

how to vote

Mayoral Election

(to elect the Mayor of London)

Pink ballot paper

- One vote for your first choice candidate – put an X in the first column, next to that person's name.
- One vote for your second choice candidate – put an X in the second column, in line with that person's name.

London Assembly

Constituency Member

(to elect the Assembly Member who will represent your area)

Yellow ballot paper

- One vote for the candidate you prefer – put an X in the column next to that person's name.

London Assembly

London-wide Assembly Member

(to elect a list of Assembly Members who will represent the whole city)

Orange ballot paper

- One vote for the party you prefer – put an X in the column next to that party's name.

NB This is the one that really matters for defeating extremist parties.

how to make best use of your vote

Mayor: a candidate needs to get over 50 per cent of first choice votes to win outright. Otherwise – and this is highly likely – there will be a second stage. The top two candidates remain. All the other candidates are eliminated and their ballots looked at again for second preferences. Where people have cast their second choice for one of those two remaining candidates, those votes are added onto their total. The winner is then the one with the most votes.

So if you want to make the most of your vote, your second choice candidate should be one of the ones most likely to end up in the top two.

London Assembly – Constituency Member: the winner is the candidate with most votes in that constituency.

This is likely to be one of the main parties, and in most cases just a Conservative or Labour candidate. Thus if all Assembly Members were elected in this way it would replicate the problems and discontent with the way we elect our MPs. Hence...

London Assembly – London-wide Assembly Member:

a more proportional voting system is used so that the overall Assembly reflects how all of London voted. It works by adding together all votes cast (for the London-wide Assembly Member list) across London. Any party with less than 5 per cent of the total vote is eliminated. A formula is then used to allocate the 11 London wide seats in proportion to the votes cast, taking into account any constituency Assembly Members the parties have already won.

Your vote will in effect count twice: once for the party you support; and once against extremists.

finding out more 

The London Elects website www.londonelects.org.uk has non-partisan info about all aspects of the elections.

If your organisation or community group wants briefing materials or a visit from a speaker who can help your members understand more clearly how the voting system works and how best they can use their vote on 1 May, then get in contact with us.

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Londoners' Votes Count

**make a difference
on 1st May 2008
use your vote to
tackle extremism**

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In the election for London Assembly Members, you can make your vote count twice: once for the party you support, and once to minimise the electoral threat from extremists.

Contrary to a General or local election, "every vote counts". Because of the proportional voting system used (see overleaf for an explanation of how it works) every vote in London is important and affects the overall result, especially in the election of the 11 London-wide Assembly Members.

why your vote matters

The BNP only narrowly failed to get a seat on the London Assembly last time. In 2004 they were within 5,000 votes of getting above the 5 per cent of votes needed to gain representation. So the threat from extremist parties is real. But so is the means to tackle it... ourselves, our communities, our workplaces, our friends and family. The higher the turnout, the harder it becomes for such a party to get over that 5 per cent threshold. It really is a case of getting out the vote and raising that bar.

You do not need to worry about splitting the anti-racist vote, or having to vote tactically rather than for the party you want. It doesn't matter who you choose to vote for in the London Assembly (city-wide) ballot. A vote for any party other than an extremist one is a vote against extremism.

why campaigning across London matters

No system gives parties seats; it is the action of voters that does.

It is up to us to work for a higher turnout. But it is also for us to consider why it is that parties like the BNP are able to get the support that they do and why they have done well in particular areas on the fringes of London. One of the reasons is that for too long voters in those areas have felt that mainstream political parties aren't listening to them or putting policies in place that would benefit them. This has created the political space for the BNP and others to come in and exploit the disaffection.

Tackling of extremism means taking the fight to such parties in all areas and all arenas. That is the only way to build a stable, long-term democratic front. This election provides us that opportunity in London. The push by extremist parties for a 'London-wide' Assembly Member can be opposed by voters throughout all of London. This means competing in every London borough – including those where there has been lots of recent activity (like Barking and Dagenham) but also areas with diverse or traditional anti-Fascist communities.

The way the voting system works for the London Assembly, it is straightforward and empowering. At last there is the opportunity for individuals and community groups throughout London who want to make a stand against extremists to do so, and to do so at the ballot box and in their local community. We can all organise, campaign and get out the vote in our own areas, and make that difference.

