

WELCOME TO YOUR VOTE

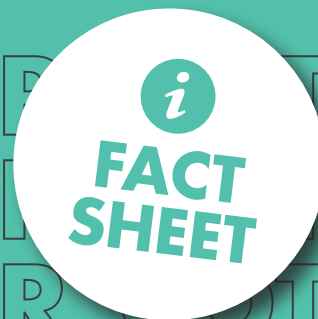
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VOTING IN COUNCIL ELECTIONS

What is a by-election?

Councils are usually elected every five years. Sometimes, councillor positions become vacant when an elected councillor chooses to step down. This could be for a variety of reasons, such as illness, other work commitments, or personal family matters.

When this happens, elections are held to elect a new councillor to this position. This is called a by-election. By-elections take place only in the area where a new councillor is needed.



What does your council do?

Your council deals with matters that directly impact your local area.

You might also hear councils be called local government or local authorities.

Your council is responsible for:

- education services
- youth and leisure facilities
- planning decisions, for example, if your neighbour wanted to build an extension
- council housing
- managing parks and other public places
- social services such as help for people with disabilities, or care for the elderly
- local roads and footpaths
- rubbish and recycling
- libraries
- registering voters and running local elections



Who represents you in your council?

The people elected to represent you on your council are called councillors.

The area covered by your council is divided into smaller areas called wards. Your ward could be represented by up to four councillors.

Many councillors have other jobs on top of their work as a councillor.

You can contact your councillors to ask them questions about what's happening in your area, or to tell them about a concern you may have. You'll usually find their contact details on your council's website.

How are councils elected?

Councillors are elected using a system called Single Transferable Vote. The paper you use to vote, called a ballot paper, will have instructions about how to cast your vote.

Your ballot paper will list the names and political parties of the candidates in your area.

Put a '1' in the box next to your first choice of candidate, a '2' next to your second choice, a '3' next to your third choice and so on. You can do this for all the people you want to vote for. You don't have to put a number beside every name if you don't want to – you could just vote for one candidate.



Your ballot paper will look similar to this:

<p>[NAME OF COUNCIL] - [NAME OF WARD]</p> <p>[Number to be elected] of the candidates listed below will be elected. You can make as many or as few choices as you wish.</p> <p>Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice. Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice. Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.</p>	
<p>ANDERSON Hans 57 Easter Road, Anytown Rowan Party</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party</p>	<input type="checkbox" value="2"/>
<p>FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent</p>	<input type="checkbox" value="4"/>
<p>HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>KUMA Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytown Elm Party</p>	<input type="checkbox" value="1"/>
<p>MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Avenue, Anytown Oak Party</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>MACKENZIE Robert William Sutherland 192 Blackhall Road, Anytown Independent</p>	<input type="checkbox" value="3"/>
<p>MASTERS Susan Caroline 93 Hollyrood Road, Anytown Sycamore Party</p>	<input type="checkbox" value="5"/>

HOW CAN YOU VOTE?

You must be registered to be able to vote. Every voter must register to vote individually. It's quick and easy to register to vote at [gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

There are three different ways you can vote. You can choose the way that suits you.

Before the day of the election, known as polling day, you'll receive a card, called a poll card. Everyone who is registered to vote in your household will receive their own poll card.



1. At the polling place

On polling day, you'll need to go to your polling place. You can find out where your polling place is by checking your poll card. It's usually a public building like a nearby school or village hall.

Polling places are 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 own polling place. Your polling place might not be the closest one to your house, so it is important to check. If you're unsure, contact the elections team at your council and they will be able to help. You can find their contact details by visiting [electoralcommission.org.uk](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk), searching for 'your election information' and entering your postcode.

Due to COVID-19, there will be safety measures in place at the polling places, to help you stay safe. There will be physical distancing and there may be a limit on how many people are allowed inside the polling place.

When you go inside, you will be expected to wear a face covering like you do when you go into shops or on public transport. The polling place staff will be behind protective screens, like staff in shops, but you'll still be able to ask them for help if you need it.



2. 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.

You need to register for a postal vote with your electoral registration office no later than 11 days before polling day – but the sooner the better.

You can download an application form by visiting **electoralcommission.org.uk** and searching for 'postal vote'. Or, you can ask your electoral registration office to send one to you. You will need to give 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 envelope provided and post it to the council to be counted.

Here are some things to consider 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
- if you have been sent a postal vote, you cannot vote in person at a polling place



3. Someone else can vote on your behalf

You can also ask someone you trust to vote on your behalf. This is called a proxy vote and your trusted person is called your proxy.

You need to tell your proxy who you'd like to vote for and they 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 days before polling day. You can download an application form by visiting **electoralcommission.org.uk** and searching for 'proxy vote'. Or, you can ask your electoral registration office to send one to you.



If you change your mind and want 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.

Remember to register to vote at **gov.uk/registertovote**