



Voting and People with an Intellectual Disability

Who is eligible to vote?

To be eligible to be included on the Register of Electors, you must:

- be at least 18 years old on the day the Register comes into force (15 February)
- have been ordinarily resident in the State on 1 September in the year preceding the Register coming into force

Which Elections/Referenda Can I vote for?

- Irish citizens can vote in every election and referendum
- British citizens may vote at Dáil, European and local elections
- Other EU citizens may vote at European and local elections
- Non-EU citizens can vote at local elections only

You must be in the State on the day of the election and be eligible to do so as per the above rules. There is no provision to post a vote from another country.

Voters with disabilities

There are certain accommodations in place for some voters with disabilities including;

- vote at an alternative polling station if the local station is inaccessible
- be helped to vote at the polling station by a companion or the presiding officer
- vote by post
- vote at a hospital, nursing home or similar institution if you live there.

promoting rights, independence, dignity and equality

Companion voting

People with a visual impairment or physical disability may bring a companion along to mark the ballot paper for them. This person must be aged 16 or over and can help up to two people at an election. The companion marks the ballot paper on behalf of the person with the disability's wishes and places the paper in the ballot box.

People with intellectual disabilities and literacy difficulties can also have a companion voter. In this case the presiding officer, the person in charge of running the polling station, will assist the voter. The presiding officer and another agent go to an area where they can discuss the ballot paper without being overheard. The presiding officer marks the paper according to the instructions of the voter.

Refusing Access to Vote

A presiding officer may refuse a person with a disability access to vote if they require assistance to do so and arrive in the last two hours of voting. This is because the officer may feel it is obstructing other voters from voting.

If a presiding officer considers that you do not have the capacity to vote s/he may refuse a person access to vote. There is no law to govern this and no test in place. It is therefore at the discretion of the presiding officer.