

This booklet tells you how to vote in England and Wales.

You can get information about how to vote in Northern Ireland and Scotland from the Electoral Commission.



Prepared for The Electoral Commission by COI
April 2006
Product code EC4

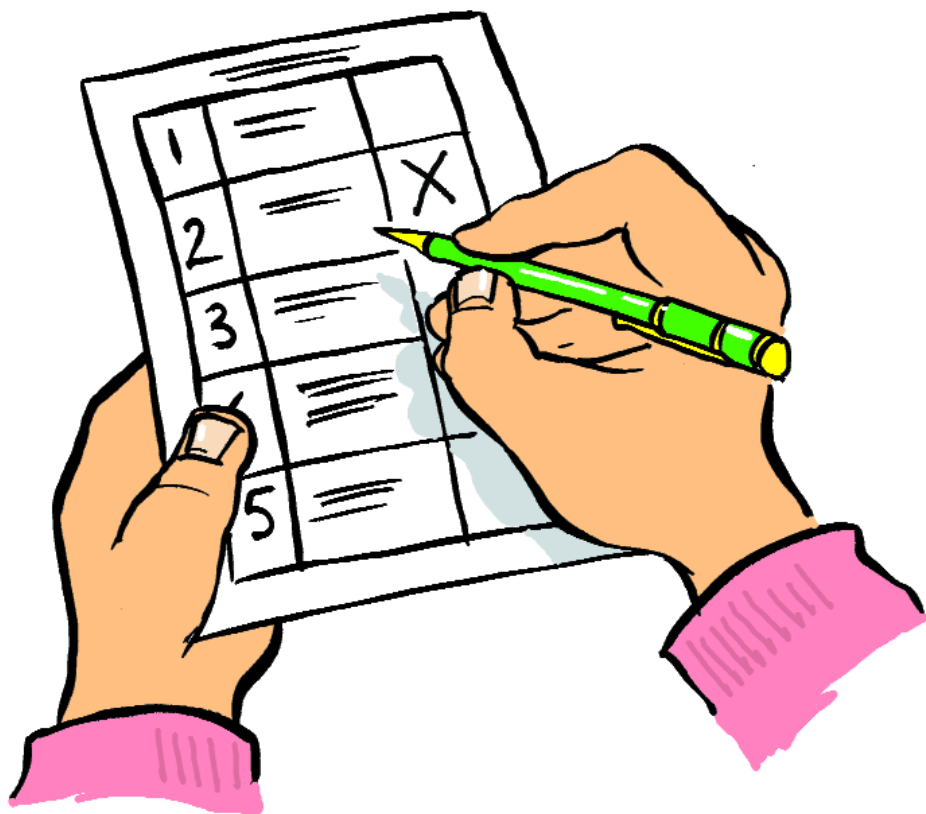
Copyright ©The Electoral Commission 2006

Voting

**This booklet tells you how to vote
and why it is important to vote**

Voting

This booklet tells you how to vote and why it is important to vote.



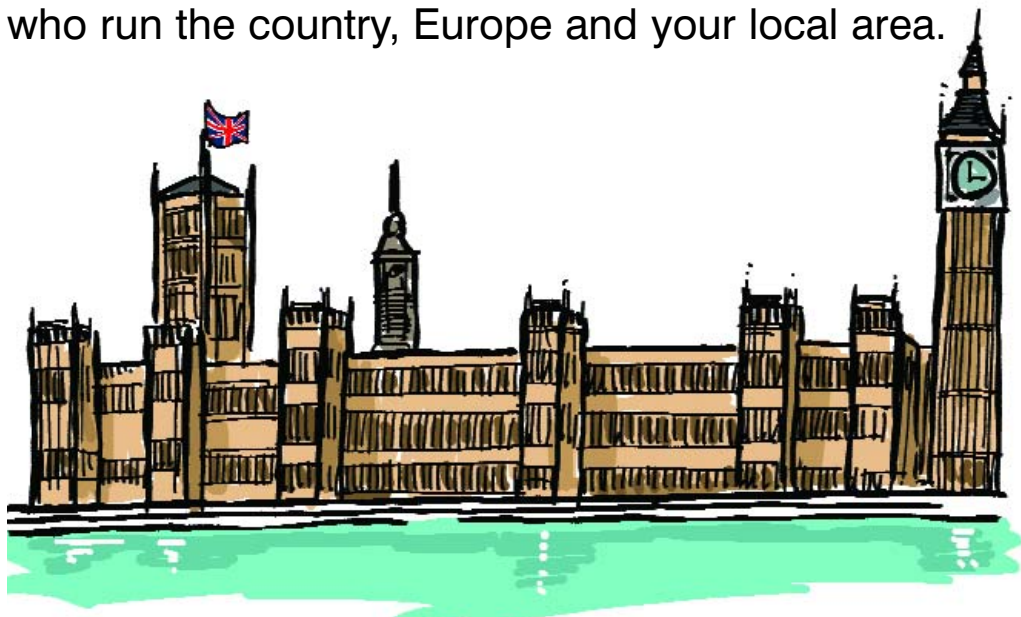
This booklet tells you how to vote in England and Wales. You can get information about how to vote in Northern Ireland and Scotland from The Electoral Commission.

Contents

What is voting?	2
Who can vote?	3
Why should I vote?	4
How do I make sure I can vote?	5
How do I vote?	7
Postal vote	11
Proxy vote	12
What happens next?	13
Finding out more	17

What is voting?

Voting is your chance to help to choose the people who run the country, Europe and your local area.



The time when you vote is called an **election**.

All votes are equal – your vote is as important as anyone else’s vote.

It does not cost anything to vote.

Who can vote?

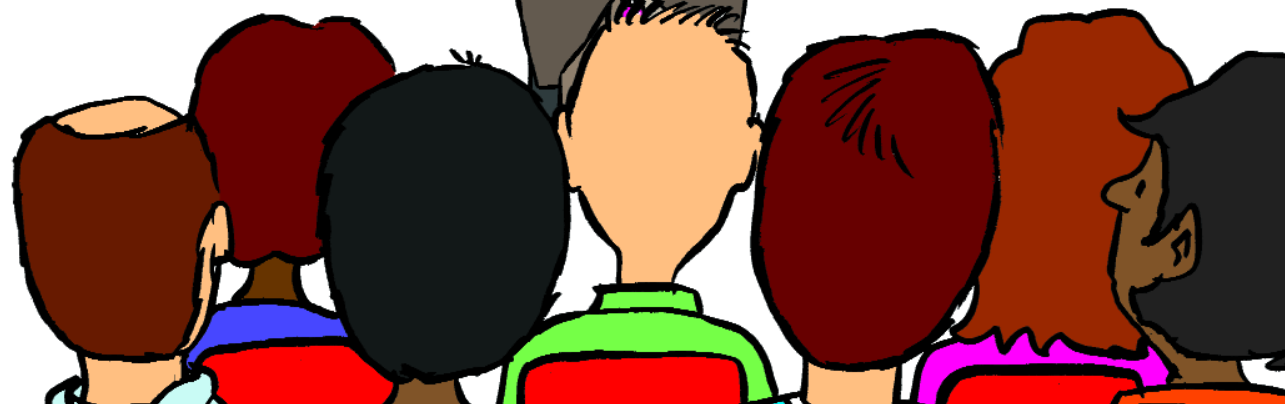
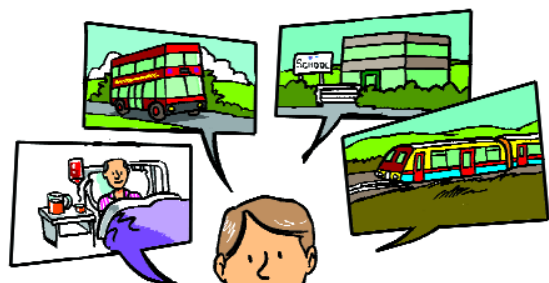
Almost **all** men and women over 18 years old can vote.



Why should I vote?

Your vote helps to choose the people who run the country, Europe or your local area. These people decide things which affect everyone, such as how schools, hospitals and buses are run.

So it is important that everyone has a say in who is elected.



How do I make sure I can vote?

It is very easy to vote.

Make sure your name is on the **Electoral Register** for your area. This is a list of everyone who can vote.

You can phone your local council to make sure you are on this list. The phone number is in the phone book under your local council.



The local council sends a form to every home every autumn to check who should be on the list. You or someone else in your home must fill in the form and send it back to the local council.

But you can give the council your details at any other time if you want. Phone your local council to find out how to give your details.

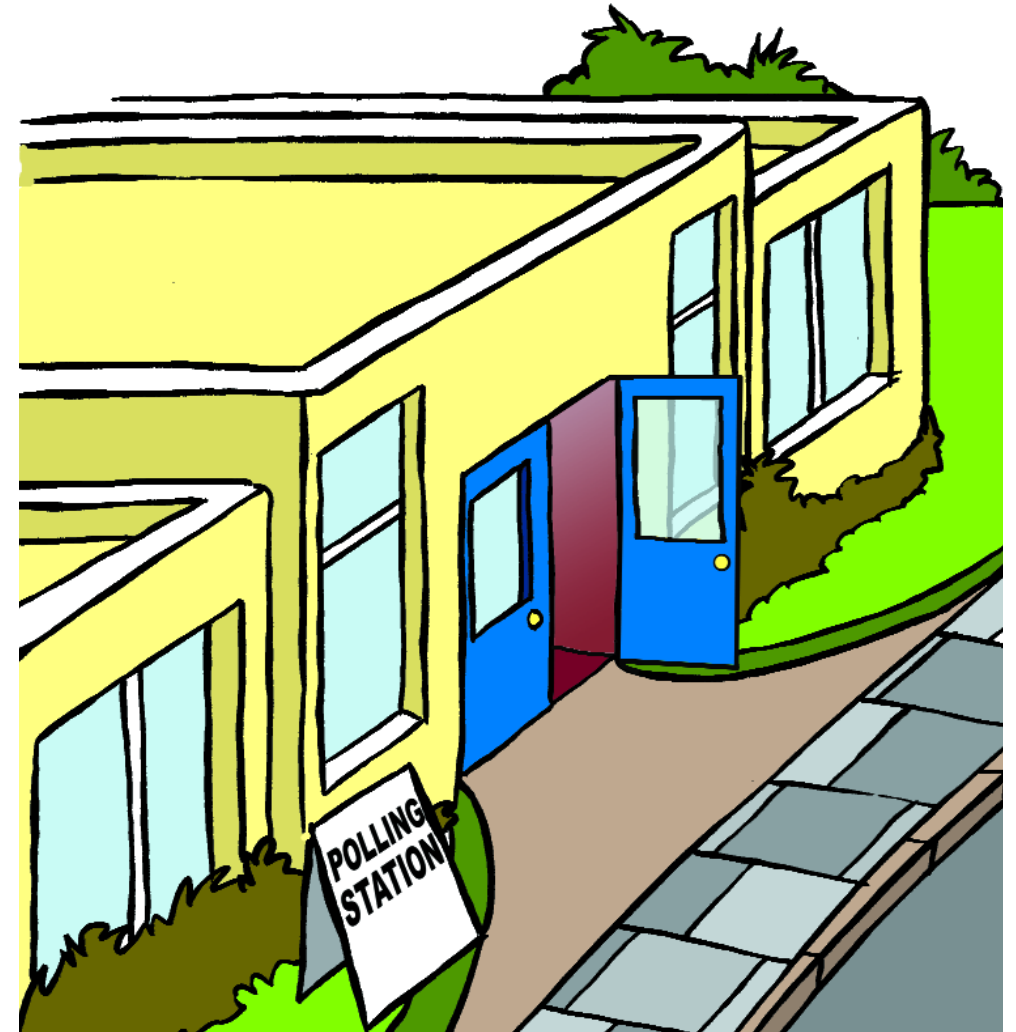
The council will send you a card just before an election. This is called a **polling card**. The card tells you where and when to vote.



How do I vote?

On election day, you go to the **polling station**. The polling station is usually a school or local hall near where you live.

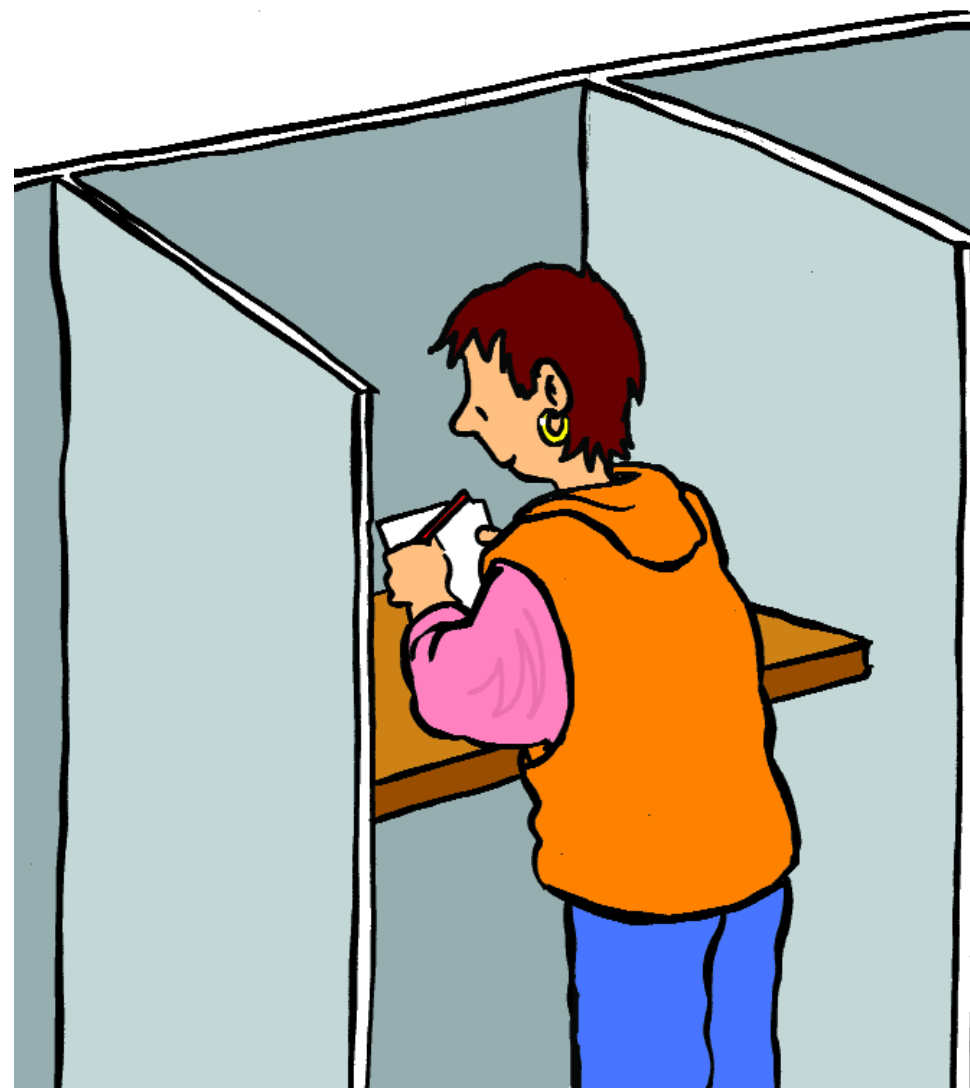
Polling is another word for **voting**.



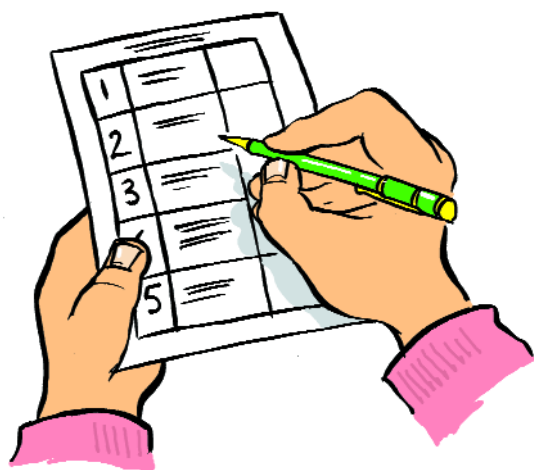
Tell the people at the polling station your **name** and **address**. If you like, you can take your **polling card** with you to show who you are.



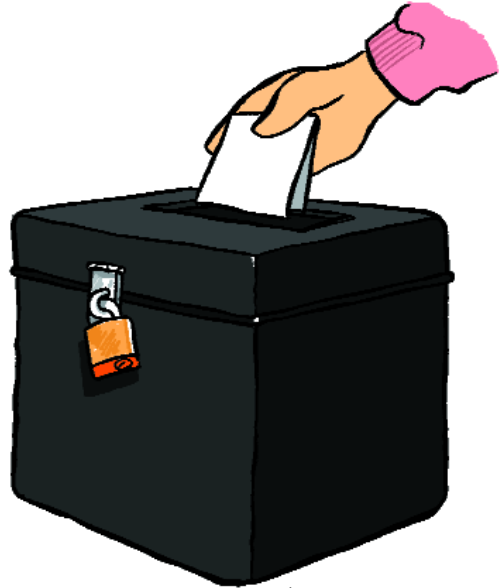
Go into a **polling booth** and put an **X** by the name of the person you want to vote for.



The people at the polling station will give you a list of the people you can vote for. This is called a **ballot paper**.



Fold the ballot paper and put it in the **ballot box**.



If you do not know what to do, you can ask the people at the **polling station** to help you.



Postal vote

If you cannot get to the polling station, you can ask your local council for a **postal vote**.

Your **ballot paper** will be sent to you at home. You can fill the ballot paper in and post it back.



If you want a postal vote, phone your local council.

Proxy vote

Sometimes you can let someone else vote for you. This is called a **proxy vote**.



You can only have a proxy vote if you cannot go to the polling station and you have not asked for a postal vote.

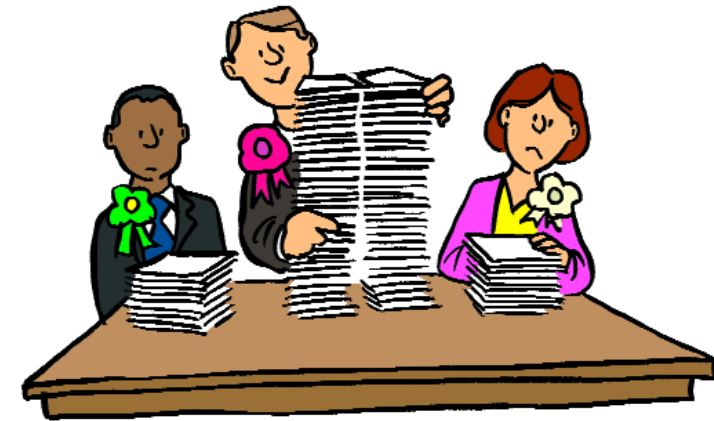
The person you choose to vote for you must vote for the person you want.



If you want a proxy vote, phone your local council. They will send you a form to fill in.

What happens next?

When voting is over, the votes are counted. The winner is the person with the most votes.



The people with the most votes decide how to run the country, Europe or your local area.



You can tell them what you think about things or what you would like them to do. You can do this by talking to them.



Or you can e-mail or write to them.



Or you may be able to go to public meetings to speak to them.



If you think they have done a good job, you may want to vote for them again.

If you do **not** think they have done a good job, you may want to vote for someone else next time!



Finding out more

This booklet tells you a bit about how to vote.

If you want more information you can ask your local electoral registration office.

The phone number is in the phone book under your local council.



Or you can find the phone number on the website www.aboutmyvote.co.uk



You can get more copies of this booklet from The Electoral Commission:

Telephone: **0870 241 6479**

E-mail: info@electoralcommission.org.uk

Web: www.aboutmyvote.co.uk

Make sure you tell them the product code EC4.