot paper will list all the candidates standing in your area.

For this election you can vote for a first and a second choice candidate.

Next to the list of candidates there will be two columns. You will be asked to:

- vote for your first choice candidate by marking a cross (X) in the first choice column, and
- vote for your second choice candidate by marking a cross (X) in the second choice column



As long as you mark one cross in the first choice column, your vote will be counted.

If you have marked a first choice, you can choose whether or not to mark a second choice. But, if you only mark a cross in the second choice column, your vote won't be counted.

How can I find out more?

If you have any questions, or would like to obtain this leaflet in another format, go to **electoralcommission.org.uk/voter** or call our helpline on 0800 3 280 280.



www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter

The deadline for postal vote applications is 5pm, Tuesday 20 April 2021.

Contact information
email: **helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk**
telephone: **0808 8000 300**



Completing the Postal Vote Application

Once your application form has arrived in the post you need to fill it in.

About You

First, fill out the About You section.

Write your full name.



There are boxes to write your phone number or your email in but you don't have to fill them in if you don't want to. They are just there to help the electoral services team get in touch with you if they need to.

Address

Next, fill out the Address section. You will need to write the address where you live.

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.

If you would like to vote by post at all elections you should tick the box "until further notice." That means you will be sent a postal vote for all elections unless you contact the electoral services team to say you would like to stop voting by post.

Contact information
email: helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk
telephone: **0808 8000 300**



If you would rather just vote by post for one election, you should add the date for that election. Or you can pick a period of time to have postal votes. For example from 01/05/2020 to 01/05/24.



Address for Postal Ballot Paper

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

Write the address you would like your postal ballot paper(s) to be sent to. This is usually your home address but if you are going to be away for example on holiday you can add the address where you will be staying.



Declaration

Finally, fill out the 'Your date of birth and declaration'. 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.

Then post your form to the address provided.

If you can't post the form back yourself, either give it to somebody you know and trust to post it for you, or ring your local electoral services team to see if they can collect it from you.

Contact information
email: helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk
telephone: **0808 8000 300**



What happens next

Before the election, you will receive a postal ballot pack and ballot papers that show you who you can vote for.



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

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 by post on the Mencap website:

www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-mencap/elections

If you have any questions you can call the Wales Learning Disability Helpline on **0808 8000 300**.



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email: **helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk**
telephone: **0808 8000 300**



Voting by proxy

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

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

Voting by proxy means that you choose someone to vote for you. You can find out more about voting on the Mencap website:

www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-mencap/elections



If you would like to vote by proxy you should call your local electoral services team to tell them and they will be able to send you a form. You will be sent a form called 'Application to vote by proxy due to disability'.



The deadline for proxy vote applications is **5pm, Tuesday 27 April 2021.**

Contact information
email: **helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk**
telephone: **0808 8000 300**



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 if you do not want to.

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 vote by proxy until you say that 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 01/05/20 and 01/05/24.

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

Contact information
email: helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk
telephone: **0808 8000 300**



Why do you want a proxy vote?

If you would like to vote by proxy for all elections in the future you will need to request a permanent proxy application form from the electoral services team at your local council. On the form you will be asked why you would like a proxy vote.

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 also 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.

If you would like a proxy vote for just one election then you do not need someone like a doctor or a nurse to support your application, you just need give the reason why you cannot get to the polling station on election day.



Need help?

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



www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/campaigning/guides-voting



If you have any questions you can call the Wales Learning Disability Helpline on **0808 8000 300**.

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Voting at a polling station

This section explains how you vote at a polling station

This section explains **how to vote at a polling station.**

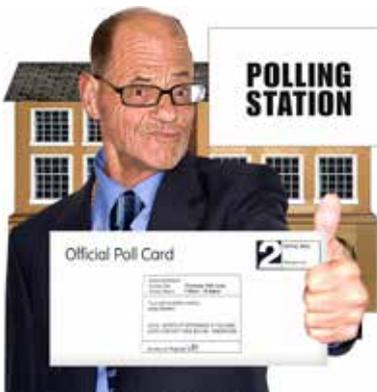
You can find out more about voting on the Mencap website:

www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-mencap/elections

When you have registered to vote, you can vote in person at a polling station.

Before an election, you will be sent a poll card.

This card will tell you where your nearest polling station is to where you live and where you need to go to vote.



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

Polling stations are open from **7am to 10pm.**

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

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



Contact information
email: **helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk**
telephone: **0808 8000 300**



If you are unsure what to do when you get to the polling station, ask the staff at the polling station – they are there to help you.

You can also ask someone to come along to the polling station with you to help you. For example, a family member who is over 18 or a support worker who can also vote in the same election as you are. **They can also help you fill in your ballot paper.**

If you don't have anyone with you and you need help filling in your ballot paper the Presiding Officer can help you. The Presiding Officer is the person in charge at the polling station.

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



At the polling station you will be given your **ballot papers**. A ballot paper is a piece of paper with all the names of the candidates on it. You mark the ballot papers by putting an 'X' next to the name of the person you would like to represent you.

What can I expect at the polling station?

Polling stations will be safe places to vote during Covid-19.

- You will be expected to use the hand sanitiser provided when you enter and exit the polling station
- You must wear a face covering at all times (unless you are exempt).
- You can bring your own pen or pencil to mark your ballot papers, but clean pencils will be provided.
- Social distancing measures will be in place.
- There may be a one-way system in operation.
- You may have to queue to enter the polling station as there will be a limit to the number of voters allowed in the building at any one time.



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

www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/campaigning/guides-voting

If you have any questions you can call the Wales Learning Disability Helpline on **0808 8000 300**.

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Important dates

This section tells you the important dates you need to remember for the elections in May 2021

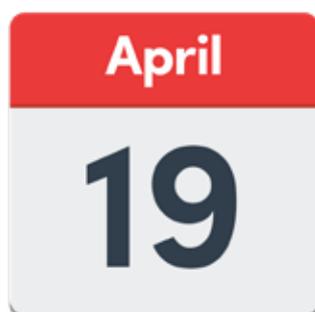
Important dates for the local elections

You might want to put some of these important dates in your diary or your calendar.



Election Day

Election day for the Senedd and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in Wales in 2021 is **Thursday 6th May**. You can vote in your polling station between 7am and 10pm.



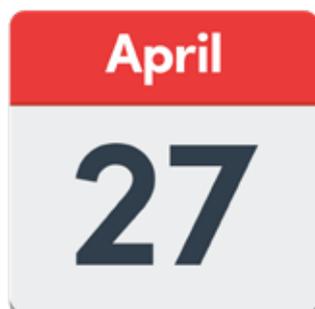
Register to Vote Deadline

If you want to vote in the local election, the deadline for registering to vote is **midnight on Monday 19th April 2021**.



Postal Vote Application Deadline

If you would like to vote by post, you must send in your application by **5pm, Tuesday 20th April 2021**.



Proxy Vote Application Deadline

If you would like to vote by proxy, you must send in your application by **5pm, Tuesday 27th April 2021**.

Contact information
email: helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk
telephone: **0808 8000 300**

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Terms we use in this guide

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



Members of the Senedd and Police and Crime Commissioners are usually in political parties. There are also candidates that are independent from political parties.



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.



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.



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 polling station is on your poll card.

Contact information
email: helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk
telephone: **0808 8000 300**



Presiding Officer

The Presiding Officer is the person in charge of a polling station on election day. They are there to make sure the election goes smoothly and they are also there to help if you have a question or would like someone to support you when you vote.



Ballot Box

The **ballot box** is where you put your ballot paper when you vote at a polling station. It is a big box used to keep all the votes safe until they are ready to be counted.



Ballot Paper

Everyone who votes is given one **ballot paper**. This is a piece of paper with all the names of the candidates on it. You mark the ballot paper by putting an 'X' next to the name of the person you would like to represent you.

After voting has closed all the ballot papers are counted and the winners are declared.

Contact information
email: helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk
telephone: **0808 8000 300**



Postal Vote

A postal vote is when someone is sent their ballot paper in the post and they fill it in and post it back. This means they don't vote at the polling station on polling day.



Proxy Vote

Voting by proxy means choosing someone else to vote for you. You need to fill in a 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.

Notes

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The
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