



Guidance on Accessing Politics Easy Read Part 4



**Inclusion
Scotland**

Disabled People's Organisation

Our voices ■ Our choices

Access to Politics

Part 4



How to take part (1)



Campaigning and activism.

Joining a Disabled Person's Organisation.

Joining a Trade Union.

Joining a Political Party.

Student politics.

Getting elected.



Inclusion Scotland made this guide:

- to show disabled people how to get involved in politics.
- to show how to make politics accessible for disabled people.



It is in 8 parts:

1. What are my rights? What can change to make it easier for me?
2. Who represents me?
3. Petitions.
4. How to take part (1).
5. How to take part (2).
6. Tips for campaigning.
7. Election day.
8. Accessibility checklist.



We hope this guide is useful to you.

Get in touch with us at:

civicparticipation@inclusionscotland.org

to tell us what you think of the guide or if you need advice and support.



How to take part.



You can take part in politics in lots of ways.

Some ways help you try to change what the public think rather than the people who represent you – people like councillors or Members of Parliament.

Campaigning and Activism



A **campaign** is a set of actions or events to get something to happen.

For example a political campaign tries to get a candidate elected.

This person is called a **candidate**.



Activism is a type of campaigning.

People try to get the public to support their cause – what they believe in.

Activism can be things like:

- **Starting a campaign online and/or on the street.**

Be clear about:

- why you are campaigning
- how you are campaigning





- what you are asking people to do
- how it will make things better.



- **Crowdfunding**

Asking people to give money to be used for the campaign.



- **Organising meetings**

To talk to people about your campaign including local businesses, charities and councillors.



- **Volunteering and participating** with local groups or other campaigns that want the same things.

Joining a Disabled People's Organisation



In disabled people's organisations more than half of the staff and board members are disabled people.

Most disabled people's organisations follow the social model of disability.



[Inclusion Scotland](#) is a national disabled people's organisation. We want Scotland to be equal for everyone.



We want there to be changes to policy and how people work.

We want disabled people to be included in society and be treated equally.



More information on Inclusion Scotland is available [here](#).

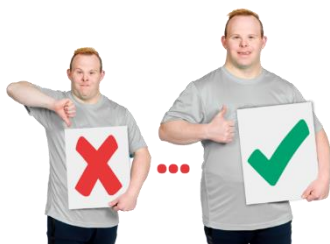
Joining a Trade Union



Trade unions represent workers in all parts of their employment.

Trade unions:

- talk to employers about making workers' conditions of employment better.
- working with the government to change things.
- work with other organisations that provide public services.





Some trade unions are linked to political parties.

Some Trade Unions have disabled workers' committees.

More information on trade unions is available [here](#).

Joining a Political Party

Political parties have candidates – people who want to be elected.



Candidates for a party believe in the same things, and have the same manifestos.

A manifesto is a document that tells you about the policies of a political party and what they want to do if they are elected.



A party will not represent everything you believe in.

If you become a member of a political party you could:

- Go to meetings for local party members and annual conferences.



This will give you the chance to ask questions and be part of making decisions.



- Find a mentor – someone who can show you how the party works and how they make policy.



- Get training, and chances to work with party officials and elected representatives.



- Join the party's disabled members' network.



- Tell the party about things you want to change.

You can do this in a motion or a policy and ask the party to agree it.



A list of all registered UK political parties is available from [the Electoral Commission](#).

Student Politics



If you are a student you can get involved in politics through:

- political societies
- student unions
- student representative councils
- events on campus.



More information on student politics in the UK is available from [the National Union of Students \(NUS\)](#).

Getting elected. Standing for elected office.

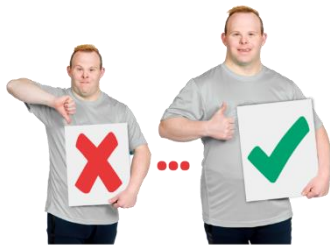


When a candidate wants to be elected it is called standing for elected office. Sometimes it is called running for office.



People want to be elected for many reasons:

- they want to represent their party or their community
- they want people to know about a cause or issue



- they want a career in politics.
- They want to make changes to make society better for everyone.

What does a candidate need?



There are different rules for standing as a candidate in different types of election.



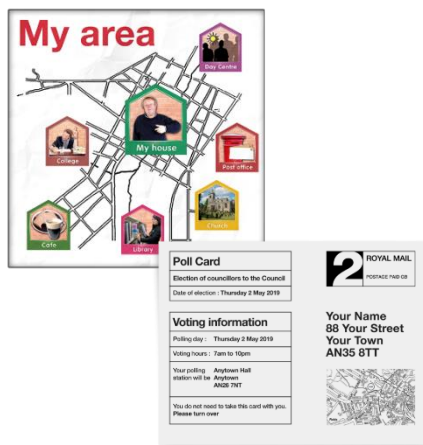
To stand as a candidate in any election in Scotland you must be:

- at least 18 years old (or 16 years old for Community Council elections) and:
- a British citizen, or
- a Commonwealth Citizen who does not need leave to enter or remain in the UK or
- a Commonwealth citizen who has indefinite leave to remain.



Other than these rules, this is nothing to stop disabled people standing for elected office in Scotland or the UK.

Community Council



To stand as a candidate you must:

- be 16 years old or over.
- live in the community council area you want to be a candidate in.
- be registered to vote in the community council area you live in.

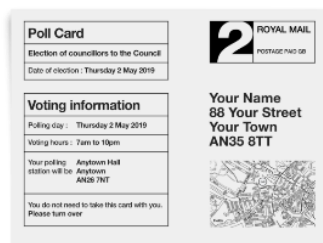
Local Authority - Council



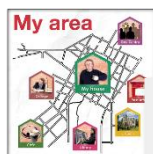
To stand as a candidate in a Council election in Scotland you must:

- be over 18
- be a UK or Commonwealth citizen.

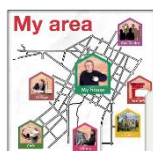
and have at least one of these qualifications:



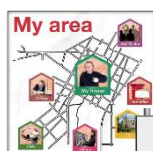
1. You are registered to vote in the council area you want to be elected to.



2. You have owned or rented land or property in the council area for a year before the day of your nomination.

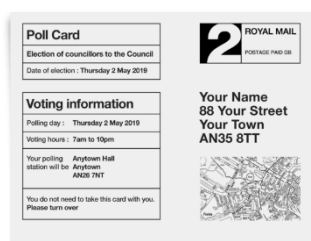


3. You have worked in the council area for 12 months before the day of your nomination.

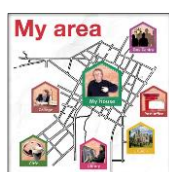


4. You have lived in the council area for a year before the day of your nomination.

Scottish Parliament



You do not have to be a registered elector in Scotland to stand as a constituency or list candidate.



You can be a candidate for both a constituency and a region.

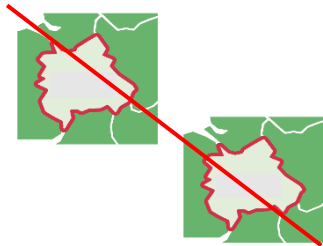
The constituency must be in the region.



If you do this, you must stand for the same party in both contests, or be independent in both contests.

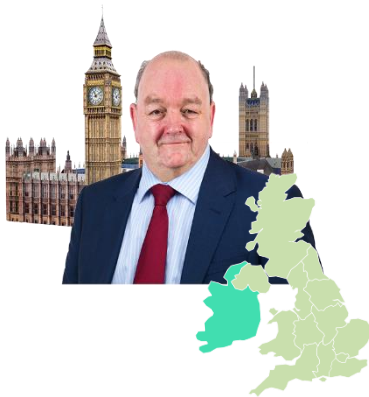


If you are elected at the constituency election, your name will be taken off the list of regional candidates.



You **cannot** stand in more than one constituency or in more than one region.

UK Parliament



You can stand for UK Parliament if you are a citizen of the Republic of Ireland.



You do not have to live in the constituency you stand in.

Exclusions



An exclusion is a reason you cannot take part.



For a full list of the requirements and exclusions for standing in different elections get in touch with [the Electoral Commission](#).



Check the rules before you put in your nomination papers.