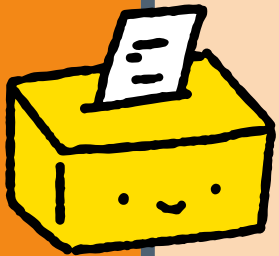


Why voting matters

A Local Elections activity pack designed by young people for young people.





Your Voice Your Future Your Power



Okay, let's be real. Politics might seem super boring, like watching paint dry. But trust us, voting is where you get to shape the world you live in! It's about choosing the people who make decisions on the things that matter to you – from education and climate change to healthcare and jobs.

This pack was created with young people, for young people because the places you live, learn, and hang out are shaped every day by decisions made in your local area. From buses and parks to safety, youth services, sports facilities, and the environment, local councils have a massive impact on your daily life.

Even if you can't vote yet, you can still take the lead. And this pack is here to help you do exactly that.

Use these activities to lead conversations and spark action in:

- Your school or college
- Your youth club or after-school group
- Sports teams
- Faith groups and community centres
- Scouts/Guides, cadets, arts clubs or drama groups
- Local campaign groups, charities, or resident associations
- Or any space where young people come together

You don't need to be an expert, just curious, passionate, and ready to get people involved.



With this pack, you can:

- Help friends and classmates learn who represents them
- Run fun, interactive sessions about local issues
- Host mini-debates, workshops, mock elections, or community walk-arounds
- Lead projects that improve your neighbourhood
- Build confidence in speaking up and taking action
- Make your group, club or school part of something bigger

Why this matters

Young people have already improved parks, protected youth services, influenced climate plans, challenged unfair rules, and made their councils listen - simply by getting informed and getting involved. This pack gives you the tools to do the same.

Don't forget! The aim is to inspire people to get informed about local elections so make sure to build in time to talk about how to register to vote and cast your vote with confidence.

Change starts here. So take the lead. Pick an activity. Bring people together. Start conversations. Make things better. This is your community. Your future. Your voice and your space to use it. Let's get started...



Own your
POWER



List of activities

1. Research who your local councillors are, what they do and then send them a collective letter about a local issue that matters to you.
2. You're in charge of the council. How will you spend your budget?
3. Neighbourhood walk to create a photo gallery of what you like and what you want to improve in your local area.
4. Run a mock election.
5. Host a local election quiz.
6. Design a poster about why local councils and elections matter.
7. Go to one of your councillors' surgeries to meet with them.

You could invite your local councillor to come along to any activities you run, whilst you're doing them, or after you've done any of these activities. This will mean you can hear from them about what they do and their plans for your local area.

If you want to incorporate an initial workshop about the role of the local council and how local elections work then here is [a workshop with slides and speaker notes](#) for you to use. You can also use this to get clued up yourself before running any of these activities.

Click 

We are here to help. Want to get involved, but need help taking the first step? No problem! We'd love to hear from you. Just email rebecca@ihaveavoice.org.uk.



1

Research who your local councillors are, what they do and send them a collective letter about a local issue that matters to you.



I HAVE
A VOICE

Time: 30-50 minutes

What you'll need: internet connection, enough devices to conduct research in small groups, the ability to either write an email or hand-written letter (if you opt to send a letter then you'll need an envelope and stamp).

Learning outcomes

- Know who represents you locally
- Practice respectful democratic contact
- Understand council's roles and responsibilities

Steps:

1. Start with a quick show of hands: Who knows which party is in charge of your council? Who knows the name of at least one local councillor? Who has ever met a councillor (ask people with their hand raised about the experience)?
2. In pairs or small groups, find your ward and councillors; note party and committee roles where available, and their contact details.
3. As a class, shortlist one issue you care about (e.g., youth services, parks, transport).
4. Draft a collective letter or email to councillors. Include: who you are, the issue, evidence, and a polite ask.
5. Send the email or letter.

Extension: Ask friends and family what issues matter to them.



2

You're in charge of the council. How will you spend your budget?



Time: 30-45 minutes

What you'll need: Paper and pens

Learning outcomes

- Understand trade-offs in public spending
- Prioritisation and negotiating skills

Steps:

1. Explain the range of priorities that each local council has to balance and how they can raise funds. You can use this presentation.
2. Split into small groups and make a list of the priorities you think that your council should fund, and then award each priority a percentage of the overall funding you think it should receive.
 - a. You could make it harder by encouraging people to be more specific, e.g. rather than just putting 10% towards parks, you could say 2% towards Hyde Park, or 2% towards more wild flowers in our parks.
 - b. You could make it easier by creating 3 buckets, e.g. small, medium, and high levels of funding.
3. Each group can then explain their prioritisation and explain why they made this trade-off.

Extensions:

1. Part way through the activity, or if one team is miles ahead, introduce a budget shock e.g. your budget has been slashed or more funding has been awarded (overall or for something specific).
2. Select an issue that divided opinions and facilitate a debate.



3

Neighbourhood walk to create a photo gallery of what you like and what you want to improve in your local area.



I HAVE A VOICE

Time: 45-90 minutes

What you'll need: Printed maps or phones with access to maps; consent and appropriate supervision; cameras

Learning outcomes

- Connect lived experience to council responsibilities
- Recognise who and what shape public spheres and how they foster community and wellbeing
- Use photography as a communication and advocacy tool
- Build a sense of belonging and develop empathy

Steps:

1. In pairs or small groups, map a short route to visit public and community spaces.
2. Follow the route and take photos of places you like and places that need improvement.
3. On return, annotate maps/photos with captions: what, why it matters, who can act (council/community).
4. Create a gallery that you can display in person or online.

Extensions:

1. Turn your photos into a slideshow or online gallery and share it with your councillors.
2. See if a community space will display your photos, and consider sketching some of them.



4

Run a mock election.



I HAVE
A VOICE

Time: 60-120 minutes

What you'll need: Paper, pens, ballot box (shoe box), ballots, stopwatch and hustings questions

Learning outcomes

- Understand the purpose and stages of an election
- Practice persuasive but respectful communication, and respect for different points of view
- Explore local issues and become more confident in participating in civic life

Steps:

1. In pairs or small groups, create your own parties and write a mini-manifesto for each party, focusing on running in a local election (e.g. 3 pledges).
2. Pick one person from each party to take part in a hustings event. Give each party 90 seconds to make an opening statement, then ask them 1-2 questions. If you have enough people there, host an audience Q&A.
3. Pass out ballot papers and conduct a secret ballot. If everyone taking part was involved in creating a manifesto, then tell people they cannot vote for themselves. Count and announce the results.

Extensions:

1. Run these as separate activities so that you can invite more people to the hustings.
2. If it is close to an election, attend a hustings event, or watch a recording of an old one and compare it to your event.



5

Host a local election quiz.



Time: 15-25 minutes

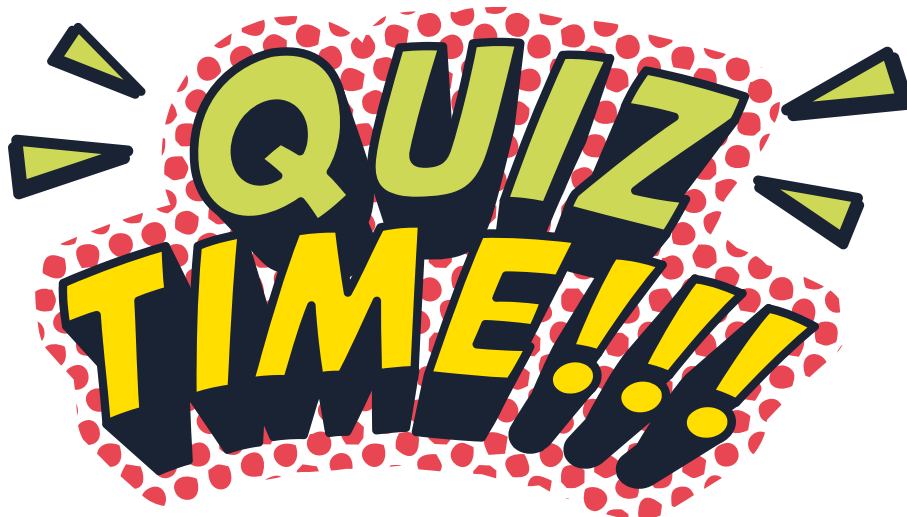
What you'll need: Materials, pens and paper

Learning outcomes

- Low-pressure knowledge building
- Great starter or reflection activity to cement learning

Steps:

1. Create your quiz. Include some easy questions to ease people in, and make sure to include some about your local area and local elections more broadly.
2. You could use information on the Electoral Commission's website to create your quiz - Welcome to Your Vote - Local Councils - England and from this video.
3. Decide whether people will take the quiz in teams or individually.
4. Decide if you're going to use pen and paper or an online quizzing tool like Kahoot.



6

Design a poster about why local councils and elections matter.



Time: 30-45 minutes

What you'll need: Paper, coloured pencils or paints, or devices with access to an online design app like Canva.

Learning outcomes

- Creative communication: Use colour, layout, images, and wording to get a message across clearly.
- Message building: Turn complex ideas (like democracy or representation) into simple, powerful statements.
- Design thinking: Make choices about audience, tone, impact, and what will grab attention.
- Critical thinking: Decide what issues matter most locally and how to express them visually.
- Confidence in self-expression: Share personal views in a creative and public-facing way.

Steps:

1. Prompt: "If you stood for council, what would you stand for?"
2. Create a poster, or comic strip, that explains clearly and creatively why local councils and elections matter. Use persuasive visuals or slogans to make the topic engaging. Communicate a message aimed at encouraging others (friends, classmates, or the wider community) to learn, vote, or get involved.
3. Gallery walk, and everyone provides constructive feedback.

Extension:

1. Send your posters to your councillors or share photos of them on social media.



7

Go to one of your councillors' surgeries to meet with them.



Time: 30-60 minutes (plus scheduling)

What you'll need: Notebook and pen

Learning outcomes

- Understand what a councillor does, how they represent local people, and what kinds of issues they can help with.
- Learn how councillor surgeries work, what they are for, how they're run, and why they exist.
- Gain confidence in contacting representatives

Steps:

1. Before the visit, research your local councillor (see activity 1) and use this knowledge, plus your own views on the issues that matter to you, to decide what questions you would like to ask and what proposals you would like to make.
2. To find out when your councillor is hosting a surgery and how to get in touch with them find their profile on your local council's website. You can find your local council on the [Electoral Commission website](#).
3. If you're attending a surgery, rather than inviting the councillor to come to you, make sure that you know where you are going and have appropriate supervision. It is also nice to let your councillor know of your plans in advance.
4. Enjoy asking questions and sharing your views. Remember, polite and well-evidenced asks that paint a positive vision for the future are particularly persuasive. Councillors love it when you don't just go to them with a problem, and you have a potential solution. It is even better if it is a solution you're willing to support, for example, organising litter picks.
5. Don't forget to actively listen to the councillor's responses and take notes.



Extension: Send a follow-up letter summarising the key points and asking to continue your engagement with your councillor.

