

# Step by step voting

Your vote is your voice

## 1. Register to vote

The **electoral register** is a list of everyone who is registered to vote. You must be on the register to be able to vote. Do this by filling out a registration form.

A registration form is sent to every home each autumn, during the annual canvass. You can also register at other times of the year by downloading a registration form from [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk) or contacting your local council.



## 2. Receive your poll card

If you are on the electoral register you will be sent a card just before an election. This is called a **poll card** and tells you what the arrangements are for voting. For instance it will detail what you need to do if you have applied to vote by post, or where your polling station is if you are voting in person.

### 3. Head to the polling station

On election day go to the **polling station**.

The polling station is often a school or local hall near to where you live. Polling stations are open from 7am – 10pm.

The staff inside the polling station will ask you your name and address and check that you are on the electoral register.

You can show them your poll card but you don't need this to vote.

All polling stations should have disabled access. If you need assistance with voting ask staff at the polling station to help you.



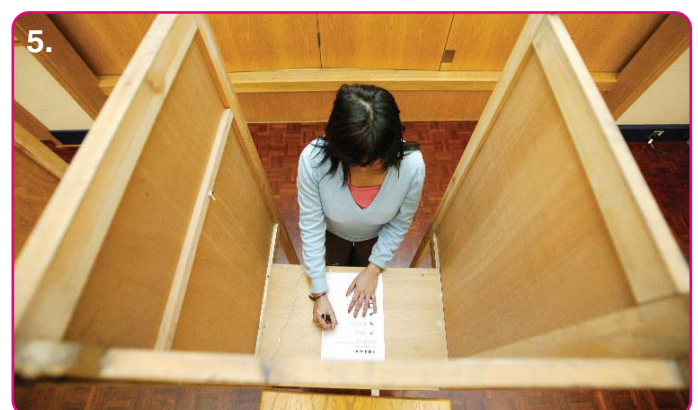
### 4. Collect your ballot paper(s)

The staff at the polling station will give you a list of the people or parties you can vote for. This is called a **ballot paper**. Depending on the type of election, you may have more than one ballot paper.

There may also be more than one election on the same day so it is important to follow instructions from the polling staff.

### 5. Go into a polling booth

Take your ballot paper(s) into a **polling booth** so that no one can see how you vote.



## 6. Mark your ballot paper

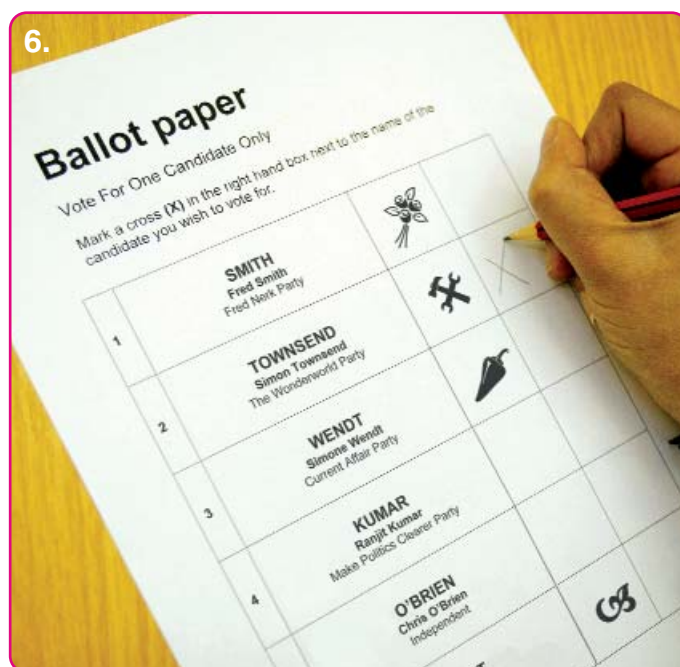
You will need to mark your ballot paper differently depending on which election you are voting in. If there is more than one election being held on the same day then the number of ballot papers you receive will vary.

Different elections use different voting systems:

- For elections to your local council (including parish councils) or the UK Parliament you place a cross (X) next to the candidate of your choice. In an election to the UK Parliament you vote for ONE candidate only. In local council elections you may be asked to vote for a number of candidates. This system is called 'first past the post'.
- For elections to the European Parliament place a cross (X) next to the political party of your choice. These elections use a 'closed list' system.

If you live in London:

- For elections to the London Assembly you have two votes: one for a constituency member and one for a London-wide representative. For both votes mark a cross (X) next to the person or party you want to be elected. This is called the 'additional member system'.
- To elect the Mayor of London you can make a first and second choice vote, e.g. put a '1' beside the candidate you like best and a '2' beside your second choice.



Sample of ballot paper used in elections to the UK Parliament

Don't write anything else on the paper or your vote may not be counted.

If you need help filling in your ballot paper or are unsure what to do, ask the polling station staff for help. If you make a mistake on your ballot paper you can ask for another.

Note to facilitator: We have provided a sample ballot paper for elections to the UK Parliament. Download other sample ballot papers from [www.dopolitics.org.uk](http://www.dopolitics.org.uk) and interchange photos depending on which election(s) you would like to talk about.

Visit [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk) for more information.

## 7. Cast your vote(s)

Place your ballot paper(s) in the **ballot box**. If there is more than one election there may be more than one ballot box. If you are not clear about what to do ask the staff at the polling station to help you.



## 8. Polls close

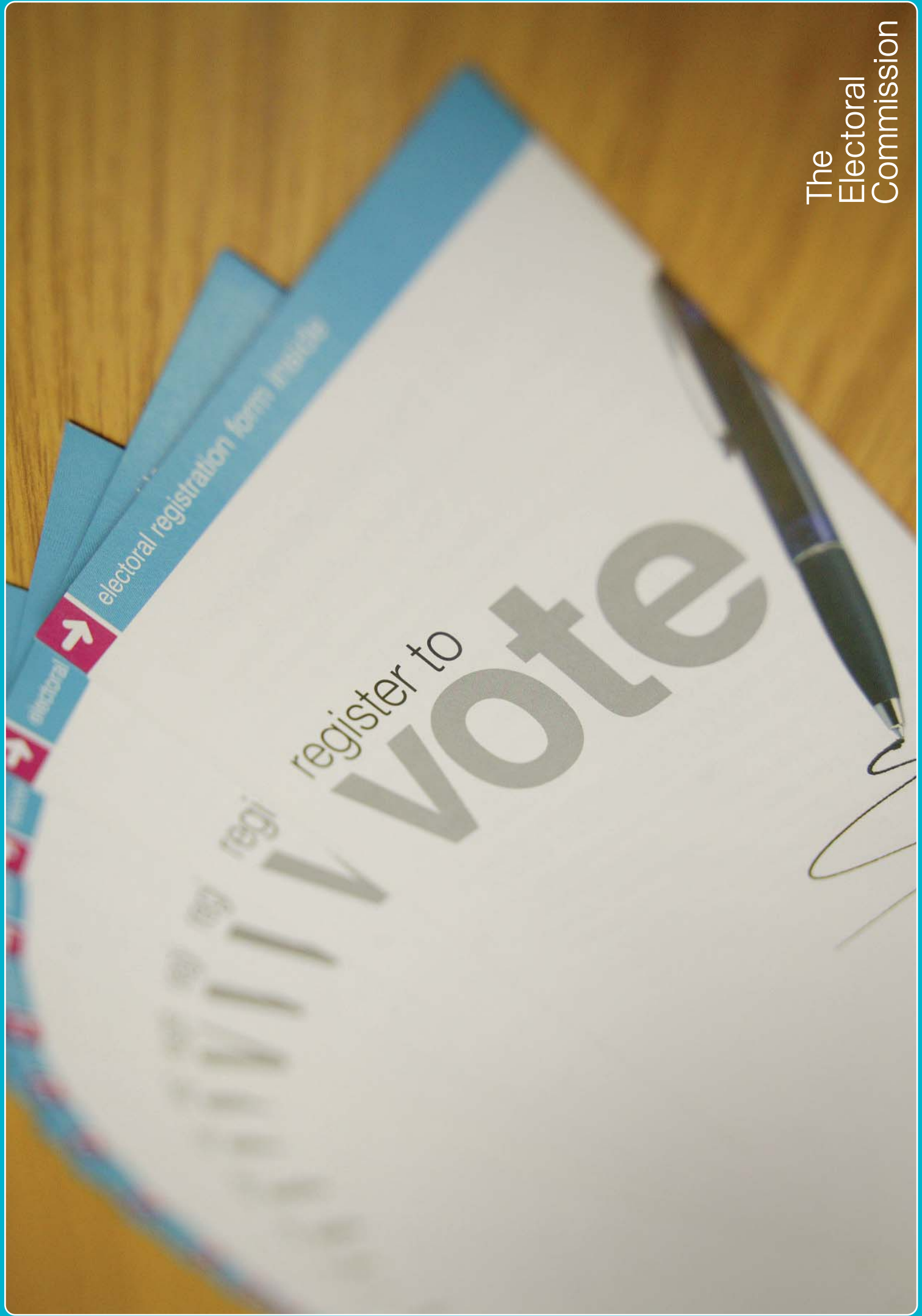
Polling stations close at 10pm.



## 9. The count

After the polls close the votes are counted and the results of the elections are declared.





Business Reply  
Licence Number  
RLSY-XEJE-CUYT

2  
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**OFFICIAL POLL CARD**  
REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACTS

NUMBER ON REGISTER

NAME & ADDRESS  
...  
... Road

CONSTITUENCY

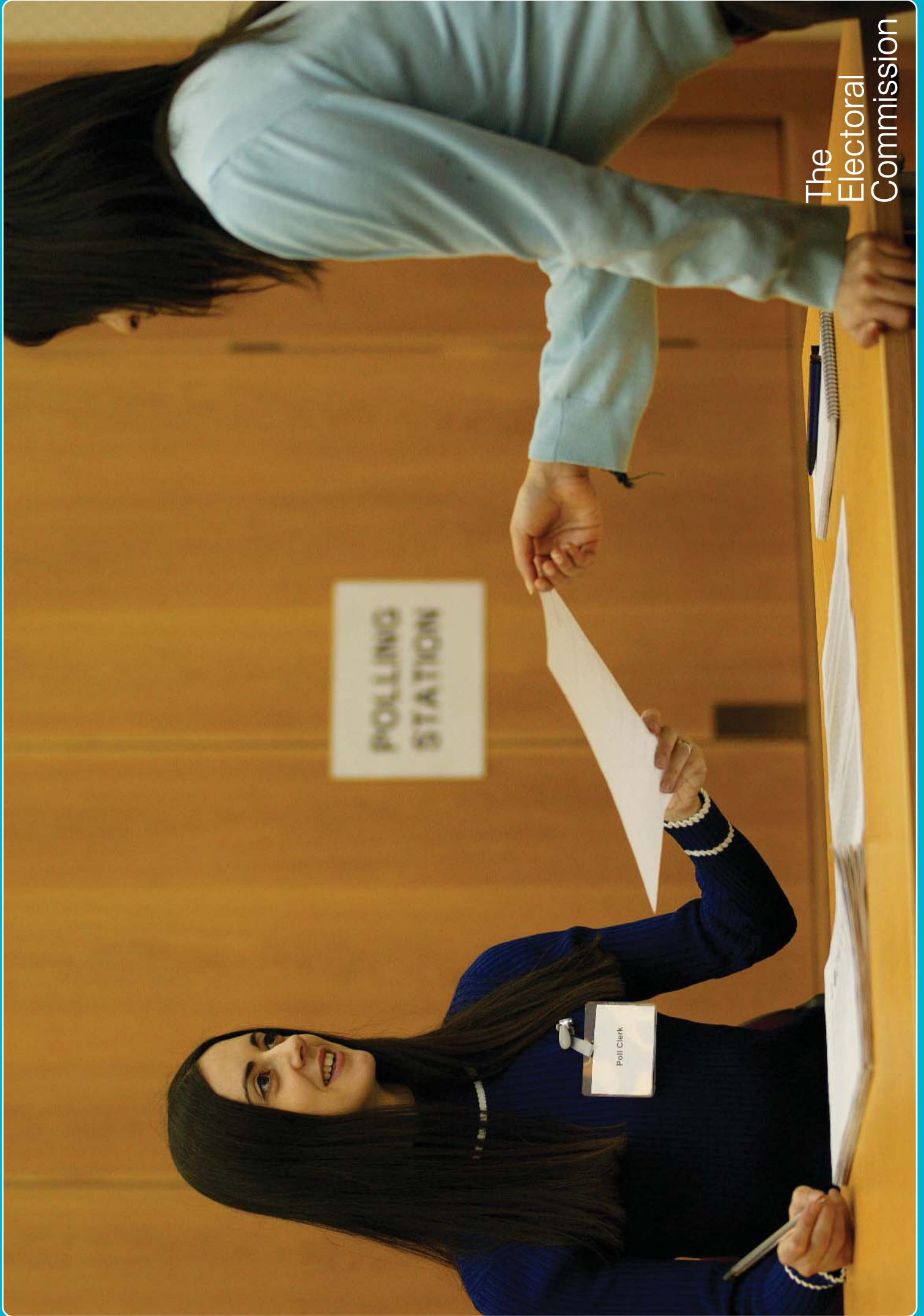
POLLING DAY  
Thursday

01020 8313 4364 - 9am to 5pm  
Monday to Friday  
Richard Cross, Secretary, 2011 2011

**POLLING  
STATION**

The  
Electoral  
Commission











# Ballot paper

Vote For One Candidate Only  
Mark a cross (X) in the right hand box next to the name of the candidate you wish to vote for.

1	<b>SMITH</b> Fred Smith Fred Nerk Party		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	<b>TOWNSEND</b> Simon Townsend The Wonderworld Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<b>WENDT</b> Simone Wendt Current Affair Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<b>KUMAR</b> Ranjit Kumar Make Politics Clearer Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<b>O'BRIEN</b> Chris O'Brien Independent		<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<b>LAST</b> Jenny Last The Best Party		<input type="checkbox"/>

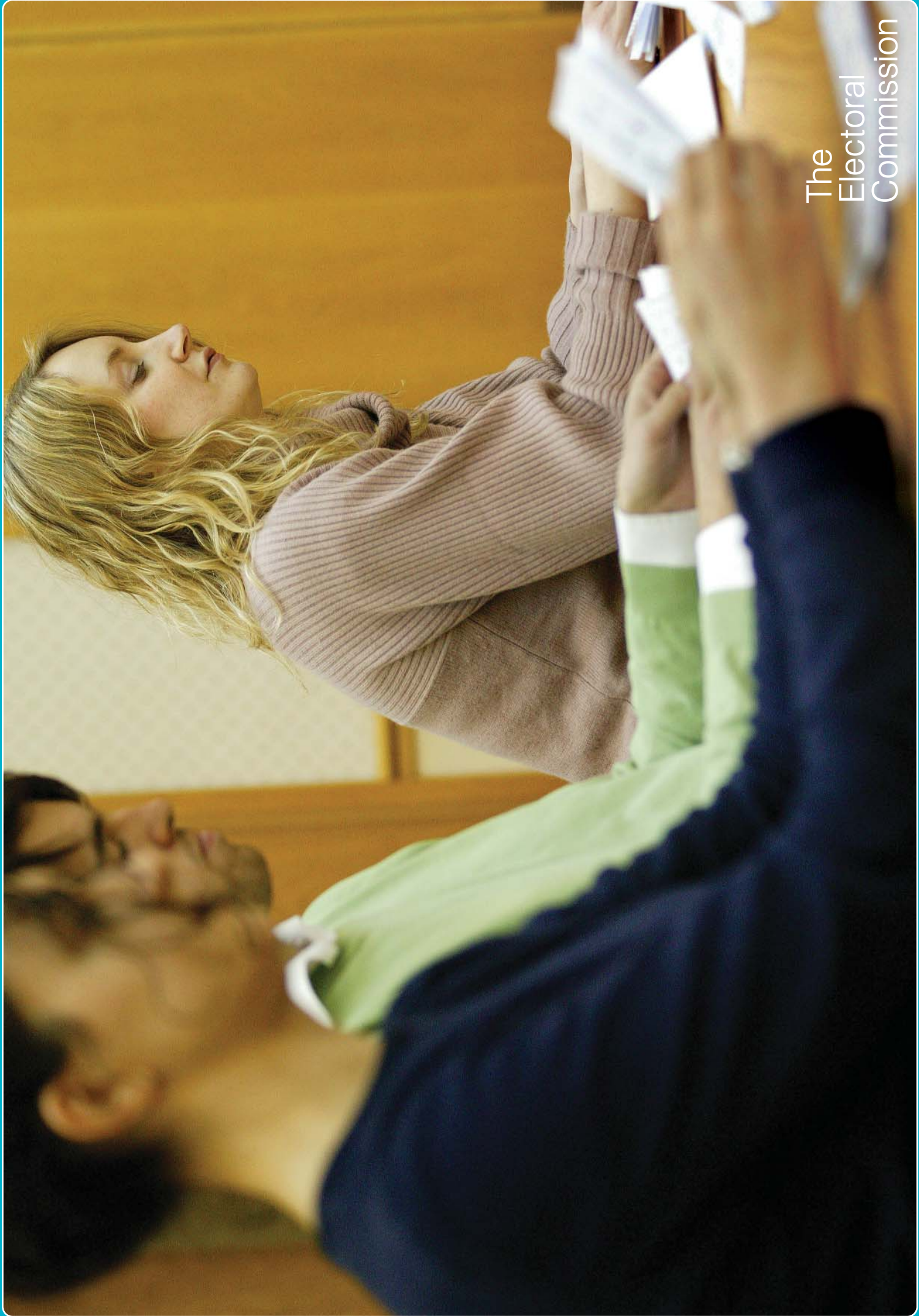


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For information about registering to vote or elections happening in your area visit **[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)**