

# Disabled people's voting rights

Local authorities now have to take proactive steps to ensure that polling stations don't disadvantage disabled people.

All voters have a right to vote independently and in secret. A person who is registered to vote or who has been officially appointed as a proxy voter cannot be refused a ballot paper or the opportunity to vote on the grounds of mental or physical incapacity.

Polling station staff must ensure that disabled voters are not offered a lower standard of service than other voters and should be able to explain what assistance is available to disabled voters wishing to vote in person at a polling station.

## Disabled voters are also entitled to:

### **The right to request assistance to mark the ballot paper**

Disabled voters may request the assistance of the Presiding Officer to mark the ballot paper for them. Alternatively, they can bring someone with them to help them vote (this person must be an immediate family member over 18 years old or a qualified elector).

### **Tactile voting device**

This is a plastic device that is fixed onto the ballot paper so visually impaired people or those with limited dexterity can mark their ballot paper in secret.

### **Large-print version of the ballot paper**

A large-print version of the ballot paper should be clearly displayed inside the polling station and a copy can be given to voters to take with them into the polling booth. A voter can't vote on the large-print version, but it can be used for reference.

### **Assistance to electors unable to gain access to the polling station**

If an elector is unable to enter the polling station because of physical disability, the Presiding Officer may take the ballot paper to the elector.

If you have any problems on election day, you should call your local authority to try to resolve this. You can also call the Electoral Commission on 020 7271 0592 or 020 7271 0728 for further guidance.

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