

Access 2026

Accessibility Action Plan for the 2026 General Election

Access 2026 is an action plan that lists the accessible services available to support Deaf and disabled people, tāngata Turi, tāngata whaikaha Māori, and their whānau, carers and communities to take part in the 2026 General Election.

This document has information on each accessible service, how to access the service and where to find more information.

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Accessing this document in alternate formats

Access 2026 has been produced in five alternate formats:

- Audio
- Braille
- Easy Read
- Large print
- New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL).

These resources are available to download or watch on elections.nz | [Access 2026](#)

Language used in this document

Accessible means that Deaf and disabled people, tāngata Turi and tāngata whaikaha Māori can access all areas of life equally to others.

For elections, this means enrolling, voting and understanding the election process.

The Electoral Commission knows that accessibility and disability mean different things for different communities.

The Commission also recognises that people have preferences of which words to use to talk about disabilities and that people's experiences as disabled are shaped by their cultures, identities and backgrounds.

The following words are used in this document:

- Deaf person or Deaf people.
- Disabled person or disabled people.
- Tāngata Turi: Māori who are Deaf or hard of hearing.
- Tāngata whaikaha Māori: Māori who are disabled. 'Tāngata' means people and 'Whaikaha' means to have strength, ability and to be enabled.
- Whānau, carers and communities.
- Disability organisations.

When the action supports a wide range of people, the words 'Deaf and disabled people' are used. When the action supports a specific group of people, the word(s) to describe that group of people will be used.

A glossary to define words used in this document can be found on pages 35 - 39.

About the Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission | Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri is an independent Crown entity established by the Electoral Act 1993.

We run New Zealand's parliamentary elections and keep the electoral rolls up to date.

We must do this fairly, effectively and efficiently.

Our work helps New Zealand have a healthy democracy, as we:

- support people to take part in their democracy
- help people understand the electoral system
- maintain confidence in the running of the electoral system.

We are committed to accessibility so Deaf and disabled people can take part in elections on an equal basis with all voters.

Foreword

The Electoral Commission | Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri is committed to accessibility, inclusion and reducing barriers for Deaf and disabled people taking part in elections.

I'm pleased to launch Access 2026: Accessibility Action Plan for the 2026 General Election.

The action plan lists the accessible services available to support Deaf and disabled people, tāngata Turi, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau, carers and communities to take part in the 2026 General Election.

This year's election will be different for many voters. Electorate boundaries have changed, meaning around 700,000 people may now be enrolled in an electorate with a new name or a different electorate than previous elections. People must also now be enrolled 13 days before election day to be able to vote. We need to respond to these changes without leaving anyone behind.

The Commission has worked to improve the accessibility of our services every election. This includes delivering core voting services like the telephone dictation service, providing accessible information and managing the Election Access Fund to support disabled candidates in parliamentary elections. But we know there is more work to do.

Access 2026 shows the ongoing progress to improve the accessibility of elections. It is great to see 20 actions covering existing, expanded and new accessible services that we will deliver this year. Examples of expanded and new services include initiatives to boost enrolment and establishing quiet voting places designed with the neurodivergent community.

While progress has been made, barriers will still exist. We will take any lessons from 2026 into planning future elections.

I'd like to thank all those who worked with us to develop Access 2026, and shape and deliver these accessible election services.

We want to ensure all eligible New Zealanders can participate in their democracy and trust the electoral system to be fair and impartial. I encourage everyone to take part in this year's election. Have your say. Your voice matters.

Karl Le Quesne

Chief Electoral Officer | Pou Kaiāwhā

Electoral Commission | Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri

Access 2026 framework

Vision and objectives

The 2026 General Election is accessible for all New Zealanders

Deaf and disabled people are enabled and empowered to fully engage and participate in the 2026 General Election.

Tāngata Turi and tāngata whaikaha Māori are enabled and empowered to make their electoral roll choice for the Māori Electoral Option in 2026.

Deaf and disabled people have trust and confidence in the electoral system and the Electoral Commission to deliver the 2026 General Election.

Areas for action

Staffing the election

Understanding the election

Enrolling to vote

Voting in the election

Supporting election candidates

Principles

Accessibility

Self-determination

Upholding equity, culture and identity

Participation and inclusion

Respect and dignity

From the *New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026 – 2030*

Foundations

New Zealand's founding documents

Electoral legislation and the Commission's guiding documents

Human rights legislation and international obligations

More information to explain this framework can be found on pages 28 - 30.

Information about the 2026 General Election

There is a general election in 2026. Election day is **Saturday 7 November 2026**.

A general election is when you can vote for the people and parties who you want to represent you in Parliament.

To vote in the 2026 General Election, you will need to be enrolled by **midnight, Sunday 25 October 2026**.

You can vote from **Monday 26 October 2026** through to **7pm** on election day, **Saturday 7 November 2026**.

Information on the election can be found on [vote.nz | 2026 General Election](#)

Who can enrol and vote?

Deaf and disabled people can enrol and vote if they are eligible.

To be eligible, or allowed, to enrol to vote, these three things must be true about you:

1. You are 18 years old or older.
2. You are a New Zealand citizen or resident for electoral purposes. A resident for electoral purposes means you are living in New Zealand lawfully and are not required to leave the country within a specified time.
3. You have lived in New Zealand continuously for 12 months or more at some time in your life.

If you're 17 years old, you can fill out an enrolment form now. On your 18th birthday, you will be automatically enrolled to vote.

If you're eligible, you must enrol to vote. But it is your choice if you want to vote or not.

Enrolling and voting means you can have a say on the issues that are important to you and on the people who you want to represent you in Parliament.

If you're unsure if you are eligible to enrol, contact the Electoral Commission:

- call us on **0800 36 76 56**
- email us at enquiries@elections.govt.nz
- visit our website [vote.nz](#)

You can enrol or update your details online on [vote.nz | Enrol or update online](#)

If you can't enrol online, you can find other accessible options to enrol on [vote.nz | Other ways to enrol](#)

Information on how to enrol and vote is available in alternate formats on [vote.nz | 2026 General Election information in accessible formats](#)

Services to enrol and vote in the 2026 General Election

Access 2026 also has information on the accessible services available that can support you to enrol and vote in the 2026 General Election.

Find out more information on pages 14 – 26.

A quick guide to the accessible enrolment and voting services for the 2026 General Election can also be downloaded from [elections.nz | Access 2026](#)

Māori Electoral Option

If you're Māori, you can choose to be on either the Māori electoral roll or the general electoral roll when you enrol to vote.

Your choice determines who you can vote for.

More information on the Māori Electoral Option can be found on [vote.nz | Māori Electoral Option](#)

Information in alternate formats on the Māori Electoral Option can be found on [vote.nz | Māori Electoral Option information in accessible formats](#)

Share information on Access 2026

If you would like to share information or resources about Access 2026 and the accessible services for the 2026 General Election, visit [elections.nz | Access 2026](#)

What is Access 2026?

Access 2026 is an action plan that lists the accessible services available for the 2026 General Election. These services are called 'Actions'.

These actions can support Deaf and disabled people, tāngata Turi, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau, carers and communities to take part in the 2026 General Election.

More information about Access 2026 can be found on pages 28 – 34.

Areas for action

There are five groups of actions that relate to a different part of the election process:

1. **Staffing the election:** actions to hire and train people to work at the 2026 General Election.
2. **Understanding the election:** actions to provide Deaf and disabled people information about enrolling, voting and the 2026 General Election.
3. **Enrolling to vote:** actions to support Deaf and disabled people to enrol to vote and to support tāngata Turi and tāngata whaikaha Māori to make their electoral roll choice for the Māori Electoral Option.
4. **Voting in the election:** actions to support Deaf and disabled people to vote in the 2026 General Election.
5. **Supporting election candidates:** actions to support Deaf and disabled candidates standing in the 2026 General Election.

Actions have been split into three categories:

1. **Existing:** actions delivered in previous elections that are the same for the 2026 General Election.
2. **Expanded:** actions delivered in previous elections that have been changed for the 2026 General Election and will be available to more people.
3. **New:** actions that are being delivered for the first time in the 2026 General Election.

Each action has information about what the service is, when it is available and where to find more information.

Alongside each action, we have identified what the impact(s) of the action will be.

Area 1: Staffing the election

This area focuses on actions to hire and train people to work at the 2026 General Election.

Existing services

Action 1: Recruit the temporary election workforce for the 2026 General Election.

The Commission hires over 20,000 people to fill 28,000 roles to deliver the election. This is called the temporary election workforce.

The people who make up this workforce are members of the community. There are a range of roles available, such as working to manage supplies in an electorate headquarters or assisting people in a voting place when they come to vote.

Everyone is encouraged to apply for the jobs available to work at the election.

All available jobs are listed on our website: work.elections.nz

The Commission runs an advertising campaign at the start of the recruitment phase to fill these roles.

Information is shared on television, social media and in the community. This includes content to support the disability community know more about the opportunities available, how to apply and what it is like to work for the election.

When: July - October 2026.

Impact:

- The temporary election workforce will gain work experience in the public sector and roles supporting their community.
- The temporary election workforce strives to reflect the diversity of the communities it serves. When we have a diverse workforce, all voters have a better experience enrolling and voting.

Action 2: Provide accessible training to the temporary election workforce.

Material is produced to educate and train the temporary election workforce roles to be able to deliver the election. This material includes videos, seminars and online modules.

The training material is made accessible with features like closed captions on videos, accessible colour contrasts and voice overs.

There is also specific training material for staff on how to support Deaf and disabled voters in the voting place.

When: March – November 2026.

Impact:

- The temporary election workforce receives accessible training that can best support their learning.
- The temporary election workforce is trained to deliver accessible services to support Deaf and disabled people to take part in the election.
- Deaf and disabled voters have better experiences when enrolling and voting.

Area 2: Understanding the election

This area focuses on actions to provide Deaf and disabled people information about enrolling, voting and the 2026 General Election.

Existing services

Action 3: Provide accessible and inclusive advertising and public information campaigns in 2026.

These campaigns provide information about:

- the Māori Electoral Option
- how to work for the Commission in an election year (see Action 1)
- how to enrol or update your enrolment details
- how to vote in the 2026 General Election
- the Election Access Fund (see Action 20).

Advertising and public information campaigns are available on a range of channels, including television, websites, social media and on billboards.

The campaigns are made accessible by having features like:

- New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) interpreters overlayed into some television adverts and online videos

- open or closed captions on television adverts, online videos and social media content
- accessible design concepts and plain language content
- casting disabled people to appear in the advertising content.

All campaigns have been developed in collaboration with the disabled community, as well as Māori, Pacific, Asian and migrant communities.

When: March – November 2026.

Impact:

- Deaf and disabled people have access to the information they need about enrolling, voting and how to take part in the election. This includes information to support tāngata Turi and tāngata whaikaha Māori on making their electoral roll choice for the Māori Electoral Option.
- The campaign about the Election Access Fund will help raise awareness of the Fund among Deaf and disabled people (who are candidates or are thinking about being a candidate in the future) and the people who support them.

Action 4: Provide accessible information on the Commission’s digital channels.

The Commission provides a wide range of information on enrolling, voting and the 2026 General Election on our digital channels – our websites and social media accounts.

Websites:

- [vote.nz](https://www.vote.nz)
- [elections.nz](https://www.elections.nz)

Social media:

- [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/elections)
- [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/elections)
- [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/elections)
- [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/elections)

This information is made accessible by:

- providing core information on enrolling, voting and the election in NZSL webpages on [vote.nz](https://www.vote.nz) and publishing alternate format resources (see Action 7)
- following the [New Zealand Government Web Standards](https://www.newzealand.govt.nz/about-us/government-web-standards) (for our websites)

- writing plain language content
- using high-quality graphics and images that have accessible colours and contrast
- using the platform's built-in accessibility features, such as open or closed captions, alt text and image captioning.

When: March – November 2026.

Impact: Deaf and disabled people have access to the information they need on the election and electoral system, including what steps they need to take to enrol and vote. This includes tāngata Turi and tāngata whaikaha Māori understanding and making their choice for the Māori Electoral Option.

Action 5: Engage with Deaf and disabled people and disability organisations about the upcoming election.

This includes:

- our community engagement teams meeting with Deaf and disabled people and disability organisations around the country to provide information and resources
- engaging with focus groups of Deaf and disabled people to collaborate and develop strategies, communications and advertising campaigns (see Action 3)
- providing printed packs of accessible resources to disability organisations about the Māori Electoral Option and the 2026 General Election (see Action 7).

When: March – November 2026.

Impact:

- The Commission can provide direct support and information to Deaf and disabled communities.
- Deaf and disabled people and disability organisations have accessible information about the upcoming election that they can share with their wider community. This includes tāngata Turi and tāngata whaikaha Māori understanding and making their roll choice for the Māori Electoral Option.
- The perspectives of Deaf and disabled people are heard and embedded into the Commission's work and delivery of accessible services.

Action 6: Provide New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) interpreters at media conferences during election year.

The media conferences are events where journalists from New Zealand media outlets can hear presentations from the Commission's leadership and ask questions.

Media conferences are held at important milestones in an election year, such as announcing the official results after the election.

These conferences are recorded and videos are published on our website for the public to access afterwards.

When:

- August 2026: launching the public information campaign to support people to enrol.
- November 2026: announcement(s) about the election and election results.

Note: these are not public events, so exact dates are not provided of when these will take place or when the video recordings will be published on the website.

Impact: The Deaf community can access important information on the 2026 General Election.

Expanded services

Action 7: Provide updated alternate format resources on enrolling, voting and the 2026 General Election.

There are five alternate formats:

- Audio
- Braille
- Easy Read
- Large print
- New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL).

Information is produced in alternate formats on enrolling and voting, the Māori Electoral Option and the 2026 General Election.

Alternate format information is available in English and te reo Māori. This is the first election where a range of core election brochures will be available in alternate formats in both languages.

Find information in alternate formats:

- [vote.nz | 2026 General Election information in accessible formats](#)
- [vote.nz | Māori Electoral Option information in accessible formats](#)
- NZSL videos on [YouTube | Electoral Commission NZ](#) or [vote.nz](#)

At three times during the year, packs of alternate format resources will be sent to disability organisations around the country to support them to share information with their communities. These packs will have resources about the Māori Electoral Option, enrolling to vote and voting in the 2026 General Election.

When: March – November 2026.

Impact:

- Deaf and disabled people have access to the information they need on the election and electoral system, including what steps they need to take to enrol and vote.
- Tāngata Turi and tāngata whaikaha Māori are supported to understand and make their roll choice for the Māori Electoral Option through updated alternate format information.

Area 3: Enrolling to vote

This area covers actions to support Deaf and disabled people to enrol to vote and actions to support tāngata Turi and tāngata whaikaha Māori to make their electoral roll choice for the Māori Electoral Option.

To vote in the 2026 General Election, you will need to be enrolled by **midnight, Sunday 25 October 2026**.

People who have enrolled to vote by **4 October 2026** will receive an EasyVote card by post or email. An EasyVote card makes voting faster and easier but you don't need your card to vote. See Action 19 for more information.

Existing service

Action 8: Provide accessible options for people who need support to enrol or update their enrolment details.

If you can't enrol or update your details online on [vote.nz](#), there are other accessible options available.

Deaf and disabled people, and people who are unwell, can access these enrolment options.

- **Fill in an accessible enrolment form**

A large print enrolment form can be downloaded from vote.nz

The form can be completed and returned by:

- upload via our website: vote.nz | [Upload your form](#)
- email to enrol@vote.nz
- post to:
Electoral Commission
FREEPOST 2 ENROL
PO Box 190
Wellington 6140.

- **Someone can support you to complete your form**

You can ask someone, such as a friend or family member, to support you to complete an enrolment form. They can also complete the form for you.

You will still need to sign the form. If you can't complete or sign the form, someone may be able to act on your behalf (see below).

Your support person can also help you enrol online on vote.nz

- **Act on behalf of someone**

If someone can't complete an enrolment form because of a physical or mental impairment, they can give permission for another person to act on their behalf. To act on behalf of someone with a **physical impairment**, the person must either:

- be enrolled to vote
- have power of attorney for the person enrolling.

To act on behalf of someone with a **mental impairment**, the person must be one of the following:

- enrolled to vote
- have enduring power of attorney for the person enrolling

- be the person enrolling's legally appointed welfare guardian.

The person acting on behalf must complete and sign:

- an enrolment form for the person enrolling
- a 'Signing on behalf' form that includes their details.

An enrolment form can be downloaded from [vote.nz | Other ways to enrol](#)

The 'Signing on behalf' form can be downloaded from [vote.nz | Need help to enrol?](#)

Once the forms are completed, they can be returned to the Commission by one of these options:

- uploading it to [vote.nz | Upload your form](#)
- emailing it to enrol@vote.nz
- posting it to **PO Box 3220, Wellington 6140.**

Contact the Commission if you have any questions about completing an enrolment form on somebody else's behalf by phone on **0800 36 76 56** or email at enrol@vote.nz

Find more information on [vote.nz | Need help to enrol?](#)

When: These options are always available.

Impact: Deaf and disabled people can enrol or update their details in a way that better supports their needs, including getting support to enrol if they need it.

Action 9: Provide enrolment and other election services to those experiencing homelessness.

Data shows that disabled people experience insecure housing and homelessness at rates double the national average ([Census 2023, Stats NZ](#)).

People experiencing homelessness can enrol and vote if they are eligible. They can enrol at an address where they spend a substantial part of their time or at the last residential address where they lived for 1 month or more.

More information on enrolling to vote if you're experiencing homelessness can be found on [vote.nz | Are you eligible to enrol and vote?](#)

The Commission has ongoing partnerships with organisations, such as city missions and shelters to provide election services to those experiencing homelessness.

Services include:

- Commission staff holding drop-in sessions at the organisation's location to provide information and support people to enrol to vote.
- Education and training for the organisations so they can provide ongoing support people to enrol and vote.

When: Ongoing.

Impact: People experiencing homelessness can get information and support to enrol to vote in an environment that is comfortable and supportive. These services often support people to enrol and vote for the first time.

Expanded services

Action 10: Provide accessible enrolment options and support at mobile enrolment pop-ups.

Mobile enrolment teams are travelling around New Zealand to support communities, especially those in rural and isolated places, to enrol to vote and check their enrolment details.

The pop-ups are also spaces for the public to get general information and support on the Māori Electoral Option and voting in the 2026 General Election.

Pop-ups are taking place at places like libraries and schools, as well as events like markets, health clinics and community days. This includes pop-ups at disability-led events and visiting schools with special education units.

Accessible enrolment options and information are provided at the pop-ups, including a large print enrolment form and take-home resources.

The pop-ups also have strong internet connections to ensure people who visit can access enrolment information online.

The locations and times of the upcoming pop-ups are updated on vote.nz and the Commission's social media channels weekly. This helps the public know when a pop-up might be in their area.

Find more information on vote.nz | [Enrolment in your community](#)

When: April - October 2026. The pop-ups will conclude before advance voting begins on Monday 26 October 2026.

Impact: Deaf and disabled people, especially those in rural or isolated communities, can access in-person services to get support to enrol to vote and understand the upcoming election.

Action 11: Provide accessible enrolment options and support at enrolment hubs.

Enrolment hubs will be set up in one place, like shopping malls, for a few weeks in September and October 2026 before voting starts.

The hubs will be places for people to enrol, update their enrolment details and get information about the 2026 General Election.

Hubs will be set up in Whangārei, Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

Details on the enrolment hub locations will be shared on [vote.nz](https://www.vote.nz) and on social media closer to the time they will be available.

Accessible enrolment options and information will be provided at the hubs, including a large print enrolment form and take-home resources.

Subject to interpreter availability, New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) interpreters may also be available on select days while the hubs are operating.

When: September – October 2026.

Impact: Deaf and disabled people can access in-person services to enrol, update their enrolment details and get information on the upcoming election in an environment that they are familiar and comfortable in.

New service

Action 12: Send accessible email and text messages to prompt people enrolled to vote to check or update their details.

In 2026, people who are enrolled to vote will see more email and SMS text messages from the Electoral Commission. This is the first election that this service will be delivered.

The emails and texts will be reminders to check and update enrolment details. These communications will follow a postal letter sent to all enrolled voters to remind them to check their details are correct and tell them what electorate they are enrolled in.

Only people who are enrolled on the general or Māori roll and have provided their email address or mobile phone number as part of their enrolment details will receive the email and text reminders. People on the unpublished roll will only get the letter by post.

The emails have been designed to be accessible by:

- having accessible colour contrasts
- including plain language content
- using in-built accessible features such as alt text.

The texts are short, plain-language messages to remind people to check their details.

See Action 19 for information on the email to deliver voters their EasyVote card.

More information about communications from the Electoral Commission for the 2026 General Election can be found on [vote.nz | Communications from the Electoral Commission](https://vote.nz/Communications-from-the-Electoral-Commission)

When:

- July 2026: Māori Electoral Option update reminders.
- August – September 2026: Enrolment update reminders.

Impact:

- Deaf and disabled people can receive important information to support their participation in the 2026 General Election in a format that might better suit their needs, such as using a digital device to read the information.
- More people update their enrolment details and are correctly enrolled before the election enrolment deadline by **midnight, Sunday 25 October 2026**.

Area 4: Voting in the election

This area covers actions to support Deaf and disabled people to vote in the 2026 General Election.

The 2026 General Election voting period is from **Monday 26 October** through to election day, **Saturday 7 November 2026**.

Existing services

Action 13: Provide accessible voting places in each electorate.

By law (Electoral Act 1993), the Commission is required to provide 12 accessible voting places in each electorate. However, the Commission aims to provide as many accessible voting places as possible in each electorate.

The Commission has criteria to select voting places across New Zealand. Accessibility is one of the key requirements.

Voting places are assessed for accessibility by looking for:

- ramps or handrails at the entrance
- any obstacles or uneven surfaces between the street and the building entrance
- availability of parking, such as disabled or free parking
- how close the venue is to public transport.

Voting place staff are given instructions on how to set up a voting place accessibly, such as ensuring there is enough space so people can easily move around the voting place to complete the voting process.

A list of all voting places will be published on [vote.nz](https://www.vote.nz) one month before election day. This is done through an interactive map that people can use to find their nearest voting place and see how it is accessible.

There will also information on [vote.nz](https://www.vote.nz) about the busy and quiet times for voting. This can help people choose when they might want to go to a voting place to vote.

If you go to vote in person at a voting place, you can have a support person to help you vote. This could be a friend, whānau member or someone who works at the voting place.

The support person can:

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

If you are unable to get to a voting place, see Action 14 to find other options that might suit you better.

When:

- Information will be published on [vote.nz](https://www.vote.nz) one month before election day.
- Voting places are available during the election period (26 October – 7 November 2026).

Impact: Deaf and disabled people can find information about accessible voting places in their electorate and can vote in person at an accessible voting place.

Action 14: Provide accessible voting options for people who are unable to get to a voting place.

These options can support Deaf and disabled people, those who are unwell, or those in a care home to vote.

- **Someone collects your voting papers for you**

You can authorise, or give permission, for someone to pick up your voting papers from a voting place for you.

You can do this by downloading a form from [vote.nz | Can't get to a voting place?](https://www.vote.nz/cant-get-to-a-voting-place)

You can fill it in, sign it and ask someone to take it to a voting place. They will then bring back your voting papers to complete.

If you're not able to complete the form, you can write this information by hand instead:

- your first and last name
- your contact phone number
- the address where you're enrolled to vote
- the electoral roll (general or Māori) you believe you are enrolled on
- a statement authorising the person to collect voting papers on your behalf.

The person you authorise to collect your voting papers can also bring them back to a voting place to submit them. Your voting papers must be returned to a voting place before voting closes at 7pm on election day, Saturday 7 November.

- **Advance voting teams visiting care homes and hospitals**

Teams of Commission staff provide voting services to people in care homes and hospitals.

These services are organised in advance by Electorate Managers (people who are in charge of delivering voting services in each electorate).

If you're scheduled to go into hospital prior to election day, it's best to vote in advance if you can.

More information on getting support to vote can be found on [vote.nz | Can't get to a voting place?](#)

When: During the election period (26 October – 7 November 2026).

Impact: Disabled people can cast their vote outside of an in-person voting place in a way that might better suit their needs.

Action 15: Provide the telephone dictation voting service for voters who are blind, partially blind or have a physical disability that means they cannot mark their voting paper without assistance.

Enrolled voters who are blind, partially blind or have a physical disability that means they cannot mark a ballot paper without assistance can register to use the telephone dictation service to cast their vote.

This service is available to voters in New Zealand and overseas.

You can register by:

- calling **0800 028 028** and selecting **option 1**, or
- emailing dictation@vote.nz.

Registrations for the telephone dictation service will open **Monday 5 October** and close **12pm, Saturday 7 November 2026**. When registering, you must provide your name, date of birth and address.

Once registered, you will be provided with a unique registration number to use when you call back to vote. You will also need to choose a secret question which is used to confirm who you are when you call back to vote.

When the voting period begins, you can call into the service to cast your vote. You only need to give your registration number to a dictation service staff member and answer your selected secret question. You do not have to provide any other personal details.

A member of the dictation service team then reads out the voting information and marks the paper with your vote. The vote is then recorded, which is confirmed by a second electoral official.

Voting opens for those who've registered for the dictation service on **Wednesday 21 October** and closes at **7pm** on election day, **Saturday 7 November 2026**.

Find out more about the dictation service on [vote.nz | Telephone dictation service](https://vote.nz/Telephone-dictation-service)

When:

- From Monday 5 October to register for the service: Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm (NZ time).
- From Monday 26 October to use the service to vote: Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm, Saturday 9am to 3pm (NZ time)
- On election day, Saturday 7 November: 9am to 7pm (NZ time).

Impact: Voters who are blind, partially blind or have a physical disability that prevents them from marking their voting paper without assistance can vote in a secure and private way that might better suit their needs.

Action 16: Support whare pōti Māori to provide an accessible voting place and experience for voters.

Whare pōti Māori are voting places set up to provide voting services that uphold the mana, dignity and autonomy of all voters, including tāngata Turi and tāngata whaikaha Māori.

These voting places are set up in culturally significant and welcoming locations for Māori.

The same criteria to select voting places across New Zealand applies to whare pōti Māori, which includes accessibility.

The tikanga, or protocols, of how the sites are run is determined by the host, which includes how they can best meet the accessibility needs of the community.

A list of all voting places, including whare pōti Māori, will be published on vote.nz one month before election day.

See Action 13 for more information about the accessibility of voting places.

When: During the election period (26 October – 7 November 2026).

Impact: Tāngata Turi and tāngata whaikaha Māori can vote in a culturally supportive environment in their community.

Action 17: Provide Deaf-enabled voting places to support Deaf voters.

Select voting places will be set up to support the needs of the Deaf community, which may include having New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) interpreters onsite. These sites will provide the same voting services as other voting places.

The Commission partners with local Deaf societies to provide these services in familiar settings and they are staffed by the local community.

Information on the location of these voting places will be published on [vote.nz](https://www.vote.nz) one month before election day (see Action 13).

The Commission will also share information on how to access these voting places with the public through our communications channels and with Deaf and disability organisations closer to the election.

When: During the election period (26 October – 7 November 2026).

Impact: Deaf voters can vote in person in a community-supported environment that might better suit their needs.

New services

Action 18: Provide select quiet voting places to support neurodivergent voters.

Quiet voting places are a new service to support the neurodivergent community, which includes autistic people, as well as people with ADHD, dyslexia and other needs.

Quiet voting places aim to be low sensory environments with reduced noise, softer lighting and fewer visual distractions.

The quiet voting places will provide the same services as other voting places.

The Commission has partnered with local organisations to set up the quiet voting places to ensure these services meet the needs of the community and are set up in well-known suitable locations.

The voting places will be staffed by people from the community, including those who are neurodivergent.

Information on the quiet voting places will be published on [vote.nz](https://www.vote.nz) one month before election day (see Action 13).

The Commission will also share information on how to access these voting places with the public through our communications channels and with disability organisations closer to the election.

When: During the election period (26 October – 7 November 2026).

Impact: Neurodivergent voters can vote in person in an environment that might better suit their needs.

Action 19: Send an accessible email to voters to deliver their EasyVote card ahead of the 2026 General Election.

People who have enrolled to vote by **4 October 2026** will receive an EasyVote card.

An EasyVote card makes voting faster and easier. Voters can bring their EasyVote card to the voting place, show it to the voting place staff and get their voting papers issued quickly. However, you don't need an EasyVote card to vote.

As well as providing reminders to check or update their details by email and text in 2026 (see Action 12), EasyVote cards will be sent by email to voters who have provided their email address as part of their enrolment details.

Voters who have just provided their postal address will receive their EasyVote card by a letter in the post. Voters who are on the unpublished roll will receive a voting slip by a letter in the post.

The EasyVote email will provide a personalised EasyVote card, as well as information on how to use it and where to find more information.

The EasyVote email has been designed to be accessible by:

- displaying the EasyVote card at the top of the email
- having accessible colour contrasts
- including plain language content
- using in-built accessibility features such as alt text
- being designed in collaboration with a focus group of disabled people.

A reminder text message will be sent to voters where their email is undelivered or who haven't opened their EasyVote email after a few days. Only voters who have provided

their mobile phone number as part of their enrolment details will receive this. The EasyVote card won't be sent by text message.

More information about communications from the Electoral Commission for the 2026 General Election, including EasyVote, can be found on [vote.nz | Communications from the Electoral Commission](#)

When:

- From Tuesday 14 October 2026: EasyVote emails and letters are sent out to voters.
- Monday 26 October – Saturday 7 November: voting is open and people can take their EasyVote cards with them when they go to vote.

Impact:

- Deaf and disabled people can use a digital device to get their EasyVote card and use it in a voting place to go through the voting process easier and faster.
- People can receive their EasyVote card in a format that better suits their needs, such as reading the information through assistive digital technologies.
- The Commission can reach people faster with important information and reminders using the channels they use every day.

Area 5: Supporting election candidates

This area covers actions to support Deaf and disabled candidates standing in the 2026 General Election.

Existing service

Action 20: Administer the Election Access Fund Te Tomokanga – Pūtea Whakatapoko Pōtitanga.

The Election Access Fund financially supports disabled people who want to be candidates in the 2026 General Election.

The Fund is available to cover costs for disabled candidates, such as:

- hiring New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) interpreters for candidate meetings
- buying assistive technology, such as a screen reader to read candidate forms
- organising accessible transport to get to candidate events.

Information on the Election Access Fund, including how to apply, can be found on [elections.nz | Election Access Fund](#)

Alternate format information on the Fund is available on [elections.nz | Application guidelines in alternate formats](#)

The Commission administers the Fund by:

- processing applications
- organising the independent panel who review applications and make decisions
- supporting applicants to understand the application process
- managing payments.

The Commission raises awareness of the Fund through a public information campaign (see Action 3). This campaign aims to increase understanding of the Fund among disabled communities and support wider engagement and participation in the democratic process.

When: The Fund is open for applications from May 2025 until election day, 7 November 2026.

Impact: Deaf and disabled people can receive funding to support their full participation as candidates in the 2026 General Election.

About Access 2026

The information on the following pages provides more information about the framework on page 5.

Vision and objectives

The vision for Access 2026 is: The 2026 General Election is accessible for all New Zealanders.

Access 2026 has three objectives:

1. Deaf and disabled people are enabled and empowered to fully engage and participate in the 2026 General Election.
2. Tāngata Turi and tāngata whaikaha Māori are enabled and empowered to make their electoral roll choice for the Māori Electoral Option in 2026.
3. Deaf and disabled people have trust and confidence in the electoral system and the Electoral Commission to deliver the 2026 General Election.

Principles

Access 2026 and the Commission's delivery of an accessible 2026 General Election is underpinned by the *New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026 – 2030*.

We have adopted the Strategy's five principles:

- Accessibility.
- Self-determination.
- Upholding equity, culture and identity.
- Participation and inclusion.
- Respect and dignity.

These principles represent our commitment to accessibility and inclusion so that Deaf and disabled people have equal access to information and services to take part in elections.

The *New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026 – 2030* is available on Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People's website: whaikaha.govt.nz

Foundations

Access 2026, and the Commission's delivery of an accessible 2026 General Election, is built upon our legislative and international obligations.

New Zealand's founding documents

The Commission affirms Aotearoa New Zealand's founding documents and their collective significance to our country and parliamentary elections.

We are committed to embedding a Māori worldview throughout our organisation that will honour our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and promote and protect the rights of Māori to participate in parliamentary elections.

We are also committed to supporting tāngata Turi and tāngata whaikaha Māori to receive information, access services, make their electoral roll choice for the Māori Electoral Option and take part in elections that upholds their culture and identity.

Electoral legislation and the Commission's guiding documents

The Electoral Act 1993 established the Electoral Commission | Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri as an independent Crown entity responsible for running New Zealand's parliamentary elections and keeping the electoral rolls up to date.

The Commission is committed to accessibility and inclusion in accordance with electoral legislation and regulations that relate to ensuring disabled people can take part in elections.

Our organisational values guide us in our work to ensure that all New Zealanders trust, value and take part in parliamentary elections.

Find out more about our values on [elections.nz | Our values](https://elections.nz/our-values)

Our strategic priorities focus our efforts to ensure we can keep achieving good outcomes for New Zealanders. Our statements of performance expectations explain how we will assess and report on our performance as we work towards our strategic goals.

Find out more on [elections.nz | Statements of intent and performance expectations](https://elections.nz/statements-of-intent-and-performance-expectations)

Human rights and international obligations

New Zealand has human rights commitments and international obligations to ensure disabled people have the same rights and freedoms as non-disabled people.

This includes the right to vote and vote secretly, stand for and hold office, and have accessible voting procedures, facilities and materials.

These rights are outlined in New Zealand laws such as the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.

New Zealand also has international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention). The Convention is an international treaty which ensures that existing human rights are applied to people with disabilities.

Article 29 of the Convention states that disabled people have the right to *“effective and full participation in political and public life on an equal basis with others.”*

The Commission is committed to upholding these rights and contributing, where appropriate, to the vision outlined in the Convention that disabled people have full participation in political and public life.

Why do we need Access 2026?

One in six people living in New Zealand identify as disabled (Stats NZ, [Household Disability Survey 2023](#)). That means that disabled people make up around 20% of the eligible voters in New Zealand (based on [enrolment statistics as of 30 June 2026](#)).

The Commission’s role to provide elections means we must also make sure that everyone can easily access information and has accessible options to enrol and vote.

We know that Deaf and disabled people do not always have an easy or good experience when enrolling and voting or have access to the information they need to participate. This can sometimes stop them from enrolling and voting at all.

We want to make sure that Deaf and disabled people continue to understand how to enrol, vote and have a positive experience during the 2026 General Election.

Developing Access 2026

Access 2026 is part of the Commission's ongoing work to improve our delivery of accessible elections.

To develop the action plan, an internal working group was established. This group brought together Commission staff from across the organisation to collaborate and champion accessibility for the 2026 General Election.

The Commission also thanks the following organisations who provided advice and feedback to develop Access 2026:

- Access Matters Aotearoa
- Autism NZ
- All is for All
- Blind Low Vision New Zealand
- Disability Connect
- Disabled People's Organisation Coalition:
 - Blind Citizens NZ
 - Balance Aotearoa
 - Deaf Aotearoa
 - Disabled Persons Assembly NZ
 - Mana Pasefika
 - Muscular Dystrophy Association of New Zealand
 - People First New Zealand
- IHC
- Independent Monitoring Mechanism:
 - Disabled People's Organisation Coalition members
 - Disability Commissioner - Human Rights Commission
 - Ombudsman New Zealand
- Ministry of Pacific Peoples
- NorthAble
- Parents of Vision Impaired New Zealand
- Taimahi Trust
- Spectrum Care
- Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People.

What we heard

There was overall support for the Commission's work to produce the action plan, provide accessible resources and deliver accessible election services.

Access 2026 was seen as a useful resource for Deaf and disabled people, disability organisations, and whānau, carers and communities to have information in one place on what accessible services were available for the 2026 General Election.

Most organisations saw that the Commission's ongoing commitment to accessibility and providing accessible election services was strong, the plan demonstrated meaningful progress over election cycles and supported positive aspirations for Deaf and disabled people in society.

Most only wanted information on what services were available for the public to access and did not want information on internal-only actions like accessibility and inclusion policies.

There were many recommendations on ways to improve the accessibility of existing services, introduce new services or change electoral processes. Some recommendations proposed would require changes to legislation which is a matter for Parliament.

Developing a new accessibility strategy

The Commission intends to develop a new accessibility strategy from 2027. This project will be scoped after the 2026 General Election.

The feedback received to develop Access 2026 and throughout the election process on improving the accessibility of elections will be considered as part of our work to develop a new accessibility strategy and future election planning.

The Commission looks forward to engaging further with Deaf and disabled people, disability organisations, and whānau, carers and communities to develop this strategy and improve the accessibility of future elections.

Evaluating Access 2026

The success and impact of Access 2026 will be shown through:

- data and insights from research conducted in 2026
- feedback from the public
- website analytics data of vote.nz and elections.nz
- social media engagement.

After the 2026 General Election, the Commission will review the success and impact of the election, including the services listed as actions in Access 2026.

These services will be evaluated and presented to Parliament in the Report of the Electoral Commission on the 2026 General Election. This report will also include recommendations to Parliament on changes and improvements for future elections.

This report was produced for the 2023 General Election. It can be found on elections.nz | [Report on the 2023 General Election](#)

The Commission also has ongoing performance measures and targets, which are reported on in our annual statement of performance expectations.

Find more information on our statement of performance expectations on elections.nz | [Statements of intent and performance expectations](#)

As the Commission does not currently have an accessibility strategy, performance measures or targets have not been set for Access 2026.

The Commission's overall vision is that the 2026 General Election is accessible for all New Zealanders. This means that our aim is that anyone who needs to access a service listed in Access 2026 does so, and that Deaf and disabled people have an easy and positive experience when taking part in the 2026 General Election.

Understanding disabled peoples' experiences during the 2026 General Election

There are various sources of data and insights that will help us understand the experiences of Deaf and disabled people during the 2026 General Election.

One of the main sources is research conducted throughout the year to gain insights into the public's knowledge about elections and their attitude towards enrolling and voting. Participants can indicate if they have a disability when surveyed.

These findings help inform the Commission's delivery of election services throughout the year. A final research report will be published in 2027.

The survey results report from the 2023 General Election can be found on elections.nz | [Voter and non-voter survey](#)

The Commission also gets information through engagement metrics from advertising campaigns and social media content, customer service channels and public feedback.

Insights from these sources are included in the Commission's overall post-election reporting. They will also inform any work to improve the accessibility of future elections.

International reporting

The Commission will also contribute, if required, to any future reporting on New Zealand's progress under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Commission also works with international electoral authorities, in particular Australia and the Pacific Islands, to share information about elections and support election delivery, including accessible services. Many services listed in Access 2026 have been informed by accessible services delivered in overseas elections.

The Commission will continue to share lessons learned with these authorities to help improve the accessibility of elections across the wider Pacific region.

Glossary

The following definitions relate to words used in Access 2026.

Accessible / accessibility

Accessible means that Deaf and disabled people, tāngata Turi and tāngata whaikaha Māori can access all areas of life equally to others. For elections – this is enrolling, voting and understanding the election process.

Action plan

A document that outlines specific steps and timelines that a person or organisation will take to achieve a goal.

Alternate formats

Alternate formats are different ways to present information. Alternate formats change written information into a different format so that everyone can access and use it.

There are five alternate formats: audio, braille, Easy Read, large print and New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL).

Find more information on [whaikaha.govt.nz | Alternate formats](https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/Alternate-formats)

Barrier

A barrier is an obstacle that makes it difficult for people to do something. Barriers may be physical, social, people's attitudes, policy or the way services are delivered.

Candidates

People who seek election to Parliament. They often want to represent their local area or a wider community. If a candidate is elected, they are a member of Parliament (MP).

Campaign

This word is used in the context of advertising. An advertising campaign is a coordinated, strategic series of messages communicated across multiple channels, such as on social media, television and billboards to promote something to the public. The campaign is usually run over a set time period, such as a few months.

Deaf person / people

A Deaf person is someone who has lost some of their hearing or is not able to hear. Some Deaf people rely on New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) to communicate.

Disabled person / people

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines a disabled person as someone with “long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.

Disability organisations

Companies, non-governmental organisations and groups that are led by disabled people and/or work to support disabled people.

Democracy

A system of government where the people vote on who they want to represent them to make decisions, policies and laws. New Zealand has a representative democracy where each voter has a say in who represents them in Parliament and in local government.

Enabled

Having the means, opportunity or ability for someone to do something.

Empowered

Having the knowledge, confidence or ability to do things or make decisions for yourself.

Electoral system

The laws and rules that set up elections and outline how they should work.

Electoral authorities

The organisation that is set up by law to run local and/or general elections.

The Electoral Commission is New Zealand’s electoral authority to run parliamentary elections.

Engage / engagement

Connecting with people to share information and have a conversation.

Enrol / enrolling to vote

Enrolling means you put your personal information like name and address on a form and sent it to the Electoral Commission because you want to be able to vote. You will then be enrolled to vote and listed on the electoral roll.

Evaluation

A process to review something and comment on it. In this context, the 2026 General Election will be evaluated after it happens to see how it went, what worked well and what could be improved.

Foundations

A point to start from that will guide how to think, plan or deliver something. In this context, this is a series of laws, policies and strategies that guide the Electoral Commission's delivery of an election.

General election

A general election is when you can vote for the people and parties who will be in Government and make decisions that affect your life. New Zealand usually has a general election every three years.

Government

New Zealand's system of government has three separate branches to make sure no one part of government has too much power. The three branches are:

- the Legislature (Parliament and the Governor-General)
- the Executive (Ministers and Government departments)
- the Judiciary (all judges).

Inclusion

Creating environments where any individual or group is welcomed, respected, supported and valued to fully participate.

Independent Crown entity

Crown entities are government organisations that deliver many of the services New Zealanders use every day. They handle a large part of government spending and service delivery. Independent Crown entities operate independently and are generally not required to give effect to government policy directives. The Electoral Commission is an independent Crown entity.

International obligations

An international obligation is a duty that a country, like New Zealand, has to another country, organisation or the international community.

These obligations usually mean the country has responsibilities to act in a certain way in areas like human rights, trade and security.

This happens because a country signs an agreement like a treaty, agrees to follow international laws, and/or is a member of an international body like the United Nations.

Legislation

A law that passed by Parliament. Legislation refers to Acts and Regulations (secondary legislation). Bills and Amendment Papers are proposed legislation and do not have the force of law until agreed by Parliament.

Māori Electoral Option

The Māori Electoral Option is a choice for Māori about which electoral roll to be on: the Māori roll or the general roll.

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

Mixed Member Proportional, or MMP, is the voting system we use in New Zealand. We use MMP to choose who represents us in Parliament. Find more information about MMP on [elections.nz](https://www.elections.nz)

Neurodivergent

A term used to describe people whose brains learn and process information differently from what is considered typical (neurotypical). This refers to conditions like autism, ADHD or dyslexia.

Objective

Something you plan to do or achieve.

Parliament

New Zealand's legislature. This is where members of Parliament work to make laws and policies to govern New Zealand.

Political party

A group that has a set of beliefs and ideas on how the country should work. In New Zealand, a political party and their candidates will run in general elections to try get the most votes. If they get the most votes, they form a Government.

Sometimes several political parties need to work together to become the Government. This happens under MMP and is called a coalition government.

New Zealand political parties have to be registered with the Electoral Commission to contest the party vote in general elections.

Principle

An idea that explains how something should work.

Registered

Being officially recorded on a list. Being registered often means you can then take part in something.

Regulations

An official rule that describes how something should be controlled or managed.

Strategy / strategic

A strategy is a detailed plan for achieving success in something. Being strategic relates to how you or an organisation will act to achieve this success.

Tāngata Turi

This term refers to Māori who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Turi means to be Deaf in te reo Māori (the Māori language).

Tāngata whaikaha Māori

This term refers to Māori who are disabled. 'Tāngata' means people in te reo Māori. 'Whaikaha' means to have strength, to have ability, to be enabled.

Vision

An idea that is often a future goal that you want to achieve.

Vote / voting

A vote is a choice that you can make on something. In this context, you vote for which candidate and political party you want to represent you in Parliament.

Whānau, carers and communities

People that support Deaf and disabled people in their lives. 'Whānau' is used to mean family members who are related to someone, extended family and part of a chosen family.