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Introduction

Voting in an election is an exciting opportunity that we have as members of a democratic society. However some of us do not value that option when we fail to exercise our right to vote.

Reasons to vote

- > Voting gives you a say on who runs the country, who sits on your local council and who represents you in Europe
- > Voting give you a say on important issues that affect you
- > All across the world, people have died fighting for the right to vote and be part of a democracy
- > Showing that you care with your vote tells candidates that they must be accountable to the public
- > Voting in elections sets a positive example to others who may be uninterested or unfamiliar with the electoral system.

Who can vote in a General Election

To vote in a General Election you must:

- > be registered to vote
- > be 18 or over on the day of the election ('polling day')
- > be a British, Irish or qualifying Commonwealth citizen
- > be resident at an address in the UK (or a British citizen living abroad who has been registered to vote in the UK in the last 15 years)
- > not be legally excluded from voting

There are 650 Members of Parliament (MPs) in the UK Parliament.

MPs are elected using the First Past the Post system. You vote once for a candidate in your constituency and the candidate with the most votes becomes your MP.

Register to vote

The quickest and easiest way to [register to vote is online on the GOV.UK website \(https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote\)](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

You need to be on the electoral register to vote in elections and referendums. [You may register to vote online \(https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote\)](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote), registering takes around 5 minutes and you will need your National Insurance number (if you have one).

You can also register by post using the [voter registration forms available from the GOV.UK website \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/voter-registration-forms-paper-versions\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/voter-registration-forms-paper-versions).

Vote in person

Most people in the UK choose to cast their vote in person at their local [polling station](#). Voting at a polling station is very straightforward and there is always a member of staff available to help you if you are not sure what to do.

If you are on the electoral register, you will receive a poll card before the election telling you when and where to vote. The polling station is often a school or local hall near where you live. The poll card you receive is for information only, and you do not need to take it to the polling station with you in order to vote.

You can find further [advice about voting in person \(https://www.yourvotematters.co.uk/how-do-i-vote/voting-in-person\)](https://www.yourvotematters.co.uk/how-do-i-vote/voting-in-person) on the your vote matters website.

Vote by post

[A postal voter](#) is an elector who has applied to have his/her ballot paper sent to their home address, or another specified address. Special envelopes are supplied to enable the ballot paper to be marked in private and returned to the Town Hall.

Vote by proxy

[A proxy voter](#) is a person who has been appointed to vote on behalf of another elector. The proxy will normally attend the voter's polling station and be handed the voter's ballot paper. In certain circumstances, the proxy may apply to vote by post on behalf of the elector.