



## How politics works

### Factsheet: Local Politicians



In England, as well as having **Parliament** and the **Government** who are responsible for running the whole country, we also have **local government** in each area.



This is usually called the **Council**, and there are **councils** for every area in the country. This means that each city and most towns have their own **council**.



The **council** is responsible for making decisions about things that affect their local area.



The people who decide how the **council** is run are called **local politicians**.



**Local politicians** are ordinary people who decide they want to help make decisions about local services.



There are different types of **local politician** and they are called **local councillors**, **town councillors**, or **parish councillors**. This depends on the area the councillor works in.



Each **council** has money to spend on services for people in that area.



These services are things like, collecting the rubbish, running libraries, repairing the roads and pavements and looking after local parks and museums.



**Councils** also have responsibility for housing and **social services** in their area.



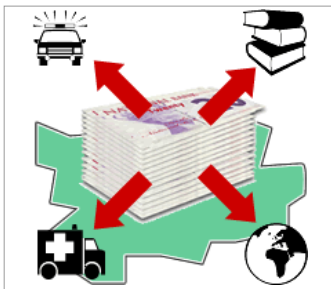
These services are very important as they are there for local people who may need support in their lives.



For example, some people might need support to live independently, or with getting about in their **community**. Some people may need support because of a disability.



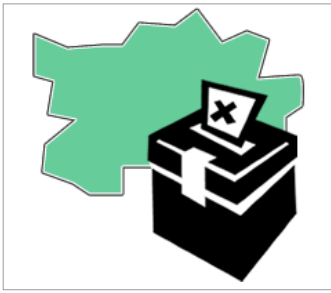
To pay for these services the **council** get some money from the **Government**, and they collect money from local people, called **council tax**.



**Local councillors** have the job of deciding how to spend this money and which services to provide for local people.



**Local councillors** discuss these things in meetings and set up groups, called **committees**, to make important decisions about these services.



You can have a say in who becomes a **local councillor** by **voting** for them at a **local election**.



Each **council** area is split up into smaller areas, called **wards**. You can find out what **ward** you live in by contacting your **local council**.



Each **ward** has **councillors** that represent the people who live in that area on the **council**.



A lot of **local councillors** are members of a **political party**, although some councillors are **independent**.



There are **local elections** every 4 years where you can **vote** to decide who will become a **councillor**.



Almost anyone can try and become a **local councillor** if they want to. There are some **rules** about this and to find out more you can contact your **local council**.



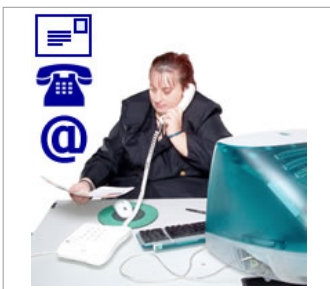
People who want to become a **councillor** will often print leaflets and put them through your door before an **election** to tell you what they want to do if they get **elected**.



This is to try and help people decide who they want to **vote** for.



Once they have been **elected**, your **local councillors** start the job of **representing** the people who live in their area.



You can contact your **local councillor** about **local** issues if you want to. You may have more than one councillor in your area. You can write to them, email them or arrange to meet them.



You can go to a **council** meeting if you want and see how councillors make decisions.



Do you know who your local councillors are?



You can find out by contacting your local council.

Or you can go to [www.councillor.gov.uk](http://www.councillor.gov.uk)



### **The Greater London Authority (GLA)**

If you live in London, as well as having **local councillors** who represent you, you will also have people called **Members of the London Assembly (MLA)** who represent you on the **Greater London Authority (GLA)**.



The **GLA** was set up to make decisions that affect the whole of London. These decisions are about things like flooding, homeless people, and transport.



There are 25 MLAs who are elected, and like local councillors their job is to represent people when decisions are made about these things for the whole of London.



Members of the London Assembly work with the **Mayor of London** who is the head of the GLA.



The **Mayor of London** and the MLAs are also elected every 4 years.



You can contact the **Mayor** and the MLAs to find out more about how the GLA works.



You can go to **[www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)**



Or you can write to

Greater London Authority  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
More London

London SE1 2AA

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