

Be informed. Be heard.  
**22 May 2015**



# Independent Guide



## Marriage Referendum and Age of Presidential Candidates Referendum

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### Introduction



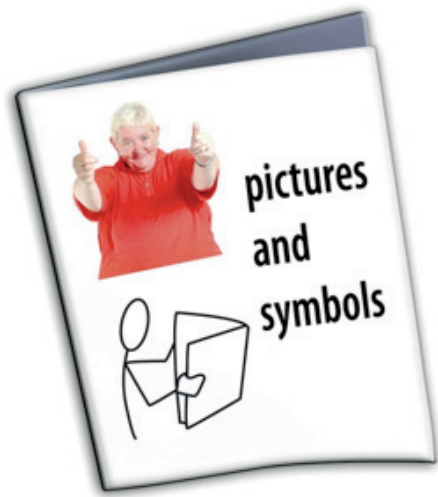
This is an easy-to-read guide to the 2 referendums that are happening on the 22nd May.



This guide is written for people with an Intellectual Disability.



We hope that the words used in this guide are easier for you to understand.



We hope that the pictures used in this guide will help you to understand.

We know that there are no one set of pictures that work for everyone.

Ask a friend or a family member to read it with you.

They can help explain what it means if you are not sure.



You can ask them lots of questions.

You can read the guide lots of times to help you understand the information.



This guide may help you decide if you will vote yes or no.

# Welcome

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Dear Voters,

On Friday 22 May, you have the chance to vote in 2 referendums.



A referendum means that you are asked to vote to change the Constitution of Ireland.



The Constitution of Ireland sets out the most important rules of the country.

## One referendum asks:

Do you agree that two people of the same sex can marry each other?



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Same sex marriage means that a man can marry another man.



Same sex marriage means that a woman can marry another woman.

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## The other referendum asks:

Do you agree to reduce the age of presidential candidates from **35** to **21**?



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Presidential Candidates are people who would like to be the President of Ireland.

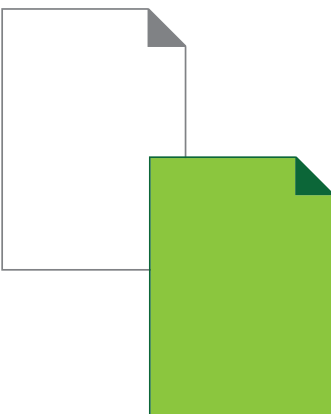
Presidential Candidates are people who run for election to be President of Ireland.

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The Referendum Commission gives you clear information about what your vote will mean.

The Referendum Commission does not tell you how to vote.



When you go to vote you will get two ballot papers at the polling station:

1. The **white** ballot paper is for the Marriage Referendum.
2. The **green** ballot paper is for the Age of Presidential Candidates Referendum.



You may vote **yes** or **no** on each ballot paper.



It is up to you how you vote.

It is important to vote.

The Constitution belongs to you.

You can decide whether to change it or not.



Make sure your voice is heard by voting on 22 May.



You can get more information on the **[www.refcom.ie](http://www.refcom.ie)** website.



All of the votes are counted the day after the referendum.

The Constitution changes if most people vote yes.

**Be informed. Be heard.**  
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The Constitution stays the same if most people vote no.



**Kevin Cross**

Chairperson

Referendum Commission





# Marriage Referendum

The Constitution of Ireland sets out the rules of the country.

The Marriage Referendum asks you to vote about adding something new to the Constitution.

**The new piece (Article 41 “The Family”) would say:**

**“Marriage may be contracted in accordance with law by two persons without distinction as to their sex”**



This would mean that a man may marry another man.

A woman may marry another woman.

Just like a woman may marry a man now.

## The rules in Ireland now:

The Constitution does not say who can get married.

The Constitution does not say who can not get married.





The Courts have said that **ONLY** a man and woman can get married.

The Laws have said that marriage is only when a man and a woman get married.

## Family in Ireland now



All married people are treated as a family.

Some families have children.

Some families have no children.



The family has rights under the Constitution.

The Irish Government must make sure that laws protect the family.



## Marriage in Ireland if most people vote yes

If most people vote **yes** in this referendum, the rules will change. People will be able to choose if they want to marry a man or a woman.

This will mean that a man may marry another man.

A woman may marry another woman.





If most people vote **yes**, 2 men who are married will be a family. That family will be protected by the Constitution.



If most people vote **yes**, 2 women who are married will be a family. That family will be protected by the Constitution.

## **Marriage in Ireland if most people vote no**



If most people vote **no** to this referendum the law will stay the same.

This will mean that only a man and a woman can get married.

A man may not marry a man.

A woman may not marry a woman.



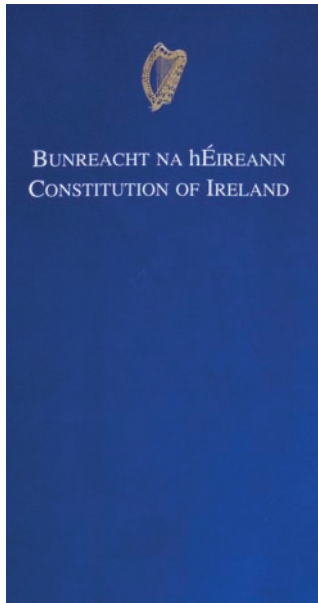
## **Some things will stay the same whether people vote yes or no**

**18+**

There will still be a rule that you cannot get married until you are 18.

There will still be a rule that you cannot marry a relation.





# Age of Presidential Candidates Referendum

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This Referendum is about the age of people who can become President of Ireland.

The President of Ireland is the Head of State. The President is elected by the people of Ireland.



The President lives in Áras an Uachtaráin in the Phoenix Park in Dublin.



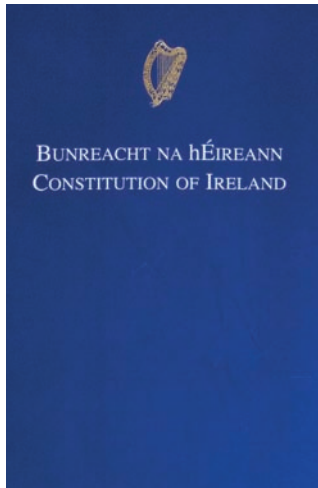
The President can be a man or woman. **Now** only someone who is aged 35 years or older can be the President.

The President **now** is Michael D. Higgins.

# 21

The vote is about letting people who are 21 years or older be elected as President of Ireland.





# What the Constitution says now about Age of Presidential Candidates

The current Article 12.4.1° of the Constitution states:

**“Every citizen who has reached his thirty-fifth year of age is eligible for election to the office of President.”**



**This means that now:**

People who try to be elected as President of Ireland have to be 35 years or older.



The referendum is about changing the constitution to:

**“Every citizen who has reached the age of twenty-one years is eligible for election to the office of President.”**



**This will mean that:**

People who try to be elected as President of Ireland will only have to be 21 years or older.



## If most people vote **yes** in the Age of Presidential Candidates Referendum

If most people vote **yes** to this referendum, the rules will change. People who try to be elected as President of Ireland will only have to be 21 years or older.



## If most people vote **no** in the Age of Presidential Candidates Referendum

If most people vote **no** to this referendum, the rules will stay the same. People who try to be elected as President of Ireland will still have to be 35 years or older.



Nothing else will change about the election of the President of Ireland.

This referendum is only about the age of people who can be president.



## Find out more

**Telephone: 1890 270 970**

**Email: [refcom@refcom.gov.ie](mailto:refcom@refcom.gov.ie)**

**Website: [www.refcom.ie](http://www.refcom.ie)**

