

Your guide to voting in an election

This is a quick guide about voting in an election.

We vote in elections to say who we want to represent us.

It is really important that you make your own choice about who you want to vote for.

You can listen to what the political parties and candidates have to say, but in the end you have to decide who to vote for, or whether you want to vote or not.

Don't feel you have to vote in a certain way, just because someone says you should. It is not someone else's vote – it's yours.

You need to be registered to be able to vote in elections. You can register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. You can also contact Electoral Services at Kirklees Council to check if you are registered, or to ask for help or advice.

If you have any concerns about anyone trying to influence the way in which you vote, either when you go to the polling station or at any other time, you should report your concerns to Electoral Services or to the police. You can also tell the staff in the polling station, who will be happy to report your concerns.

If you need any help or advice with elections and voting, please telephone Electoral Services on 01484 221650 or email us at electoral.registration@kirklees.gov.uk

Your guide to voting at a polling station

This is a quick guide about how to vote at a polling station.

You should receive a poll card before the election. This tells you where your local polling station is, which is where you go to vote on election day.

You don't need to take your poll card with you, but it helps the polling station staff if you do. They will ask you to confirm your name and address before giving you a ballot paper.

If you are approached by anyone outside the polling station and they tell you who to vote for, you should not feel intimidated to do what they say. No-one will know who you have voted for because it is done in secret.

The staff who work inside the polling station do not work for political parties. They are there to make sure that you can vote in secret and not be influenced by anyone else.

Once you have been given your ballot paper, you should go over to the polling booth. This is where you are able to vote in secret.

No-one else can see who you are voting for. No-one else should mark your ballot paper for you when you are voting. It is not allowed for someone to reach over and tell you, or show you, who to vote for. You need to make your own choice.

If you are worried about anyone trying to influence the way that you vote, you can tell the staff in the polling station – they will be happy to help.

Your guide to postal voting

This is a quick guide about postal voting.

Postal voting papers are usually sent out around two weeks before an election.

You may receive visits from candidates or party workers campaigning in your area around this time. This process is allowed as party workers can campaign for votes.

You must come to your own decision about who you want to vote for. Don't feel that you have to vote for a particular party or candidate, just because you have been pressurised to do so.

If someone encourages you to apply to vote by post so that they can fill your postal vote in for you, you should refuse. It is not allowed for someone else to complete your ballot pack. It is a very serious offence to use someone else's postal vote. If this happens, the police may be involved.

You need to put a cross on the ballot paper to indicate which candidate you want to vote for. You should put no other mark on the ballot paper or your vote may not be counted. Also make sure that you sign the security statement with your normal signature, otherwise your vote may not be counted.

You should return your postal vote yourself, so that you keep your vote secret. Do not give your postal vote back to anyone working on behalf of a political party or candidate.

What happens to your postal vote?

Are you wondering what happens to your postal vote after you return it?

Your envelope goes to the Electoral Services team for opening. At the postal vote opening there are strict checks to make sure that each postal vote has been completed by the person who originally requested it. We use very advanced computer software to check your signature and date of birth.

We don't look at the ballot papers at this stage. Postal ballot papers are opened face downwards and stored securely until election day.

We only count up the number of votes on ballot papers after the polling stations have closed on election day. When we count your vote, the security statement that you've signed has already been stored separately from your ballot paper, so no-one knows who you have voted for.

Please make sure that you use your own vote. Don't give it to someone else, or allow someone to vote for you.

It is not someone else's vote – it's yours.