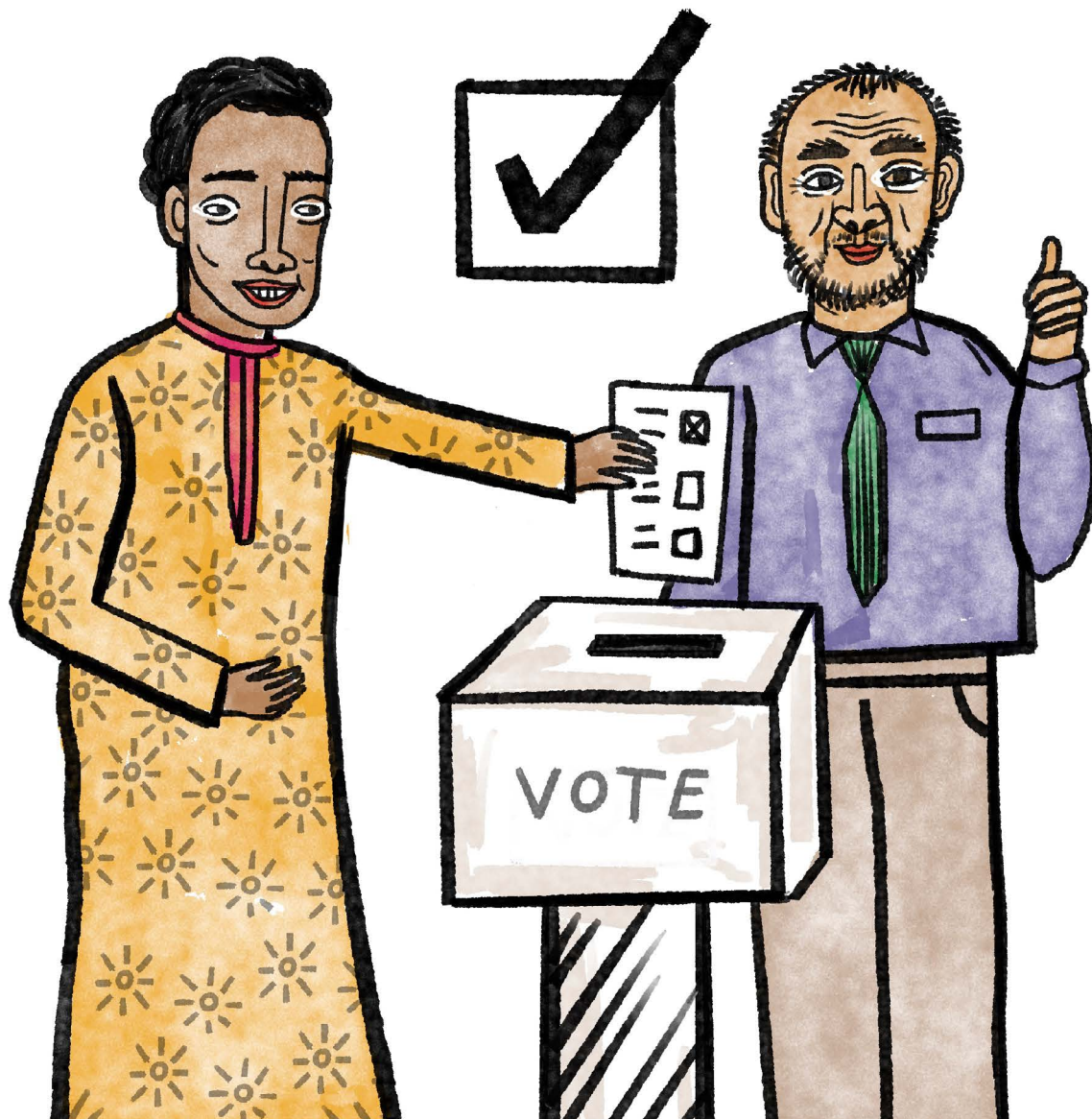


POLLING STATION



Our right to vote: a guide for inclusion



Irish Aid
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Inclusion
international



Sightsavers



Who makes the big decisions for the country?

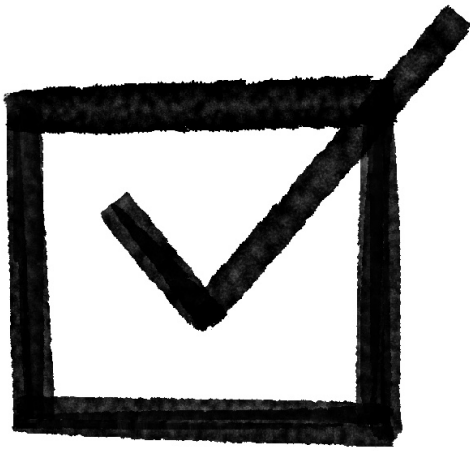
Every country has a group of people who make the big decisions that affect everyone who lives there.

Together, these people are called ‘the government’.

For example, this might be the President or the Prime Minister, and the people they work with.

The government makes major decisions about areas such as education, transport, healthcare and the country’s security.

Locally, the government is often represented by the ‘local council’.

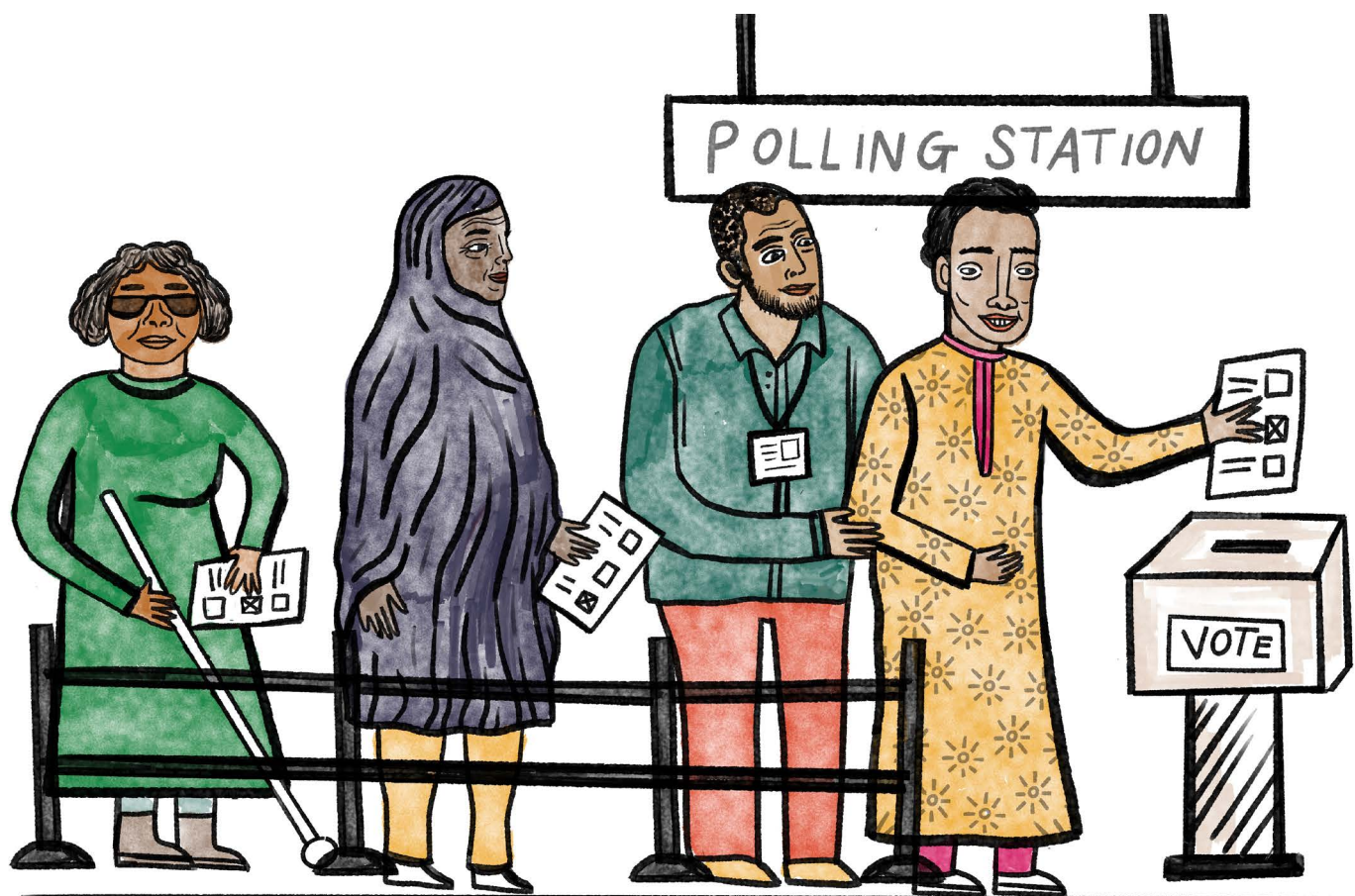


The right to vote

Countries hold 'elections' to choose the people who make up the local government or council.

Each person can choose who they think should be in charge. This is called 'voting'.

Each person expresses their choice of who should be leader by writing it down on a piece of paper.



Can people with intellectual disabilities vote?

There is an international law called the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Many countries in the world agree with this law. This law says what countries should do to make sure that all disabled people have the same rights as everyone else.

The information in article 29 of this law says that disabled people have the right to take part in political decisions.

This means that people with intellectual disabilities also have the right to vote.

You have the right to vote. You also have the right to get help to vote.

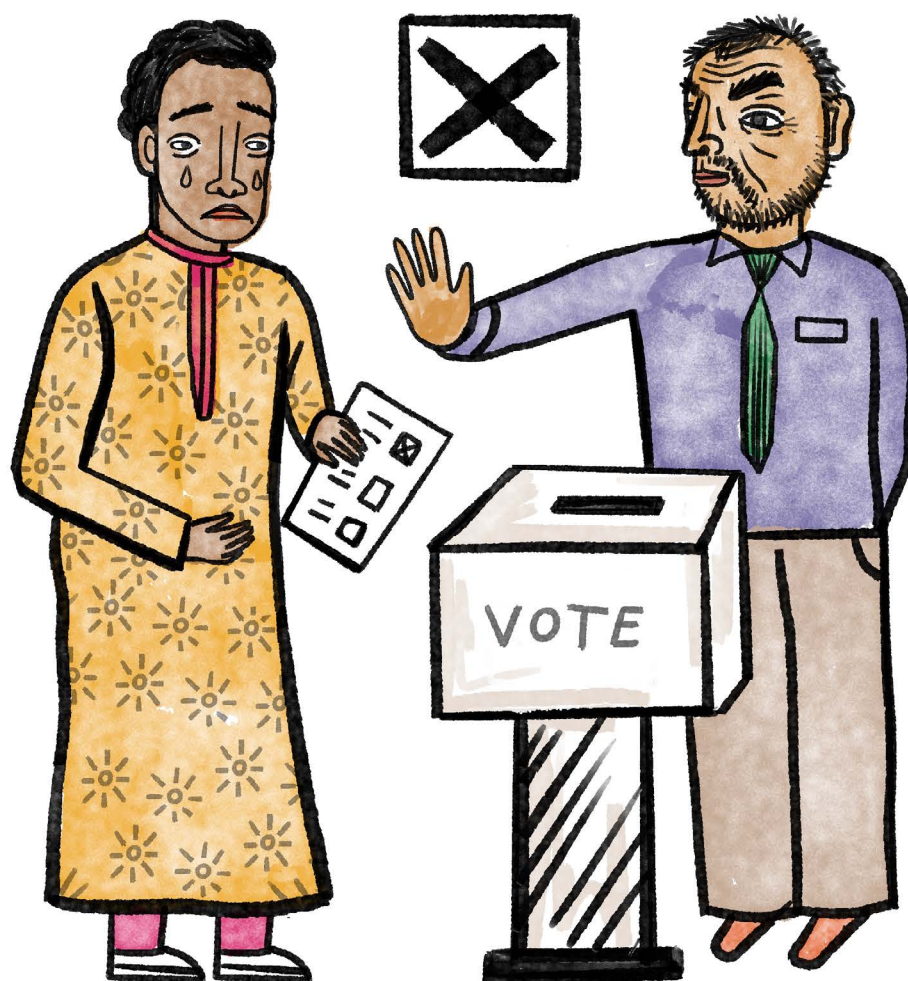
You also have the right to be a candidate in elections and to ask people to vote for you.

You have the right to form or join different organisations, including organisations related to politics.

For this to happen, voting must be inclusive and the polling station where people vote accessible to people with intellectual disabilities.

Information on how to vote and who you can vote for must be easy to understand.



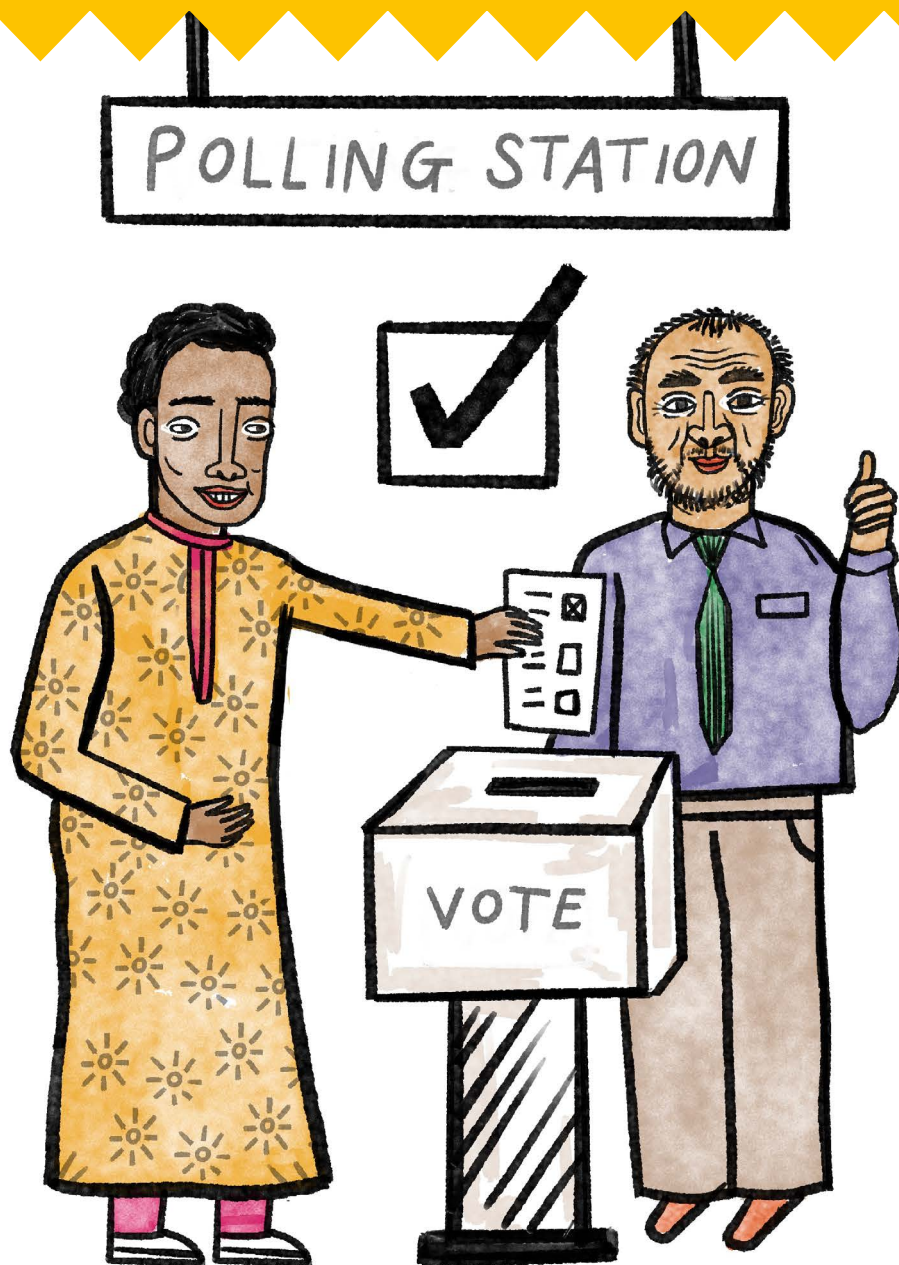


What should I do if my right to vote is not respected?

The International law (CRPD) says that people with intellectual disabilities can vote.

Nationally some parts of the law may limit the right of people with intellectual disabilities to vote.

This does not respect your rights.



When laws and attitudes are not right, we can try to change them. Here's what you can do:

- You can ask a disability organisation to help you do it.
- You can get together with other people with intellectual disabilities to ask the government to make decisions that would help you vote.

Everyone should be able to vote because it is a way of making decisions that matter to us.

The right to participate in public life

In addition to the right to vote, article 29 of the Convention states that people with disabilities have the right to participate in public life.

This means:

- Creating or being a member of organisations such as civil society organisations or political parties.
- Participating in community initiatives and meetings.



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