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Voters living with dementia

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People living with dementia, or any other cognitive impairment, can still vote if they want to.

We have an [Easy Read Guide to Voting](#) for people who have difficulty reading and understanding written information.

Does a person with dementia have to enrol?

Everyone in New Zealand who is eligible to enrol, must enrol. This includes people who have dementia or other conditions that impact on cognitive function.

Even though people who are eligible to vote must be on the electoral roll, it is not compulsory for people to vote at an election.

Can a support person help someone enrol?

Yes, a support person can help someone enrol.

If someone can't sign the form because of a physical or mental impairment, a support person can complete the form on their behalf.

If you're helping someone with dementia enrol, you will need to fill in another form so we can contact you as their representative. Call 0800 36 76 56 for the form.

Can someone vote if they have dementia?

The right to vote in parliamentary elections and referendums is a fundamental right in our democratic system. There is no capacity test for voting.

Someone with dementia can vote, provided they want to vote and can clearly indicate their voting preference.

If a voter has reduced mental capacity, because of dementia or any other condition, the law allows the voter to be assisted to vote in accordance with the voter's instructions.

The support person can either physically assist the voter to mark the ballot paper or may mark the paper on the voter's behalf in accordance with the voter's instructions.

The voter must be present and must indicate their voting preference at the time the vote is cast. If they are not able to do this or cannot be present during voting, no one is permitted to vote on that person's behalf, not even someone with power of attorney.

The bottom line is that the decision to vote, and who to vote for, must be made by the voter. Anyone assisting the voter must follow the voter's instructions and not attempt to direct or influence their choice.

Voting with help from a support person

If you need help to read or mark your voting papers, a friend, family member or electoral official can be your support person.

Your support person can:

- go behind the voting screen with you
- read out the words and information on your voting papers
- mark the voting papers for you if you ask them to.

Your support person can't tell you who you should vote for in the general election, or how you should vote in the referendums.