

Voting Champions



Supporting Participation in Elections

Tips for Care Providers

About these Tips

These tips are about your role in helping the people you support take part in the 2017 council elections and the General election. It is about the process of voting. People can then make their own choice about how they vote.

The Voting Champions project provides training and information to care providers.

The Voting Champions project is supported by:

- Care Inspectorate
- CCPS
- Electoral Commission
- Scottish Care
- Scottish Social Services Council
- Scottish Government

Why it matters

Taking part in an election is linked to other important aspects of people's lives.

- How people participate and have their say on matters that affect them, such as their own support and the services they use.
- Being part of the community.

Important Dates for the Scottish Parliament election

17 April: Deadline to register to vote for the local elections

4 May: Local elections

22 May: Deadline to register to vote for the General election

8 June: General election

Supporting people on Registering to vote

You can help people check on line to see if they are on the register.

You can help them register online or complete the form.

For more information: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/registering-to-vote-and-the-electoral-register>

Which address?

If someone is in hospital or living somewhere else for a short period, they register at their home address.

If someone now lives in a care setting or hospital, that is their address for registering.

If someone does not have an address because they are homeless, or move around a lot, they can still vote by registering at the temporary address of where they are staying.

Worries about capacity

Even if someone has limited capacity, they can still vote.

If someone has a Guardianship or Power of Attorney arrangement, they still vote themselves.

People can get as much or as little help as they need to let them vote. You are allowed to have someone help you when you vote and you can also ask for help when you go to the polling station.

How to vote – in person, post or proxy

Most people go to the polling station and vote in person.

- Some people feel this is very important - it is what everyone else does and is a demonstration of their right to vote.
- Other people find it is too difficult or makes them anxious.
- The person can take someone with them to help them vote.
- The Electoral Commission has guidelines to enable the people at polling stations to make voting in person as accessible as possible.

Everyone has the right to use a postal vote instead of going in person.

- The person can make their vote when they are feeling well.
- They can get help to do it and take their time.

A proxy vote is when the person identified someone else to vote on their behalf. The voter tells the proxy how to vote.

- A proxy is useful if person had not applied for a postal vote and is now unable to go in person.
- Some people like the idea of there still being someone going to polling station and casting a vote.
- The person chooses the proxy.
- Someone who is not a close relative – such as a care worker – can be a proxy to up to 3 people.

Examples

A project is supporting several people who will be voting for the first time. They are planning to meet up and go to the Polling Station (a local school) together with one of the workers. They are going to support each other if anyone struggles a bit with finding the right room or anything else. Then they are going for a coffee together.

A care home is talking to the people who live there about whether they want to vote in person or in another way. There are plans for some people to go together to the Polling Station in a taxi with a care worker. Other people are going with a relative. Other people will be using postal votes.

Encouraging people to vote

Use the approaches that help people make choices on other matters.

Help people get access to information about the candidates and their policies, or the issues. For example:

- Ask for material that is in bigger print or easy read
- Help people get along to any meetings in the area if they want to go.
- Help people write to candidates to raise issues that matter to them, or invite them along to a place that is convenient for the people you support.

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