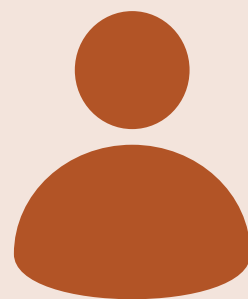


Easy Read



Access to Politics Toolkit

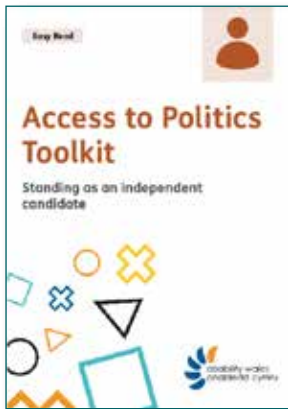
Standing as an independent
candidate



About this booklet



This is an Easy Read version of: **Access to Politics Toolkit: Standing as an independent candidate.**



This section gives you information about being an **independent candidate** – someone who does not belong to a political party.



You might need help to read it. You can ask someone you know to help you.

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Standing as an Independent Candidate



Independent candidates are people who do not belong to a political party.

You may want to be an Independent Candidate for many reasons:



- No party matches your beliefs.



- Most Town and Community Councillors are independent.



- You want to work on a specific issue.



- You want the freedom to stand for election without having limits on what you can say or work on.



The information in this toolkit is still useful for independent candidates.

You will need to:



- Check the rules to make sure you are allowed to stand as an Independent Candidate.



- Contact your local council.



- Fill in the right forms and send them by the deadline date.



- Select an election agent - to help you campaign within the rules.



- Send in your costs afterwards.

Checking you can be an independent candidate

You must:



- Be 18 or over.



- Be a UK, Irish or Commonwealth citizen.



For local council elections, you also need to:



- Live in the area.



- Or work in the area.



- Or own or rent property there.



- Or be registered to vote there.



You must not be banned to stand by law.



For example, because you have been arrested for a serious crime.



Or have a certain job - like a judge or a police officer.

Contact your Local Returning Officer



Every council has a **Local Returning Officer**.



This is a person in charge of making sure elections in your area are run properly.



They will:

- Give you exact deadlines and forms.
- Give useful advice.
- Check your paperwork before you send it in.



Deadlines are strict.



The deadline for sending in your forms is 19 working days before the election.



If you miss the deadline, you cannot be a candidate.

Fill in nomination forms



You must fill in and send:

- Nomination form – this is the name of the form you must fill out to be a candidate.
- Home address form.



You must sign the nomination form.



Someone must see you sign the form.

Pay a deposit



- For local council elections in Wales, you do not usually pay a deposit.



- For the UK Parliament election, you have to pay a £500 deposit.



- You get your deposit back if you get a 5% share of the votes. 5% means at least 5 in every 100 votes.

Select an Election Agent

What they do:



- Manage your campaign and make sure it follows rules and laws.



- Manage spending.



- Deal with donations and paperwork.

Important:



- You must have an Election Agent by law.



- You can be your own Election Agent.



You must give your Election Agents name and address.



This is your choice. It must be someone you trust.



They should be organised and not banned from being an agent.



If you do not select one, you will become your own Election Agent.

Other agents

You can also select:



- Polling agents – they watch polling stations and make sure everything is done properly there.



- Counting agents – they watch votes being counted.



You do not have to have these, but they are useful.

Running your Campaign

You can:



- Deliver leaflets.



- Knock on doors.



- Use social media.



- Hold and go to meetings.

Remember:



- There are strict rules about how much you can spend on your campaign.



- You can only use donations that follow the rules.



- You must keep a record of all the money you have spent on your campaign.

After the Election

You must:



- Send a report about how much money you spent on your campaign.



- Include receipts.



- Include information about the donations you had.



You must do this by law.

Key tips:



- Deadlines and forms are set by your local council Returning Officer.



- Many councils will check your forms before you send them in.



- You can be listed on ballot papers in Welsh, English or both.

Extra advice:



- Start early – campaign work and forms can take a lot of time.



- Being your own Election Agent is easier for small campaigns.



- Always double check your forms – mistakes on your forms will stop you being able to stand as a candidate.

More information



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