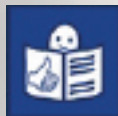




**INCLUSION IRELAND**

National Association for People with an Intellectual Disability

# **Inclusion Ireland Guide to Voting**



promoting rights, independence, dignity and equality



**Inclusion Ireland** is a national organisation that promotes the rights of people with an intellectual disability in Ireland

It has 170 member organisations that provide supports and services to people with an intellectual disability

It also has over 300 individual members

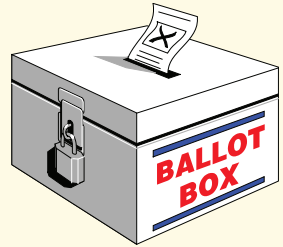
### What does Inclusion Ireland do?

- ◆ Provides information, advice and advocacy to people with an intellectual disability, their families and others
- ◆ Publishes information leaflets & booklets
- ◆ Publishes a newsletter
- ◆ Organises seminars and conferences
- ◆ Gives information talks to different groups
- ◆ Promotes advocacy services for people with an intellectual disability
- ◆ Promotes self advocacy for people with an intellectual disability
- ◆ Promotes research into intellectual disability

The services provided by **Inclusion Ireland** are available to people all over Ireland

## What is an Election?

An Election is when people living in a country vote on who they want to represent them.



## Why Should I Vote?

It is your right to vote.

If you don't vote then you don't have a say in who the TDs are and that means you don't have a say in healthcare, social welfare, the law, education, employment and many more areas.

You should choose someone who you think will work hard on your behalf.

## Who Can I Vote For?

People living in Ireland can vote for different people to do different jobs.

Councillors – work in your community. Everybody living in Ireland can vote for Councillors.

TDs - represent people from areas around the country called constituencies. TDs are members of Dáil Éireann. Dáil Éireann is the parliament in Ireland. TDs represent people from their area or constituency at national level.

Irish and British people living here can vote for TDs.

MEPs – work in the European Union, with representatives from other countries such as France, Britain, Germany and many more. All people from the European Union living here can vote for MEPs.

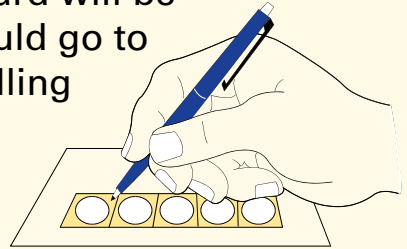
Before an Election you will see posters of the people who want to be elected. These people are called candidates. You will also get leaflets in the post.

The candidates call to people's houses to look for votes and hear suggestions. This is called canvassing.

## How Do I Vote?

Most people vote at a polling station, usually in a school or hall near where you live.

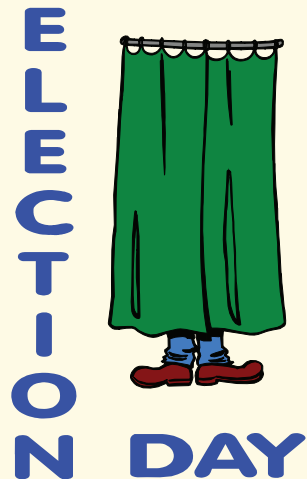
Before the election a polling card will be posted to your home. You should go to the polling station with the polling card with you.



The names and photos of candidates, who want to be elected, are on a sheet of paper, called a ballot.

You fill in the polling card by putting numbers in the boxes beside their name. You put number 1 for your first choice. You can choose one person if you want or you can choose as many as you want. If you choose more than one you put the numbers 2,3,4 etc. in the boxes beside their names.

This sheet is placed in a box with all the other votes, where they are counted later on. You don't put your name or address or any personal information on the sheet and voting is kept secret.



## Are there any supports for Voters?

The polling station must be accessible, meaning that everyone can get in and use it.

If it isn't then a person can vote at another place. If you need to vote in another building you must write to the polling officer, who is in charge, at least one week before the election.



People who have sight problems or difficulty reading can get a companion to help mark the form. The companion can not decide for you. They can only help you read the form and write down your choice.

If you have difficulty making up your mind about who to vote for, it's ok to talk to your friends, key workers, tutors or family members, but the choice is yours to make.

## Referendum

A referendum is another type of vote. In a referendum you don't vote for people to represent you, you vote "YES" or "NO" to a change in our Constitution.

The Constitution sets out the rights of people and has basic laws. Any time the government make a new law they must make sure that it doesn't disagree with the laws in the Constitution.

If the government bring in a new law and they have to change the constitution then we have to have a referendum to agree to it.

**YES**

When you vote in a referendum you will be asked to put an X in the box beside the word "YES" if you agree with the change or put an X in the box beside the word "NO" if you don't agree.

You would vote in a referendum in the same way as you would vote in an election, in a voting booth in secret.

**NO**

The referendum will only change the constitution if more than 50% (half) of people voting say "YES".



## Checklist

Now you have read this booklet you should be able to do the following things:

- ◆ Say what voting is
- ◆ Say why you should vote
- ◆ Say who the different people are who represent you
- ◆ Say what a referendum is
- ◆ Know how to find your polling station
- ◆ Know how to fill in your ballot paper (with help if needed)

## **Useful Contacts**

**Check the Register –  
see if you are registered to vote  
[www.checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie)**

**Citizen's Information – for information about  
voting and more  
[www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)**

**Contact your local authority about voting  
[www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie)**



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