M CIL

Merton Centre for Independent Living

General Election 2019
Have Your Say – Sign up to Vote!

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General Election 2019 Have Your Say! Sign up to Vote!

Have you heard? There's an election, again! Yes, there will be a general Election on 12th December 2019.

Traditionally disabled people have faced barriers to voting and democratic engagement. These barriers can include a lack of accessible information, inaccessible polling stations and society's failure to properly value the voices and choices of disabled people.

These days, political decisions are having a direct impact on the day-to-day lives of Deaf and Disabled people. Disabled people need to make sure our voices are heard in the democratic process. Voting and getting involved in activity in the lead up to elections is one important way to do this.

If you want to have a say, you must register to vote by 11:59pm on 26 November 2019

You can vote in the 2019 general election if you:

- Are registered to vote by 26 November 2019
- Are 18 years old or over on the day of the election ('polling day')
- Are a British, Irish or Commonwealth citizen
- Are 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)
- Are not legally excluded from voting

How do I register to vote?

You can register to vote online: https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote
You will need to have your National Insurance number to register and also your date of birth and your address
For Merton residents, if you're not sure if you are already registered, you could contact London Borough of Merton Electoral Services on **020 8274 4901**

If you can't get online, you can fill out a paper form. Get one from the Civic Centre in Morden, or call Electoral Services on 020 8274 4901 to arrange getting a form sent out to you – but hurry as time is running out and you will need to get the form back to the Council by **26th November 2019.**

What if I'm not sure I can get to the polling station?

You can vote in person at a polling station, by post or appoint someone you trust to vote on your behalf as your proxy.

Postal Vote
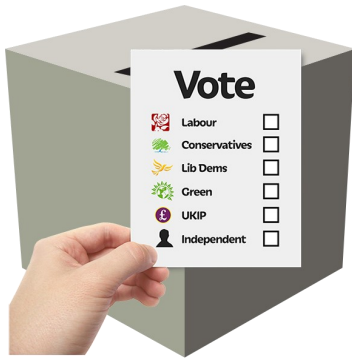Voting by post means that you will be sent a ballot form to mark your vote via post.

Voting by post can be useful if you are worried that you won't be able to get to a polling station and would rather keep your vote secret.

If you want to vote by post in the general election on 12th Dec 2019,you must apply by 5pm Tuesday 26 November.

To vote by post at any election you must be registered to vote first.

If you want to vote by post you can download a form here Postal Vote Application Form - https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/0196_How_to_vote_postal_vote_form.pdf which you need to fill out and send back to the Council by **26th November 2019.**

If you have applied for a postal vote, you can't go to the polling station. The voting forms are generally sent out about two weeks before polling day, depending on when you apply. They include instructions on how to return the postal vote, with a security statement that you have to complete with your signature and date of birth. You have to return this to the Council, with the ballot paper(s), before the close of polling on the day of the election. The Council will compare the signature and date of birth on your statement with those on your application. The vote cannot be counted if they do not match. If your signature changes a lot, then this might not be the right way for you to vote.

Proxy

Can't get to your local polling station? You can register to vote by proxy.

Voting by proxy means that you appoint someone you trust to vote on your behalf. Voting by proxy can be useful if you are worried that you won't be able to get to a polling station on polling day. For example, you may have an on-going illness.

If you want to vote by proxy in the General Election on 12th Dec 2019 you must apply by 5pm Wednesday 4 December 2019.

You and the person you nominate to vote on your behalf must be registered to vote. If you want to vote by proxy you can download this form and return it to the Council by the deadline Proxy application form. If you can't print the forms you need, you can contact Merton Council in person or on **020 8274 4901**

If you have a **medical emergency** occurring after 5pm, six working days before the election, you can apply to vote by emergency proxy (until 5pm on the day of the election). To apply for an emergency proxy vote you will need to download, print and fill in a form and send it to the Council. The form is available on this link https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-09/Emergency-disability-proxy-vote-application-form.pdf or contact the Council.

What if I would like to go to the polling station myself, but I might need some support?

Before polling day on 12th Dec 2019 you will be sent a **poll card** which will tell you **where your polling station is**. You can only vote at the polling station it says on your poll card.

You do not need to take the poll card with you to vote, but it will help the polling station staff if you do. Polling stations will be open between 7am and 10pm for voting. When you get there the polling station staff will ask you for your name and address. Staff will check you are on the electoral register and have come to the right polling station.

7am - 10pm

They will then give you your ballot paper. You mark your vote in secret on the ballot paper in a cubicle and put it in the sealed ballot box.
All polling stations should be wheelchair accessible and support disabled voters. If you need assistance on polling day, you can ask a member of staff, called a Presiding Officer.

Presiding Officers

If you are voting in person at a polling station, there are a number of ways the staff, called Presiding Officers, can support you to vote.

Don't worry if you can not mark your ballot paper, Presiding Officers may mark your ballot paper for you. You may also attend the polling station with someone who you would like to mark your ballot paper on your behalf.

Polling stations should be accessible for everyone wishing to vote. If for whatever reason your local polling station isn't accessible, Presiding Officers should provide you with a ballot paper and allow you to vote outside of the polling station.

Tactile Voting Devices

Polling stations should provide tactile voting devices.

The tactile voting device attaches on top of your ballot paper. It has numbered flaps (the numbers are raised and are in Braille) directly over the boxes where you mark your vote.

A Presiding Officer or someone you have attended the polling station with can read out the list of candidates. You can then use the large numbered flaps to find the part of the ballot paper you wish to mark with your vote.

Large Print and Magnifying Assistance

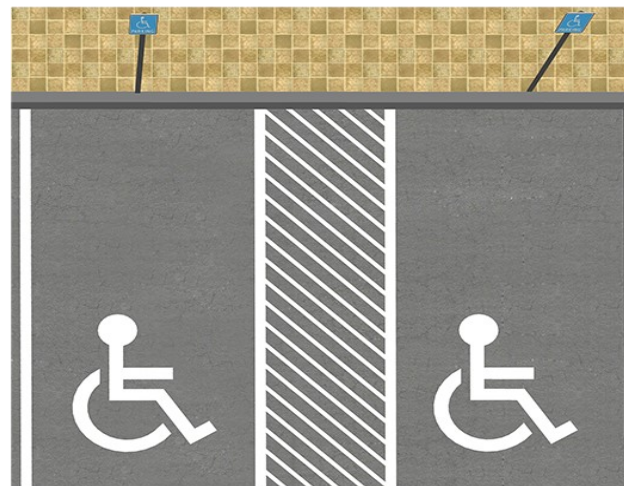Polling stations should provide large print versions of ballot papers.

Polling stations should also provide magnifying assistance. These magnifying sheets can be placed over standard and large print versions of ballot paper to make them easier to read.

Presiding Officers should be able to   provide these aids on request.

Parking

If you need to use a disabled parking space, these should be clearly visible and monitored throughout the day.

Not sure you're interested in voting?
Here are some things our members said in the last General Election:

"If you don't vote, you have no say at all in who represents you in government. At any election in your area, one of the candidates will be selected to represent you whether you vote or not. If you're registered, you'll have the chance to have a say on who represents you by voting."

"Around the world people have died fighting for the right to vote and be part of a democracy. This isn't meant to be a guilt trip, but less than 100 years ago in the UK, people were killed during their struggles to get the vote for women."

Vote
Labour
Conservatives
Lib Dems
Green
UKIP
Independent

General Election
2019

Thurs 12th Dec

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