

Voting rights information sheet for mental health patients

General Election

Thursday 8 June 2017

Am I allowed to vote?

- The vast majority of patients in the community **can vote**.
- Voluntary patients in mental health hospitals **can vote**.
- Patients under civil sections, such as section 2 and 3 of the Mental Health Act (MHA), **can vote**.
- Patients on a Community Treatment Order (CTO) **can vote**.
- Patients who lack capacity **can vote**.
- Patients who are homeless, of no fixed abode or in B&B accommodation **can vote**.
- Prisoners remanded to hospital under the Mental Health Act (MHA) on Sections 35, 36 or 48 **can vote**.

Who cannot vote?

Patients detained after having been convicted of committing a criminal offence and been ordered to hospital by the Courts **cannot vote**.

Why do people choose not to vote?

They may not be interested in voting, may feel voting makes no difference or that they do not have enough knowledge to choose a party to vote for, may not know they are eligible to vote, may not know how to register to vote, or may have problems registering to vote or to cast their vote that are related to their physical or mental health or practical issues.

How do I register to vote?

To vote you must be on the electoral register. You can register to vote on line or by post. On line registration only takes five minutes. More information to register on line or by post is available at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk

When is the last day you can register to vote in the General Election 2017?

5pm Monday 22 May.

If I am homeless how do I register to vote?

If you are homeless, you should make a declaration of local connection giving the address of a place where you spend a substantial part of your time, or the address of somewhere near to that place. This could include a cafe or drop-in centre. You need to fill in a declaration of local connection form to vote (available from the electoral office).

A declaration of local connection may be made by homeless people, patients in psychiatric hospitals, remand prisoners, people resident in more than one constituency.

If I am in hospital can I register to vote using the hospital address?

The use of a hospital address for the purposes of registration is permitted so long as the period of time that you have been in hospital is enough for you to be regarded as resident.

If you are a short-term patient in a psychiatric hospital you can register to vote in the usual way. You should give your address outside the hospital as your place of residence.

If you are a short-term patient with no address outside the hospital then you may be able to make a declaration of local connection.

If you are a long-term patient in a psychiatric hospital you can register at your address outside the hospital. Alternatively, you can register at the address of the hospital if you have been, or will be, in the hospital for a long enough period of time for it to be regarded as your place of residence.

What are the ways I can cast my vote?

In person: At a polling station between 7am and 10pm on Thursday 8 June 2017.

By post: Postal vote packs are usually sent out about a week before Election Day. Post your vote back so that it arrives by 10pm on the day of the election. If it arrives later than this, your vote won't be counted. If you're too late to post your ballot paper back, you can hand it in to your local electoral registration office or bring it to your local polling station by 10pm on polling day.

By proxy: Nominating someone to vote for you on the day of the election or by post.

When is the last day to apply to vote by post and for postal proxy applications?

5pm on Tuesday 23 May if you are applying to vote by post or 5pm on Wednesday 31 May if you wish to vote by proxy.

Where can I get more information?

If you are a patient please speak to a professional involved in your care, or your local advocacy workers, and consider attending the CNWL Recovery College workshop on Citizenship and Voting Rights.

Get information and register at <https://www.yourvotematters.co.uk/> or <http://www.gov.uk/registertovote>

A good easy read guide is available at <https://www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/campaigning/voting-and-registering-vote>

Useful information for younger voters available at <http://bitetheballot.co.uk/> and <http://votingcounts.org.uk/>