

The Irish Government

The Government is the group of senior **ministers** responsible for the **executive power** of the country.

Executive power means the power to make decisions or policies.

A **policy** is a plan of action about an important issue.

The Taoiseach is the head of the Irish Government.

The Government has lots of things to think about, like money, health, employment and education, so to make it easier they set up different offices called departments.

For example, the department responsible for people's education is called the Department of Education.

The person in charge of each department is called a Minister.

The person in charge of the Department of Education is called the Minister of Education

The Government is responsible for carrying out laws.

The Government is also often described as the "Cabinet" or the "Executive".

The Government decides major questions of policy and carries out a number of important functions.

Local Government

Local Government provides facilities, for example local water supply, sewerage systems and refuse collections.

In Ireland there are 29 County Councils and 5 City Councils.

These are the **local authorities** responsible for running and managing each County and City.

Within each County Council there are a number of Town Councils.

The elected members of each local authority in

Ireland are all called **Councillors**.

Councillors are local politicians.

Councillors are elected during a local election.

Councillors represent and support the interests of the local community.

If you have any comments, questions or complaints about your local area, you should contact your local councillor.



YOUR OPINIONS AND YOUR VOTE ARE IMPORTANT!

All citizens aged 18 years and older have the right to vote... INCLUDING YOU.

Your vote counts. Make Sure Your Voice is Heard!



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What is an election?

The time when you **vote** is called an **election**.

Voting is your chance to help to choose the people to run your local area, Ireland and Europe.

These people are called **politicians**.

Politicians decide things, which affect everyone such as how hospitals and schools are run.

You can decide to vote for a person if you agree with his or her ideas.

A politician is a member of a **political party**.

A **political party** is a group of politicians who work together because they have similar ideas.

You can decide to vote for a political party if you agree with that party's opinions and ideas.

When do you vote?

- You can vote in a **General Election**.

This is the time when people choose Members of Parliament and the Government to run the country.

- You can vote in a **Local Election**.

A local election is when you can vote for your local politicians, called **councillors**.

Councillors make decisions about your local area and local services.

- You can vote in a **Referendum**.

This is when you vote on a question rather than a person

Who can vote?

People aged 18 and over can vote.

Your name must be on the **Register of Electors**.

This is a list of everyone who can vote.

If your name is not on this list you can fill in a form at the post office.

If you are registered to vote you will get a polling card.

Polling is another name for voting.

The polling card will tell you where and when to vote.

The place where you vote is called a **polling station**. The polling station is usually a school or a community hall near where you live.

How to vote?

Show the people at the polling station your polling card.

You should also bring some photo identification with you, for example, your passport.

The people at the desk will give you a page with a list of people you can vote for. This page is called a **ballot paper**.

You bring the ballot paper with you into the **polling booth**.

A **polling booth** is a private place in a polling station, where you



vote in an election by marking a ballot paper.

Fold the ballot paper and put it into the ballot box outside the polling booth.

Remember that your vote is secret.

Nobody can tell you who to vote for.

What happens after the elections?

When the polling station closes, all the votes are counted.

This is called **the count**.

The candidate or political party who has the most number of votes wins the election.

You can watch the count on television.

You can find out the winners from the television, radio, internet or newspapers.

Do not forget your political party after the elections.

Your political party can still speak for you even if they did not win the election.

How will you know if there is an election?

You will hear about it from your family, friends or from the media.

There will be information on the newspapers, television and billboards.