

# Set up a town or parish council

Local councils provide services to meet local needs and improve community wellbeing.



## What is it?

Town and parish councils are the first level of local government. They provide communities with a democratic voice and a structure for taking community action.

More than a third of people in England currently have a town or parish council, and the government is making it easier to set one up.

## How can I take part?

To set up your own town or parish council, you'll need to first give your local authority a petition containing the signatures of at least 7.5% of the local population.

The petition must:

- state exactly what it proposes: creating a parish or town council for a defined area
- contain the signatures of at least 7.5% of local electors, based on the most recent electoral register - you'll need more signatures for areas with fewer than 2,500 electors

If the petition is valid, your local authority will carry out a 'community governance review' to see if a local council should be created.

A neighbourhood forum that's had a [neighbourhood development plan](#) passed at referendum can trigger a community governance review without needing a petition.

You can get more information and advice about what you need to do from the National Association of Local Councils' (NALC) [Create a Council](#) site or you can contact your County

Association of Local Councils. Each county has its own association. You can [find contact details on the NALC website](#). For London, contact NALC direct. You may be able to get funding from them to help with this.

You can also read about what happens after a petition is submitted in '[Guidance on Community Governance Reviews](#)' which explains how local authorities should review the petitions.

## **Related content**

- [Community governance reviews: guidance](#)
- [Understand how your council works](#)
- [Local government structure and elections](#)
- [Make a neighbourhood plan](#)
- [Invest in local enterprises](#)