

Promoting Citizenship through Voting

Voting is an important human right and part of life for every adult and as an organisation we should encourage people to use their vote to express their own views and preferences. Not everyone wants to use their vote but often this can be due to anxieties about the voting process and visiting a polling station. With the referendum almost upon us the following example is only one way that we can encourage people we support to be involved in the voting process using a postal vote, promote citizenship whilst also having some fun!

Using a Postal Vote in a creative manner

We recognised that some of the people we support were not confident about voting or going to the polling station, even with support, so discussed the option of using a postal vote and holding an early polling day for the service. Several people decided that they would like to do this so this is what we did:

Step 1: We supported those interested to register for a postal vote

Step 2: We set the date and time for our polling event, allowing time for the postal voting cards to be sent out and before the final posting date for the votes. We let everyone know about it through a 'flyer' and sent out a reminder about the polling day a few days beforehand (reminding people to bring their postal voting card with them on the day)

Step 3: We accessed the easy read manifestos for each party (or in the case of the referendum this would be the 'Yes' and 'No' cases)

Step 4: We created polling booths for the day through the use of tables and thick cardboard to promote the privacy of the voters. We also used a lockable box for people to submit their voters card after marking their preferred option on it

Step 5: On the day, we had staff read out the easy read manifestos - each member of staff wore the colours of the party whose manifesto they were reading out (in the case of the referendum it could be a Yes or No hat!). They read only what was on the document to ensure there was no individual thoughts shared! Once everyone had presented their information, the polling station was opened and people had the chance to go to the polling booth and make their choice. They put their voting card into the locked box afterwards

Step 6: Finally, the party began! We had sandwiches and cakes to celebrate.

Step 7: After everyone left, the Manager opened the box and posted the votes

We hoped that through this event people we support would feel more confident to continue to use their vote and perhaps feel more confident to visit the polling station the next time. We have continued to use this approach when voting opportunities have arisen. People we support have continued to vote but have chosen to keep doing this through the Area Polling Day.

If you choose to try this approach and would like more information on how to go about it, you can contact Nicola McKenna (nmckenna@trfs.org.uk or at 0141 554 3658) or Nancy Keenan (nkeenan@trfs.org.uk or on 0141 353 4050)