

Are you or is someone you love living with dementia and planning to vote on Friday? Here is a brief guide on dementia and voting rights:

Is a person's right to vote affected by a diagnosis of dementia?

Not necessarily. Just because a person has been diagnosed with dementia does not mean he/she loses their right to vote. Your right to vote can only be restricted if, at the time of voting, you cannot understand in broad terms the nature and effect of voting, and are unable to choose between candidates.

Who decides if a person lacks capacity to vote?

The presumption is that a person has capacity to vote unless the opposite is shown. If a person is registered to vote, the decision about whether he/she has capacity to vote on Election Day will fall to the Presiding Officer at the polling station. The Presiding Officer is the person responsible for taking the poll at a polling station. If there is a dispute about whether a person has capacity to vote this will need to be decided by the courts.

What supports are available to a person with dementia who wishes to vote?

If necessary, a person with dementia can ask to have their voting paper marked at the polling station by a companion or by the Presiding Officer, but the Presiding Officer can refuse to provide any assistance during the last two hours of polling. If you want a companion to assist you they must be at least 16-years-old and cannot be a candidate or an agent of a candidate.

You can find additional information on the supports available for voters with disabilities at <http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/LocalGovernment/Voting/FileDownload,1896,en.pdf>