

Voting in a Bye-Election



**Easy-to-Read
Guide**



Easy-to-Read Guide to Bye-Elections

How to use this guide



We wrote this guide in an Easy-to-Read way.



We wrote some important words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.

We explain what these bold words mean.



There is a list of these words on page 16.



You can ask for support to read this guide.
A friend, family member or support person
might be able to help you.



What is a bye-election?

When there is an empty seat in the **Dáil**, there is a bye-election.

There can be an empty seat if a **TD**:

- **resigns**,
- **retires**, or
- **dies**.

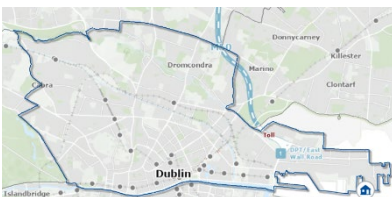


Once a seat is empty it needs to be filled in under 6 months.



Can I vote in a bye-election?

A bye-election is held in the **constituency** where the empty seat needs to be filled.

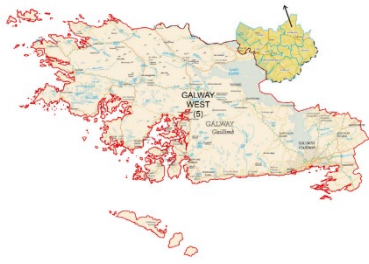


A **constituency** is an area, like Dublin Central and Galway West.

You can vote in a bye-election if you are:

- Registered to Vote,
- Aged 18 years old or older,
- An Irish or British citizen, and
- Living in the constituency where the bye-election is taking place.





For example,

- If a seat needs to be filled in the Dublin Central or Galway West constituencies, only people who live in those constituencies can vote.



You can check which constituency you live in by looking at our website:

<https://www.electoralcommission.ie/what-constituency-am-i-in/>



In a bye-election, you vote for the candidate you want to represent you.

A **candidate** in a bye-election is a person who wants to be elected as a **TD**.



What is a TD?

A TD is a person we elect to represent us in the **Dáil**.



There are 174 **TDs** elected across 43 constituencies.



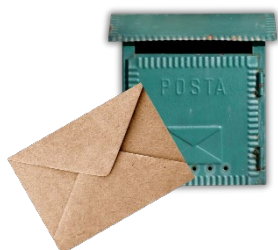
How do you register to vote?

Before you can vote, you **must** join the **electoral register**. You only need to register once.



If you move address, you should update your details.

You can do both on www.checktheregister.ie or by contacting your local authority.



Postal voting

If you have an illness or disability, you might be able to vote by post. This is called a **postal vote**.

Some people might be able to vote by post because of their job.



You need to apply for a postal vote before an election.

We have some information about postal voting.

You can find it on our website:

www.electoralcommission.ie/accessible-voting/



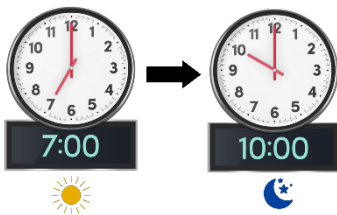
When do you vote?

The date you vote is called Polling Day. We will know this date 3 or 4 weeks before. We tell people once we know.



You can also:

- ask a family member, friend or neighbour;
- watch the news on TV;
- search online.



On election day, polling stations usually open at 7am and close at 10pm.

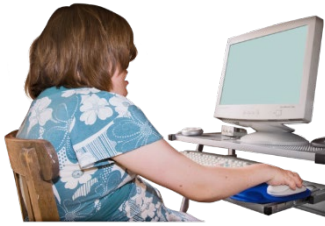


This information will be on your **polling information card**. This will be posted to you.



Voter checklist

- Look on www.checktheregister.ie to make sure that your details are right on the register.



- Learn about the political parties and **candidates** in your area.



- Watch for your polling information card to arrive in the post.



- Make your plan to vote on the day. You might want a person you trust to get you there.



- Bring Photo ID with you to the polling station on Polling Day. It's also a good idea to bring your polling information card but not necessary.



Where do you vote?

On election day, you go to a building called a **polling station** to vote.



For example, it could be a:

- School;
- Community centre;
- GAA Club.

Your polling station will be on your polling information card. The opening hours will be on this too.



You can also check where your polling station is and when it opens and closes on:
www.checktheregister.ie



The polling station

When you go into the polling station, there will be polling staff. They are people who work at polling stations on election day. It is their job to help you.



What will the staff do?

The staff will ask you some questions before you vote such as:



What is your full name?

Tell the staff your:

- first name
- last name



You should bring **ID** in case you are asked for it.

This could include:

- Passport
- Driver's license
- Public Services Card



You can check our website for a list of what you can use for ID.



Your ballot paper

They will give you a piece of paper called a ballot paper. Take your ballot paper to one of the voting booths.



The screens let you fill out your ballot papers where no one else can see.



There will be a pencil for you to use. But you can use your own pen or pencil if you want to.



You can see samples of what the ballot paper will look like on our website:
www.electoralcommission.ie

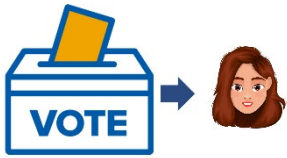


Who should I vote for?

Your vote is your choice, and you can choose any person or group of people that you like or that you think will speak for you the best.



You should think carefully about it and vote for the person who you think will do the best job in the Dáil.

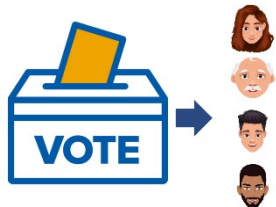


How to vote

- You can vote for one candidate if you wish.



- You can vote for more than one candidate if you wish.



Or

- You can vote for them all.

It is your choice.

Put a number “1” in the box beside the candidate you want to vote for. This is your preferred candidate.



Put a number “2” beside your second preference candidate.

Put a number “3” beside your third preference candidate. And so on.



You can vote for as many people as you like. There is a video on our website that helps explain how to vote:

www.electoralcommission.ie/how-to-vote/



What if you need help voting?

If you need help when you vote, you can:

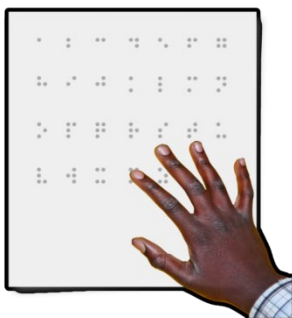
- take someone you know with you, like a friend, or
- ask the staff for help.



The staff can help you fill out your ballot paper if you ask.

They can't tell you who to vote for.

They will keep your vote a secret.



If you use braille you can ask for a Ballot Paper Template.

More information is on our website:

www.electoralcommission.ie/accessible-voting/



What if you make a mistake?

If you make a mistake when you fill out your ballot paper, take it back to the staff who gave it to you.

Tell the staff that you:

- made a mistake;
- need a new ballot paper.



The staff will:

- take the ballot paper with the mistake;
- give you a new ballot paper.

Take the new ballot paper and fill it out.



Where do you put your ballot papers?

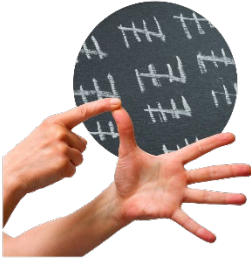
When you have filled out your ballot paper, you need to put it in the **ballot box**.

This will be the box beside the staff who gave you the ballot paper.

A ballot box is a sealed box where voters put their ballot papers once they have filled them out.



When you have put your votes in the ballot boxes, you have finished voting.



The counting of votes

- Every vote is brought to a **count centre** in each constituency. People are hired to count every vote to see which candidate has the most votes.



- The candidate with the most votes wins.



- All the number 1 votes are always counted first.



- If a candidate does not receive enough votes they are **eliminated**. Their number 2 or lower votes are then counted. These types of votes are called transfers.



- The **quota** is the number of votes a candidate needs to get elected. The quota in a bye-election is 50% of the total number of votes plus 1 extra vote.



- When a candidate reaches the quota, they are deemed elected. A candidate can be elected without reaching the quota if all other candidates have been eliminated.



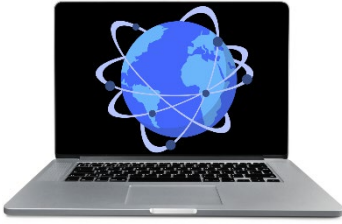
- The winning candidate will then be elected.



How will I know who won?

The winners of each vote will be on the news on TV and radio. You can check who won on the internet and on social media. You can check the newspapers.

Information you find online



We are now using social media, online messaging and the internet to discuss current affairs, political topics and elections. We are getting a huge amount of information from lots of different places.



The internet can be very helpful in getting facts and information and sharing different views.

You might come across information about the elections online. This information might not always be true.

What can you do?

When you are reading, watching videos or programmes or listening to podcasts online or in the media, always ask yourself:



- How do I know this is true?
- Who is telling me this?
- Why are they telling me this?
- How can I confirm this? /How can I find out if this is right?
- Do I need to think about this some more?



Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



Ballot box

A ballot box is a sealed box where voters put their ballot papers once they have filled them out.



Candidate

A candidate is a person running for election.



Count centres

The place where the counting of votes happens following the ballot boxes arriving from all polling stations within the electoral area.



Dáil

The Dáil is part of the national parliament. It is where elected TDs meet. The people in the Dáil choose who will be in the Government if no single party wins. In the Dáil, they talk about and vote on important issues. They also pass new laws.



Democracy

Ireland is a representative democracy which means we vote for representatives to lead the country for us. We are free to vote for who we choose.



Eliminated

An eliminated candidate is a candidate who does not win in an election and whose votes are transferred to the remaining candidates.



Electoral register

A list of people who can vote.



Bye-election

A bye-election is when there is an empty seat in the Dáil. People who live in that area vote to fill the seat.



Government

The government is the group of people who are responsible for leading the country.

Identification or ID

You may be asked to show valid ID when you go to vote at a polling station and if asked you must show it. This is a document or card that proves who you are. It has your name and a photo of you on it. For a full list of ID that you can use, visit our 'What You Need to Vote' webpage:

www.electoralcommission.ie/what-you-need-to-vote/



Polling Day

The day voting takes place. People also call this election day.

Polling information card

If you are registered to vote, you should receive a polling information card before Polling Day. This will give you the details of your polling station. If your polling card does not arrive, don't worry as you do not need it to vote.





Polling station

A polling station is a building where people go to vote.

For example, a:

- school
- community centre.



Postal vote

When you vote by post.



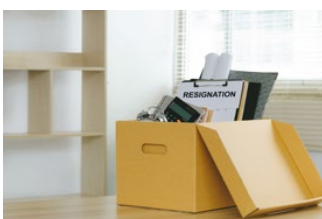
Presiding officer

Presiding officers are responsible for the opening, closing and conduct of their polling station throughout the day.



Quota

The number of votes that a candidate needs to win a seat.



Resign

Resign is when you leave your work and do not go back. You may decide to begin a new role.



Retire

Retire is when you stop working. In Ireland, people usually retire when they are 65.



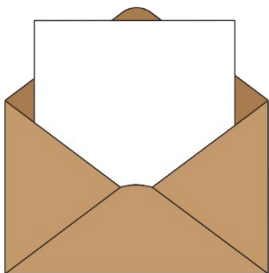
TDs

TD stands for Teachta Dála. TDs represent people from different constituencies around the country.



Vote

A vote happens when a group of people makes a choice. Each person has their own vote. When you vote, you are giving your choice and helping to choose who is part of Ireland's parliament, the Dáil.



For more Information

Postal address:

An Coimisiún Toghcháin, Block M, Dublin Castle,
Dublin 2, D02 X8X8



Email address: info@electoralcommission.ie

Social media: @ElecCommIRL