

**Measures for Returning Officers and
Electoral Registration Officers to
improve accessibility during elections
(Immediate Actions)**

16 February 2024

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Background

1. In early 2023 a sub-group of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB) was formed to explore the scope for improving the accessibility of the electoral process for people who experience barriers. The group aimed to identify and, if necessary, along with the Scottish Government, facilitate the trialling and implementation of practical and deliverable improvements in Scotland.
2. There are a range of drivers for this project:
 - representative groups with different interests have lobbied for accessibility improvements for many years; these are varied and include improvements to help people who are blind or have sight loss, those who have learning disabilities and those with mobility difficulties,
 - the high court judgment¹ in England and Wales which said that the tactile voting device (TVD) was not of itself enough to support people with sight loss to vote without assistance,
 - changes made by the Elections Act 2022 to the UK Government approach to accessibility during reserved elections,
 - existing legislation on accessibility at devolved elections, and
 - the availability of new burdens funding arising from the Elections Act changes.
3. In the course of its work the sub-group identified three workstreams relating to accessibility:
 1. **Short term** accessibility measures that can be implemented for the next UK Parliamentary general election (UKPGE), anticipated during 2024,
 2. **Medium term** accessibility measures that could be put in place by the Scottish Parliament election in 2026, encompassing website information, revised tactile and audio elements, and
 3. **Long term** potential accessibility measures for the Scottish council elections in 2027 and beyond, including general modernisation of voting and additional digital options.

¹ [R \(Andrews\) v Minister for the Cabinet Office \[2021\] EWHC 2233 \(Admin\)](#)

Accessibility and elections

4. Everyone should be able to register and vote without facing barriers. They should be able to vote independently (on their own) and in secret.
5. Voting rights are not always communicated in an accessible way, some do not have the support they need when registering to vote or voting and others face barriers when they go to a polling station or vote by post.
6. Accessibility issues cover all aspects of the voter journey and should be core to the planning, design and delivery of services from:
 - registering to vote and applying for absent votes,
 - receiving or finding out more information or data related to an election,
 - understanding, completing and receiving a postal vote,
 - attending a polling station to vote, and
 - accessing support, materials and assistance when it is required.
7. Whilst many of the provisions are centred on the voter, Returning Officers (ROs) and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) should also consider the needs of candidates, agents and other stakeholders who also require access to the process.

What are my responsibilities in relation to accessibility?

8. The Elections Act 2022 introduced changes which aim to provide greater flexibility and choice in how disabled voters are supported to vote at polling stations for UKPGE, but the measures could be used for both reserved and devolved polls in the interest of consistency.
9. The responsibilities of the Returning Officer (RO) are set out in detail in the Electoral Commission's [Guidance for Returning Officers – Assistance with voting for disabled voters](#). The guidance covers responsibilities set out under the Representation of the People Act 1983, Equality Act 2010, and the Elections Act 2022².
10. Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) will have a [public engagement strategy](#) identifying registration challenges in each area and which will inform the registration plan. As part of an effective local public engagement strategy there

² [Section 9, Elections Act 2022 \(Assistance with voting for persons with disabilities\)](#)

will need to be plans to engage and support those residents less likely to be registered or who have more difficulty in registering via the usual channels.

Existing resources

11. The Electoral Commission has a number of resources which support ROs and EROs in meeting accessibility responsibilities:

- [Guidance for Returning Officers - Assistance with voting for disabled voters](#)
- [Communicating information directly to disabled voters](#)
- [Key considerations for the implementation of Tranche 1 of the Elections Act 2022](#) (PDF)
- [Key considerations for the implementation of Tranche 2 of the Elections Act 2022](#) (PDF)
- [Guidance for Returning Officers](#) – poll specific / UKPGE
- Guidance for polling station staff – poll specific
- [Democratic engagement resources](#) in a number of formats
- [Designing voter material guidance](#)
- Factsheet - [Producing accessible documents](#)

12. In addition, other representative groups provide resources and guidance some highlighted below and in later sections.

- [Mencap](#) have created a series of mini easy read guides for people with a learning disability, which give information on the different ways to vote for different local elections.
- The [Macular Society](#) support those that have macular disease including age-related macular degeneration and macular dystrophies. They provide information on [preparing documents for visually impaired people](#) and [low vision aids](#).
- United Response is a national disability charity and they have produced specific information on the voting process. Their campaign [My Vote My Voice](#) is focussed on encouraging people with learning disabilities and autistic people vote in the next UKPGE.

Recommended measures

13. In addition to existing guidance, the EMB Accessibility sub-group has identified a set of simple measures that can be implemented by ROs and EROs and their teams to further improve accessibility of elections, in advance of a UKPGE to be held before January 2025.
14. Some measures apply in the polling station, where customarily the accessibility focus has been centred. Other measures consider the whole voter journey at the point of registering to vote and include other stakeholders with whom ROs and EROs will have contact before, during and after the poll. This is a step further than the legislation requires but the 'whole voter journey' is important to consider.
15. Many of these measures are low cost or involve modifications to existing practice or provision. Some administrators may find that they have already implemented or identified the measures noted below:

- 15.1. Ensure at any initial point of communication to voters, or when voters access information about registering to vote, that a range of routes and formats are provided, with support if required, to allow an individual to register to vote.**
- 15.2. Consider how, when and where you communicate messages about registering to vote, the options for an absent vote and how to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate so that groups with specific access needs are reached and supported.**
- 15.3. Ensure that all general information and communications targeted or provided to voters are accessible and available in a range of formats appropriate for those with accessibility needs.**
- 15.4. Ensure you promote and support a range of contact routes, to allow the provision of information and support in ways that meet different requirements.**
- 15.5. Review your poll card / poll letter templates for options to improve accessibility through document design and provide easy to use links to access further information and support in a range of formats.**
- 15.6. Ensure in advance of the poll that you communicate and provide accessible information about getting to the polling station, what to expect and the support / aids that**

will be available to voters to vote independently and in secret.

- 15.7. Review local demographic information and records of previous issues at polling places to understand where specific information and support may be needed for groups of voters who have accessibility requirements, planning and targeting provision to address particular local or community needs.**
- 15.8. Ensure that all staff are trained and familiar with the support measures available and can advise or signpost the voter, or any supporters or carers, to access additional information or information in a different format, appropriate to specific needs.**

16. These measures are supported by commentary in the following sections, which illustrate some of the material, resources, or considerations that you could utilise in your area. You may determine that some of the examples provided may not be suitable or practical for your area or provide new or novel solutions which suit local need.

Register to vote and Voter Authority Certificates

17. Registering to vote and finding out more information and applying for different voting methods is the first step in the voter journey.
18. Information and awareness provided, whether general or targeted, requires an understanding of the needs of the groups being communicated with. Consider the format of how information is presented and the accessibility of the language used whether conveyed in print, online or by phone.
19. There is a range of accessible resources available to support the Register to vote process, and information you produce should also point to alternative voting methods and the new information about Voter ID and communications for Voter Authority Certificates.

- 1. Ensure at any initial point of communication to voters, or when voters access information about registering to vote, that a range of routes and formats are provided, with support if required, to allow an individual to register to vote.**

20. Mencap and the Cabinet Office have created an easy-read guide to assist people with learning disabilities when registering online through their campaign [My Vote My Voice](#). The guide may also help if English is not the first language.
21. For those that are partially sighted or have visual loss there is a [large print 'apply to register to vote' form](#) available from the Electoral Commission. Similarly, an easy read invitation to register form is also available.
22. Provide clear links on how to request support, which may include face-to-face support to allow an individual to register to vote or to support someone caring for someone with additional needs.
23. You could provide, promote and circulate links to the easy read guide on [applying for a Voter Authority Certificate](#) published by DHLUC.

2. Consider how, when and where you communicate messages about registering to vote, the options for an absent vote and how to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate so that groups with specific access needs are reached and supported.

Providing information to electors/voters

24. When you are communicating or raising awareness with electors, voters and stakeholders consider the demographic of the group you are communicating with, as well as any difficulty they may be faced with; this may influence how you communicate with them. Some groups may have specific communication needs.

25. For example, some formats will assist some more than others:³

- visual – audio, audio description, Braille, Moon, telephone,
- learning disabilities and literacy difficulties – audio, audio description, easy read, easy access, Makaton, subtitles,
- hearing – British Sign Language, Makaton, subtitling, textphone, SMS,
- co-ordination difficulties – large print, audio, audio description, telephone.

26. Some local authorities or organisations may already have an ‘accessible communications policy’⁴ or publish general accessibility information on their websites, particularly in relation to web content accessibility guidelines.

27. For some groups it may be appropriate to communicate directly with them to best convey your message. The Electoral Commission have produced guidance on [Communicating directly with disabled voters](#).

3. Ensure that all general information and communications provided to voters are accessible and available in a range of formats appropriate for those with accessibility needs.

28. [Disability Information Scotland](#) provide several training resources on producing easy read documents, creating accessible PDFs, templates and forms and how to use accessible styles in MS Word. They also include checklists to ensure that your information is accessible and a general overview on making information accessible.

29. The UK Government Disability Unit provides guidance on [Accessible Communication formats](#) and also notes that you should involve disabled people from your audience in developing and reviewing a strategy for producing information in accessible formats. The [UK Government Communications Service](#) also provides guidance on digital and social media

³ [Accessible communication formats](#), Cabinet Office – Disability Unit

⁴ Accessible Communications Policy 2022 – 2024, Sefton Council, <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/your-council/accessible-communications-policy-2022-2024/>

accessibility. The Scottish Government have produced advice and guidance on '[Principles of Inclusive Communication](#): An information and self-assessment tool for public authorities' (2011).

Contacting electoral services

30. Accessible customer service is when you provide services that empower or enable individuals with disabilities to engage with your services. Stakeholders being able to contact you effectively for information or support is an important factor in the planning and provision of your service.
31. Traditionally contact is made via face-to-face services which are increasingly in decline and accordingly telephone, email, and as online services have developed, perhaps through online contact forms or embedded support requests facilitated through your website.
32. So that anyone that lives with a form of sensory loss or difficulty can access the services and information that they have a right to, you may need to consider how you currently support them to effectively contact you or understand information you provide.
33. For example for those that use British Sign Language (BSL) could utilise [SignVideo](#) web access, [Sign Live](#) application, [InterpretersLive](#) or a custom interpreting service.
34. Deaf relay interpreters may assist users who are not fluent in BSL to fully understand what's being communicated to them including those that may have a specific or complex language needs, learning disabilities or mental health problems.
35. Limiting the ways that voters can contact you may exclude some demographic groups who may be more comfortable using more traditional routes, i.e. only offering online services may have an impact on certain groups in their ability to access information or make contact with your service.

4. Ensure you promote and support a range of contact routes, to allow the provision of information and support in ways that meet different requirements.

Poll cards

36. Poll cards / poll letters are an important first step in the election process reminding voters of their voting arrangements and offering information on the poll, voting process and alternative options as well as contact information. The Elections Act 2022 brings changes to the poll card, and the format for a UKPGE to include additional information about Voter ID.
37. Whilst much of the content of the poll card / poll letter is prescribed, you should consider options on how accessible the document is in terms of size, font, colour, layout, clear space and graphics, for accessible document design.
38. It may not be possible to adapt your standard set of poll cards to be more accessible due to limitations on size and print contracts. However, it should be possible to allow voters to request voter materials in large print or another format if requested and required to support the voter.
39. Consider whether you can provide a QR code or direct link to more information about accessibility at polling stations on the relevant poll card / poll letter. Ensure that you have clear information for the voter about contacting the relevant office to request assistance and support if required.
40. Consider providing links in your poll card / poll letters to additional support material e.g. the easy read guide on [applying for a Voter Authority Certificate](#) published by DHLUC or animated, audio or video explanations about Voter ID at polling stations to aid in understanding of new processes.

5. Review your poll card / poll letter templates for options to improve accessibility through document design and provide easy to use links to access further information and support in a range of formats.

Polling stations

Communicating assistance

41. Elections already have some statutory provisions in place to make them more accessible. For example:

- large print ballot paper samples,
- tactile voting devices,
- assistance by companions or the Presiding Officer,
- alternative accessible routes into a polling place.

42. You may have these and additional accessibility measures in place already. It has been highlighted⁵ that we may not always promote these adaptations to the users or support them in the best way possible.

43. Communication and awareness of the measures you have in place are as important as the availability of the measures or aids themselves.

6. Ensure in advance of the poll that you communicate and provide accessible information about getting to the polling station, what to expect and the support / aids that will be available to voters to vote independently and in secret.

Advance information

44. Consider the information you provide in advance of the poll about the voting process and where and how you provide it:

- a dedicated page on your website or/and in other channels/media:
 - outlining all the measures you provide ensuring that you explain the adaptations and aids you provide ^{6, 7, 8}

⁵ [Electoral Commission report on the May 2023 local elections in England](#) - Recommendation 1: Increase awareness of the support available for disabled voters

⁶ Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200205/elections_and_voting/5039/accessibility_at_polling_stations

⁷ Leicester City Council <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/elections-and-voting/accessibility-at-polling-stations/>

⁸ West Berkshire Council - <https://westberks.gov.uk/polling-accessibility>

- clarifying any assistance, support or service animals permitted in polling stations available in your electoral area,
 - clear routes for the voter to find out more information,
 - how to request support or request a reasonable adjustment,⁹
 - what support can and can't be provided within the rules,¹⁰
 - when requesting support, can the individual do so by a choice of channels which may suit individual needs,
 - provide information on how to report an accessibility issue in a polling station, so it can be resolved for future polls.
 - consider providing a QR or specific link on a voter's poll card relating to accessibility information on your website.
 - set out accessible information on access arrangements¹¹ for each of your polling stations covering elements such as:
 - are there allocated disabled parking spaces?
 - is the external access over unmade ground or gravel or paved?
 - is the external access some distance to the entrance of the polling station?
 - does the station have a ramp at the entrance or exit?
 - does the station have a wide or double door entrance?
 - does the station have automatic entry or exit doors?
 - are there any access issues internally?
 - is there a hearing induction loop available?
 - does the station have disabled toilets?
 - set out information on facilities and aids available within each polling station including:
 - when the station is likely to be busy / quiet
 - availability of quiet space
 - provide and circulate links to the easy read guide on [applying for a Voter Authority Certificate](#) published by DHLUC
 - provide information or video material about 'what will happen at the polling station' on your website, as printed material provided to relevant groups or at
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⁹ Brighton and Hove City Council - <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/voting-and-elections/accessible-voting>

¹⁰ Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council - <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/accessibility-polling>

¹¹ Woking Borough Council - <https://www.woking.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/council-and-democracy/elections/Polling%20Stations%20-%20Accessibility%20Listings%20-%202023.pdf>

the polling station for reference (including the requirement to show photo ID when it applies) [including in British Sign Language](#) (YouTube)

- provide an 'easy read guide to voting at a polling station' / Makaton guide on 'how to vote' (including the requirement to show photo ID when it applies) on your website, as printed material to relevant groups or at the polling station for reference.
- If you have information uploaded in documents to your website:
 - is the link to key information prominent?
 - where the information is uploaded documents linked on the website ensure they are accessible e.g. if they are in an accessible PDF format, is alternative text used for images?
 - is an uploaded document the best format to provide this information, does it need to be within the body of the webpage?
 - are there any channels which you could use, which you currently don't to disseminate information. Many services are being digitised and moved online, does this exclude some users who still need to access information 'offline' or face to face.
 - provide audio or audible ballot papers that can be viewed before polling day or via the voter's own device on polling day (see below)
 - are the candidates and agents, and local parties aware of the support you offer to voters? They will also handle queries from voters while out campaigning or directly through their offices, they too should be aware of the range of measures you provide and how to find out more information. These stakeholders will be an important signpost in awareness and should be provided information on the services and support offered to electors/voters.

Supporting specific groups

Identifying and communicating with specific groups

45. To understand which aids and adaptations you may need to consider providing in the polling station it is important to appreciate the range and number of users you are supporting.
46. Local data and contact with networks of disability groups and civil society organisations will be an important factor in your planning and decisions around accessibility. Local data may include Sight Loss registers within your authority or the RNIBs [Sight Loss Tool](#).
47. The Electoral Commission have produced guidance on [Communicating directly with disabled voters](#) and information about local data to support your plans and meet your responsibilities.

7. Review local demographic information and records of previous issues at polling places to understand where specific information and support may be needed for groups of voters who have accessibility requirements, planning and targeting provision to address particular local or community needs.

Making reasonable adjustments

48. Establishing and providing options to improve local accessibility in polling stations may mean that you are able to make 'reasonable adjustments'¹², in all or some polling stations for groups or individual needs. Reasonable adjustments could be relation to the environment, timing, help, communication with, and attitude towards an individual requiring support.

49. Examples of reasonable adjustments could include:

- identifying and communicating quiet times in the polling station to minimise stimulation or aid hearing and understanding,
- entering the building through a particular door to aid mobility or access,
- adjusting furniture to accommodate mobility aids,
- assistance with moving around the polling place,
- allowing more time for staff to serve and communicate with the voter,
- offering clear written information or a process diagram in advance,
- advising you so you can inform staff that the voter requires to lip read,
- giving instructions, slowly and one at time to allow understanding, and allow for reflection and response.

Specific initiatives

50. You may be able to introduce initiatives to allow the voter or voter groups to independently request and access the support they need.

51. This might include a voting passport which is an A4 sheet of paper to hand to polling staff so they easily can understand the reasonable adjustments needed to enable that voter to vote. The passport is focused for use for those with a

¹² Section 20, Equality Act 2010

learning disability and / or autism. My Vote My Voice and Dimensions provide voting passport templates and formats. ^{13, 14, 15}

Signage and visual cues

52. Adaptions, aids or support available in the polling station may not be obvious to the user at the point of use or the polling station environment may not encourage those requiring support to have the confidence to ask staff for assistance or information.

53. Simple signage changes could assist in improving awareness and requests for support:

- signage incorporating a QR code at the polling station entrance with a link to information for disabled voters or those needing additional support and to explain the voter journey, you may wish to consider a link to an audio format within this provision,
- erect signage indicating a hearing loop system is available if the venue has one installed. Those attending the polling station may not be aware of its presence if a loop is available already in the venue,
- erect signage at the poll staff desk promoting assistance requests to those that many need extra support (Appendix 1)
- considering carefully where you site accessibility notices in polling stations for maximum benefit and attention prior to reaching the desk
- incorporating pictorial and recognisable elements to your text-based signs to aid understanding and gain attention
- reviewing the size, font and line spacing of the prescribed statutory voter notices with information on providing instructions on how to vote, ensuring readability.

54. Further visual cues for those that may need, or assisting someone that needs support include:

- signage identifying the low-level booth as wheelchair accessible or a prompt to use a chair if required at that booth,

¹³ Voting passport, Bradford City Council

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/media/5586/votingpassport.pdf>

¹⁴ Dimensions - supporting learning disability and / or autism - [voting passport](#)

¹⁵ My Vote My Voice – Voting Passport <https://www.myvotemyvoice.org.uk/resource/voting-passport/>

- ensuring that magnifiers, tactile devices and other physical aids in plain sight, available for use by the voter and not stowed in kit bags or boxes or staff storage table.

Staff identification

55. Many polling staff are required to wear a badge identifying their role as Presiding officer, Polling clerk, or Information/Polling assistant to allow easy identification for voters, candidates, agents and observers. It may be useful to review your provision in terms of accessibility and readability considering:

- badge size – is it large enough to provide the information required?
- badge colour – is it plain, readable and provides contrast?
- font used - is it plain, readable from a distance and distinguishable from the background?
- could you foster approachability with 'Happy to help' or similar on the badge or staff desk?

Physical adaptations

56. Some of the physical adaptations listed are already commonplace in many polling stations and should be considered as the minimum standard for voters.

- avoiding directing voters across unmade ground or high door thresholds which would be difficult for low slung mobility scooters or some types of electric wheelchair,
- where there is no level access, ramps for easier access,
- tactile voting devices for people with a sight loss,
- large copies of the ballot paper for display or handheld use,
- wheelchair access booths for every station/place including information in advance about the size and height of the booth table,¹⁶
- chairs at the staff desk and by polling booths for people who cannot stand for prolonged periods,
- propping doors open that are heavy or difficult to open or placing additional staff where available, at entrances/exits at polling stations particularly where doors are required to remain shut - for example, fire doors.
- removing floor coverings that could be consider a trip hazard or provide difficulty for mobility aids to cross.

¹⁶ Brighton and Hove City Council - <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/voting-and-elections/accessible-voting>

57. Other adaptations which could be used:

- brighter lighting for polling booths,
- providing LED touch sensor light to improve lighting in the polling booth,
- re-siting booths to take advantage of natural or existing overhead lights,
- pencil grips and large width pencils to help voters with dexterity difficulties or limited hand mobility,
- large magnifiers – A5 and A4 size+ are readily available and perhaps considering providing of different strengths of magnification as this can vary with product,
- coloured overlays to help people with dyslexia to read the ballot paper or a copy of the ballot paper printed on a different colour background^{17, 18}
- allow disabled voters to use any text-to-speech apps, torch or magnifier that they have on their phone, to assist them in reading their ballot paper,
- portable hearing loop systems - these devices can be made available at a requested voter's polling station on a request basis prior to the election,¹⁹
- audio recordings or audible ballot webpages of the ballot paper(s):
 - Audio recordings of ballot papers provided on your website.
 - MP3²⁰
 - YouTube – audio only²¹
 - Recording of the statements of persons nominated²²
 - Audible ballot webpages²³ built to offer audible versions of the ballot papers users can use Recheck (Browsealoud) on each page to read out the text or use a screen reader of your choice.

¹⁷ St Helens Borough Council <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/7463/Accessibility-at-polling-stations>

¹⁸ [Dyslexia friendly style guide](#), British Dyslexia Association

¹⁹ St Helen's Borough Council - <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/7463/Accessibility-at-polling-stations>

²⁰ Norwich City Council - https://www.norwich.gov.uk/downloads/file/8955/thorpe_hamlet_audio_ballot_paper

²¹ Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council - Wardle, Shaw and West Littleborough ward - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9UasXs4S8c>

²² Bolton City Council - <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/voting/notices-results-1>

²³ Manchester City Council – LGE 4 May 2023
https://www.manchester.gov.uk/directory/198/audio_ballots

Staff training

58. Fundamental to the provision of aids and the offer of voter assistance in polling stations are approachable, friendly and helpful polling station staff.

59. Staff need to be aware of the range of aids and support available, how to use them, and how they can make reasonable adjustments, where possible, when requested to do so by the voter.

60. These provisions need to be supported and advocated by election team staff and contact centre staff who are familiar in support measures available and are able to advise voters accordingly', This information may also be required any organisation or carer who supports that voter noting that information may be required in advance or on the spot on polling day.

8. Ensure that all staff in the voter journey are trained and familiar with the support measures available and can advise or signpost the voter, or any supporting organisation or carer, to find out more information or access information in a different way, appropriate to need.

61. Staff training *should* provide:

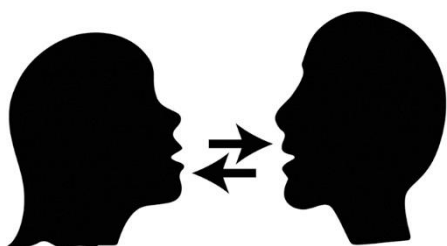
- their role in supporting accessibility in the polling station,
- more awareness of different support needs,
- how the aids and adaptations should be set out in the polling station,
- how you plan to signpost voters to the aids and support, through poll cards, signage, website
- how to address, speak and support a voter who may require support (Appendix 2)
- what they can and can't to support the voter or to make reasonable adjustments

Appendix 1 - Aids to Communication / Asking for assistance signs

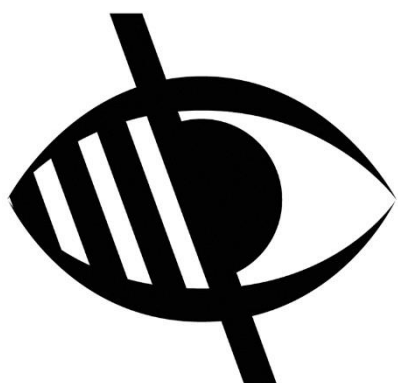
I would welcome support due to:



**Hearing loss
/deafness**



Speech disorder



**Visual
impairment**



**Require quiet
area**

If you need help you can ask us...

- to show you a large print ballot paper
- to read out the candidates on the ballot paper
- for help to mark the ballot paper with your decision
- for a tactile voting device

Please tell us if...

- you need us to repeat anything
- you need to use a chair
- you need help in the polling booth
- you need to stay with the person who is helping you

Appendix 2 – Sample tips to aid effective communication

(in part provided by Highland Council)

Aids to communication

Ask if the customer needs assistance and let them explain what help is needed; do not assume.

For the customer support and elections staff - If communication support is needed, try to find out and book in advance if possible.

Top tips to aid communication

Do

- keep a pen and paper handy to write things down.
- be yourself, maintain eye contact and speak clearly and directly to the customer.
- make sure the area has good lighting.
- use plain language and avoid slang words, expressions or jargon.
- allow plenty of time - give the person extra time to speak if they are using a communication aid or have a learning disability.
- ask the customer to repeat themselves if you don't understand them.
- respect the customer's personal space and remember that a wheelchair is part of a person's personal space.
- some people may prefer a quiet area with minimum distractions in order to communicate effectively.

Don't

- Be overly enthusiastic or attentive.
- Speak to disabled people through the person they are with
- Shout or exaggerate facial expressions or hand gestures.
- Pretend you understand what someone is saying if you don't.
- Finish people's sentences for them or presume you know what they are going to say.

Booking communication support:

<< Provide any guidance on booking communication support on >>

