

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

Issues and actions for staff supporting the
Scottish Parliamentary election
on 6 May 2021

1 How to use this guide

1.1 This publication has been designed as a resource for Returning Officers to support the training and briefing of support staff working on the Scottish Parliamentary election on 6 May 2021

The Commission has published [a timetable containing the statutory deadlines](#) for the election which can be found on our website.

1.2 The FAQ guide can be used either as a resource to reinforce key messages from briefing/training sessions for support staff or as an information and reference tool to be used in conjunction with locally produced information sources.

1.3 The material has been designed for staff who do not normally work in the field of elections and provides basic procedural guidance which can be passed on to members of the public to clarify key issues around the registration and election process. These staff should be advised to elevate more complex questions to the elections office.

1.4 The guide is designed for use by the following types of staff who may be asked to support the elections locally:

- call centre staff
- local council reception staff
- staff working in information centres and one-stop shops

1.5 Staff should be reminded that there are many areas where they are unable to comment and must not show a bias. Therefore, all responses given should be politically neutral and in no way be or be able to be interpreted as supporting or opposing any party or candidate. Staff using this document should take care not to stray from the provided answers other than when they have been expressly advised that they may do so by their employer/manager.

1.6 Staff should be given contact details for the elections office in cases where calls are more complicated and cannot be answered by these answers. They should also be given details of the website to which people should be directed to apply to register online: www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

2 Registration

Issue/question	Answer	Action
Am I registered to vote?	You can find out by contacting your local electoral registration office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer caller to the electoral registration office if they need to check that they are registered. • If you do not have the details, provide contact details from www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter using the caller's postcode or direct them to 0800 3 280 280. <p>Remind callers that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications to register should be made as soon as possible. • Applications must be made by 19 April 2021. • Applications received after 19 April 2021 will not be in time for the election on 6 May 2021, but they will be registered for future elections.
How do I register to vote?	<p>You can apply to register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote .</p> <p>Alternatively, you can apply by filling in a form and returning it to your electoral registration office.</p> <p>The deadline for registration applications is 19 April 2021.</p> <p>See also <i>Am I registered to vote?</i> above.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct caller to the electoral registration office if they need to check that they are registered • If they wish, provide electoral registration office contact details (from www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter or your own instructions) • Tell caller to go to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote to apply to register online • Tell them to download forms from

Issue/question	Answer	Action
		<p>https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote or offer to send a form (or pass them to the elections office if you have been instructed to do so)</p> <p>Remind callers that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications to register should be made as soon as possible. • Applications must be made by 19 April 2021. Applications received after 19 April 2021 will not be in time for the election on 6 May 2021, but they will be registered for future elections.
Missed the deadline (if caller calls after 19 April 2021)	<p>You have missed the deadline to get on the register at your current address for the election on 6 May 2021.</p> <p>However, you can register now for future elections and referendums.</p> <p>Suggest the caller contacts the electoral registration office to check if they are registered. If they are not registered and have recently moved, they should check with the electoral registration office in the area where they used to live.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they wish to register for future elections and referendums, then use the information above • If they know their previous postcode, you can search for their old electoral registration office's contact details by going to www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter.
How do I register for future elections and referendums?	<p>You can apply to register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote</p> <p>You can also apply by filling in a form and returning it to your electoral registration office.</p> <p>Once you are registered, you do not need to apply again unless your circumstances change, for example, you move home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process as above.
I applied to register ages	The ERO needs to verify your identity before adding your name to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate more complex queries to the electoral

Issue/question	Answer	Action
ago but I'm still not on the register.	<p>the register.</p> <p>In some cases, the ERO will need to contact you to ask for more information to process your application.</p> <p>If you want to check the progress of your application please contact the electoral registration office.</p> <p>The register will be updated regularly ahead of this election, with the final update due on 28 April 2021.</p>	<p>registration office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer caller to the electoral registration office if they need to check that they are registered. • If they wish, provide contact details from www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter.
What are the monthly cut-off dates? / Any question about a specific month's cut-off date.	<p>Use information provided to give details of the relevant monthly cut-off dates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deadline for making an application to register for the Scottish Parliamentary election on 6 May 2021 is 19 April 2021, but applications should be made as soon as possible. • Monthly cut-off dates can be found on the Electoral Commission's website.
Am I eligible to register to vote?	<p>You can only vote if you are registered. You can register if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - you are a British or Irish citizen, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen or a qualifying foreign national (i.e. you have leave to enter or remain in the UK or don't require leave to enter or to remain in the UK) permanently living in the UK. - you are 14 or over (but you cannot vote until your 16th birthday in Scottish Parliamentary and local government elections. <p>You have to be 18 to vote in UK Parliamentary elections</p> <p>Qualifying foreign nationals can vote at Scottish Parliamentary and Scottish local government elections, but they cannot vote at UK Parliamentary elections.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they want more info, direct them to www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter, or use any contact details you have been given. • To check whether they are a citizen of a Commonwealth country, refer to the list of Commonwealth countries in section 12 below. • If anyone is unsure whether they have leave to enter or remain in the UK, or whether they don't require leave to enter or remain in the UK, refer them to the Home Office www.homeoffice.gov.uk. • If they wish to register, see above.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
	<p>Some people can register, even though they are not permanently living in the UK. These are Service Voters, Crown Servants posted overseas or overseas electors – see sections 5 and 6 for further information.</p>	
<p>If I pay council tax am I automatically registered?</p>	<p>No. Electoral registration is a separate process performed by your local Electoral Registration Officer. The law does not allow names to be automatically be added to the electoral register from Council tax records.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate more complex queries to the electoral registration office.
<p>I'm a student and I'm not sure where I should register to vote.</p>	<p>Students may be entitled to register at both their home address and their college/university (term time) address.</p> <p>It is an offence to vote more than once at the election.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer to give information on registering to vote (see 'How do I register to vote?') above for that information). <p>Remind callers that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications to register should be made as soon as possible. • Applications must be made by 19 April 2021. • Applications received after 19 April 2021 will not be in time for the election on the 6 May 2021 • For more complicated queries give contact details/pass them to the electoral registration office.
<p>I've just turned 16 and want to register.</p>	<p>Same answer and actions as 'How do I register to vote?' above.</p> <p>You can register to vote if you are 14 or over.</p> <p>However, you can only vote in the Scottish Parliament elections and Scottish local government elections once you are 16 years old.</p>	

Issue/question	Answer	Action
	<p>You can vote in UK Parliamentary elections once you are 18 years old.</p>	
<p>I'm homeless / live on a house boat / caravan / in a mental hospital / remanded in custody / am under 16 and looked after by a local authority or being kept in secure accommodation. Can I register?</p>	<p>Yes. You can make something called a 'declaration of local connection'.</p> <p>You can apply by filling in a form and posting it to your electoral registration office.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer to electoral registration office or supply their contact details if you have them. • Use www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter if needed.
<p>What are the full and open registers?</p>	<p>The full electoral register lists the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote in public elections. The register is used for electoral purposes, such as making sure only eligible people can vote. It is also used for other limited purposes specified in law, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detecting crime (e.g. fraud) • calling people for jury service • checking credit applications. <p>The open register is an extract of the electoral register, but is not used for elections. It can be bought by any person, company or organisation. For example, it is used by businesses and charities to confirm name and address details. Your name and address will be included in the open register unless you ask for them to be removed. Removing your details from the open register does not affect your</p>	<p>More information on who has access to the electoral register and what it can be used for can be found on our website: https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/electoral-register</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate more complex queries to the elections office.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
	<p>right to vote.</p> <p>You can find more information about both registers and how they may be used at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.</p> <p>Details of under 16s are not included on any version of the published registers.</p>	
<p>How do I find out if my details are on the open register and how can I get them removed if they are?</p>	<p>You will need to contact the elections office at your local council</p> <p>If your details are on the open register and you wish to have them removed from future versions of this register, your elections office will be able to help.</p> <p>Details of under 16s are never included on the open register.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate complex queries to the electoral registration office.
<p>How is my personal data used?</p>	<p>Your ERO has a legal duty to keep and process information about you in accordance with the law.</p> <p>Using information received from the public, registration officers keep two registers – the full register and the open register.</p> <p>You can find out what information is held about you, on paper and in computer records.</p> <p>You can find out more about how your ERO uses data in line with data protection legislative requirements on their website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer to give information on the full and open registers (see ‘What are the full and open registers?’ above for that information). • Refer the elector to the ERO’s privacy notice • The caller can contact the ERO if they wish to see a copy of their records or if they would like to know more about how information about them is used.

3 Postal and proxy voting

Issue/question	Answer	Action
Who can apply for a postal vote?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone who is registered to vote • If you are not yet registered, you should apply now. You can submit a postal vote application alongside your registration application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can download postal forms from www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter or get them from the elections office. • If they wish, provide the address and contact details for the electoral registration office that you have been given or obtained from www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter.
What is the deadline for applying for a postal vote for the Scottish Parliament election on 6 May 2021?	<p>Your application to vote by post must be received by 5pm on 6 April 2021.</p> <p>If you are not yet registered, the deadline to apply to vote by post is still 5pm on 6 April 2021, but your application to register to vote must have reached the ERO by 19 April 2021.</p> <p>(For local government by elections, the deadline is 11 working days before the poll)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 'Who can apply for a postal vote' above. • If you have access to the information, check whether the enquirer is registered or not and tailor the response accordingly. • They can download postal forms from www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter or get them from the elections office. • Refer to the ERO if necessary.
If someone calls after the deadline – 5pm on 6 April 2021	<p>You have missed the deadline to apply for a postal vote for the election on 6 May 2021.</p> <p>You may be able to apply for a proxy vote up until 5pm on 27 April 2021 if you can't attend the polling station. You will need to state the reason why you can't attend the polling station on the form.</p> <p>You can still apply for a postal vote for future elections or referendums now if you wish.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can download postal and proxy forms from www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter or get them from the elections office. • If they wish, provide the address and contact details for the electoral registration office that you have been given or from www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
How do I get a postal vote?	<p>You can download an application form from www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter, or get one from the electoral registration office.</p> <p>You need to return the form to the elections office.</p> <p>Remind them of the deadline (see above).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can download postal vote forms from www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter, or get them from the electoral registration office. • If they wish, provide the address and contact details for the electoral registration office that you have been given or from www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter.
I haven't received my postal ballot paper yet.	<p>Returning Officers must dispatch postal votes as soon they can, but cannot do so until after nominations have closed and ballot papers have been produced. However dispatch dates will vary.</p> <p>[Insert any local information you may have on postal vote dispatch timeframes]</p> <p>Otherwise you will be added to one of the various register updates that are published throughout the election period. We will send you a postal vote as soon as you are added to the register through one of those updates.</p> <p>If it hasn't arrived within a few days of polling day, or you have lost it, you can get a replacement postal ballot pack in person from your local elections office, up until 10pm on polling day. You will need identification.</p> <p>If you have spoilt your ballot paper or postal voting statement, you can get a replacement until 10pm on polling day. Do not destroy or throw away your postal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell them to contact the local elections office and ask when they are sending out postal votes if they need to know exactly when postal votes will be sent. • Ask them to contact the elections office for details of the allowed identification if they need a replacement for a lost/not received postal vote and to arrange for a replacement.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
	ballot papers. You will need to return them before you can get a replacement.	
For what period does my postal vote last?	You can apply for a specific election or referendum, or for a specific time period, or for a permanent postal vote which lasts until you cancel it or move home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escalate to electoral registration office if they require more information.
How does the postal voting statement work?	<p>This document will arrive in your postal vote pack alongside your ballot papers. It must be completed or your vote will not count.</p> <p>You will need to provide your signature and date of birth. This will be checked against the signature and date of birth you previously supplied to the Electoral Registration Officer.</p> <p>More detailed instructions will be provided in your postal ballot pack, or you can contact your local elections office for more information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they wish, provide elections office contact details.
Why do I have to give my date of birth and signature? How is it secret?	<p>When you apply for a postal (or proxy) vote you must provide your date of birth and signature.</p> <p>When you get your postal ballot papers there will be a separate statement on which you will be asked for the same details. This is for security reasons and the details must match those you previously provided for your vote to be counted.</p> <p>However, rest assured that the statement is separated from the ballot paper when it is received. This happens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they want to discuss any aspect of postal vote security or who has their personal details further, elevate to elections office.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
	before the sealed ballot paper envelope is opened. This keeps your vote secret; no one will be able to find out how you voted.	
How secure is a postal vote?/ Any question or challenge about the security of voting.	<p>It may be an offence to complete a postal vote that is not your own, or to intimidate voters.</p> <p>If you have evidence that electoral fraud has been committed you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the police as quickly as possible using the non-emergency number 101. You should be prepared to give them a statement and substantiate your allegation. • If you are worried about giving your name to the police, you can also report electoral fraud anonymously by contacting CrimeStoppers by phone on 0800 555 111 or online at crimestoppers-uk.org <p>If you think that electoral fraud <u>may</u> have been committed you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First speak to the Electoral Registration Officer or Constituency Returning Officer for your local area <p>They may be able to explain whether or not electoral fraud has been committed, and can refer your concerns to the police if necessary. They can also provide you with the details of the police contact for the relevant police force</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer on to elections office if they want to discuss this further.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
	so that you can report the allegation yourself.	
I opted for a postal vote but I don't want to post it/I'm too late to post it	<p>You can drop off your postal vote on polling day at the elections office, or to certain polling stations in the area. Make sure you do it before 10pm.</p> <p>You cannot be given ballot papers at the polling station.</p> <p>Contact your local elections office to find out where their office is or for the address of your polling station or a polling station where you can deliver your postal vote.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If they wish, provide elections office contact details.
I have received my postal vote but I don't want to vote by post	<p>If before 5pm on 20 April: You can change your voting method for these elections if you haven't already returned your postal vote.</p> <p>Otherwise: You can complete your postal vote and take it to certain polling stations in the area on polling day, or hand it in at the elections office. Make sure you do it before 10pm.</p> <p>Contact your local elections office to find out where their office is or for the address of a polling station where you can deliver your postal vote.</p> <p>You can change your voting arrangements for future elections or referendums by contacting the elections office.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide electoral registration office contact details if necessary.
Who can apply for a proxy vote?	<p>Anyone who is registered to vote can apply to vote by proxy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your chosen proxy (i.e. the person voting on your 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They can download a form from www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter, or get one from the elections office. If they wish, provide the address and contact details for

Issue/question	Answer	Action
	<p>behalf) must also be registered to vote.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you or your proxy are not yet registered, you should apply now. You can submit a proxy vote application alongside your registration application. <p>To vote by proxy, you must have a reason – e.g. you will be away on holiday, you are away on business. You will not need to get your application attested.</p> <p>Contact your local electoral registration office for more information and an application form.</p>	<p>the electoral registration office that you have been given or from</p> <p>www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter.</p>
<p>What is the deadline for applying for a proxy vote?</p>	<p>If you are amending an existing proxy vote or changing from postal to proxy, you must return your application by 5pm on 6 April 2021.</p> <p>You may be able to change who your appointed proxy is after 6 April – check with your ERO if this applies to you.</p> <p>New proxy applications (where you were previously going to vote at a polling station) must be received by 5pm on 27 April 2021.</p> <p>If you are not yet registered, the deadline to apply to vote by proxy is still 5pm on 27 April 2021, but your application to register to vote must have reached the ERO by 19 April 2021.</p> <p>If the deadline has passed, you may be able to apply for an emergency proxy vote (see below).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above If you have access to the information, check whether the enquirer is registered or not and tailor the response accordingly. Refer to ERO if necessary

Issue/question	Answer	Action
What if I have missed the deadline to apply for a proxy vote?	<p>You may be able to apply for an emergency proxy vote.</p> <p>If the emergency occurred after 5pm on 27 April, you can apply to vote by proxy for emergency medical reasons, for reasons related to coronavirus, or if you are called away unexpectedly for work reasons.</p> <p>You can apply for an emergency proxy up until 5pm on polling day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To discuss emergency proxy applications, direct them to the elections office.
What if my appointed proxy is affected by Covid and can't go to the polling station?	<p>You, the elector, may apply to the ERO to change your appointed proxy, if on the day of the election the proxy cannot go to the polling station on the grounds of coronavirus, or if it is likely that on the day of the election they will not be able to go to the polling station.</p> <p>You can apply for to replace your proxy up until 5pm on polling day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To discuss emergency proxy applications, direct them to the elections office.
I've been appointed as proxy for someone and I don't know how it works	<p>It's simple to vote as someone's proxy. You vote in the same way as any other elector.</p> <p>You should ask the person who has appointed you as their proxy how they want you to vote on their behalf.</p> <p>You will be sent a proxy poll card with details of where you should go to vote. This will be near to where the person who appointed you lives.</p> <p>If you can't attend the polling station you can vote as proxy by post, but you must apply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If they want to discuss this further, refer them to the elections office.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
	<p>by 5pm on 6 April 2021.</p> <p>If you are going to the polling station just tell the staff there that you are voting as a proxy and they will tell you what to do.</p> <p>Don't forget to take your proxy poll card – although you don't need it to vote, this will speed up the ballot paper issuing process.</p>	
I can't sign or sign in a consistent manner	There is a special system if you can't sign or sign in a consistent manner. You will need to complete a special application form from the electoral registration office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the electoral registration office

4 How/where to vote

Issue/question	Answer	Action
Date of election	6 May 2021 (polling hours: 7am to 10pm).	
How do I find out where my polling station is?	<p>Your poll card should tell you the location of your polling station.</p> <p>Alternatively, contact the elections office.</p> <p>There may have been a review of the polling places in your area since the last elections, and your polling station may have been changed as a result. Contact the elections office for more information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the caller requires further information, provide contact details for the elections office.
Polling hours?	Polling hours are between 7am – 10pm.	
Will the polling station be Covid-19/corona virus secure?	<p>There are measures in place at polling stations to help protect against Covid-19. For example:</p> <p>[examples of measures – customise for your authority]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -floor marking to encourage physical distancing -additional signage -hand sanitisers on way in and out -Perspex screens -one-way system -obligatory to wear face coverings -single-use pencils to mark ballot papers <p>Polling station staff have received extra training on</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the caller requires further information, provide contact details for the elections office. • If caller is vulnerable explain about other methods of voting

Issue/question	Answer	Action
	how to mitigate the spread of coronavirus	
What methods of voting are there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In person at the polling station - By post - By proxy (need to give particular reason for one-off; need to meet certain criteria to vote by proxy for a period of time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above for information on applying.
How do I fill in the ballot papers?	<p>You will be given two ballot papers: one for the constituency and one for the region. Further information will be provided by the poll clerk at the polling station or, if you opted to vote by post, it will be in your ballot pack.</p> <p>There will be instructions on the top of each ballot paper which you should read.</p> <p>The Electoral Commission has information in different formats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate any more complicated queries to the elections office. • The Electoral Commission guidance is available at: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter
I have lost / not received my poll card	<p>You do not need your poll card to vote.</p> <p>If you have lost your poll card, your local elections office can tell you where your polling station is.</p> <p>If you have not received a poll card you should check that you are registered (see above).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide contact details. Use www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter or contact details you have been given.

5 Overseas voters

Issue/question	Answer	Action
Can British citizens living abroad vote?	<p>British citizens living abroad are not eligible to vote in Scottish Parliamentary elections.</p> <p>They can register to vote at UK Parliamentary elections You can register as an overseas elector if you are, or have been, included within the past 15 years in a register of Parliamentary electors in the UK. If you were too young to register when you left the UK, your parent or guardian must have been registered.</p> <p>Service voters and Crown Servants stationed overseas can vote in all elections (see next section).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct them to www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter; or direct them to electoral registration office for more information.

6 Service voters and Crown Servants

Issue/question	Answer	Action
I am in the Armed Forces (Army, Royal Navy or RAF) posted abroad. How do I register to vote?	<p>You can register at the address in Scotland where you would be living if not posted overseas or at an address in Scotland where you have lived in the past.</p> <p>If you are under 18, are not in the Armed Forces yourself, but your parent or guardian is and you are living with them, you can also register as a service voter. You must be living in Scotland or would be living in Scotland if your parent or guardian were not based overseas.</p> <p>You can apply to register to vote online at https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote-armed-forces</p> <p>OR</p> <p>by using a service declaration form and sending it to the electoral registration office for the area you wish to register.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service voter applications can be made online at https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote-armed-forces • Provide contact details. More info at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter • Service voter registration form can be downloaded from https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. • Remind them of the deadline – 19 April 2021, but encourage to apply as soon as possible.
I am in the Armed Forces living in the UK, how do I register to vote?	<p>Service personnel, their spouses or civil partners, and their children living with them, have the option of making a service declaration (as above), or can opt to register to vote in the traditional way (as described in the registration section)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide contact details. More info at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter. • Service voter registration form can be downloaded from https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote-armed-forces. • Remind them of the deadline – 19 April 2021, but encourage to apply as soon as possible.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
I am a Service voter, what methods of voting are available to me?	<p>A service voter can vote in person at their polling station or can opt to vote by post or proxy.</p> <p>Postal votes sent to those registered abroad are normally prioritised and sent first to maximise the time for them to reach you and be completed and sent back before the close of poll.</p> <p>However, if you are living or posted abroad you may want to appoint a proxy to vote on your behalf.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote website where Service voter forms can be downloaded. • Remind them of the 5pm 6 April 2021 deadline for receipt of postal vote applications and the 5pm 27 April 2021 deadline for a new proxy vote. • If they already have a proxy vote but want to change it, they need to do this by 5pm 6 April 2021. • If they want to change who their appointed proxy is after the 6 April – refer to the ERO
I work in a UK embassy / for the EU / for the UN, and am based overseas. How do I register to vote?	<p>If you are working outside the UK as a Crown Servant or as an employee of the British Council, you can still register to vote.</p> <p>You can also register if you are married to, or are the civil partner of a Crown Servant or British Council employee and you are accompanying them during their employment abroad.</p> <p>If you are under 18 years old and living with a parent or guardian who is a Crown Servant or British Council employee serving abroad, you are also eligible to register as service voter provided you would be living in Scotland if your parent or guardian were not based overseas.</p> <p>If you are employed by the EU, UN or any other organisation not directly in service of the Crown you cannot register as a Crown Servant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide contact details for more information. • Crown servant voter registration form can be downloaded from https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote • Remind them of the registration deadline – 19 April 2021, but encourage them to apply as soon as possible.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
	<p>Crown Servants and British Council employees can apply to register to vote online at https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote-crown-servants-british-council-employees</p> <p>OR</p> <p>by completing a Crown Servant registration form, which is available to download from https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.</p> <p>Only British Crown servants, British Council employees, their spouse/civil partner and children can register this way</p>	
<p>I am a Crown Servant, what methods of voting are available to me?</p>	<p>You can vote in person at your polling station or you can opt to vote by post or proxy.</p> <p>Postal votes sent to those registered abroad are normally prioritised and sent first to maximise the time for them to reach you and be completed and sent back before close of poll.</p> <p>However, if you are living or posted abroad you may want to appoint a proxy to vote on your behalf.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote website where Crown Servant voter forms can be downloaded. • Remind them of the 5pm 6 April 2021 deadline for receipt of postal vote applications and the 5pm 27 April 2021 deadline for a new proxy vote. • If they already have a proxy vote but want to change it, they need to do this by 5pm 6 April 2021. • If they want to change who their appointed proxy is after the 6 April – refer to the ERO • Provide contact details for more information.

7 Access issues

Issue/question	Answer	Action
<p>What provision is made for disabled people?</p>	<p>There are different options for casting your vote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at a polling station - by post - by appointing a proxy to vote on your behalf. <p>Most polling stations will be fully accessible. The staff should be trained and have access to equipment to assist disabled electors to vote in secret or with the assistance of polling station staff.</p> <p>Disabled electors may also bring a companion to assist them to vote at the polling station.</p> <p>Contact the elections office for details of the access to any particular polling station and the assistance that will be available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they wish, provide contact details for the elections office.
<p>What provisions are made for blind or visually impaired voters?</p>	<p>Tactile voting templates and large print versions of ballot papers are available at all polling stations.</p> <p>You can take a companion with you (close relative or elector qualified to vote) to assist you, or ask the presiding officer at the polling station for help.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they wish, provide contact details for the elections office.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
What provision is there for non-English speakers?	<p>Ballot papers cannot be printed in languages other than English.</p> <p>However, there may be guidance notes available in other languages. These may be available in the polling station.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they wish, provide contact details for the elections office. • Could also explain that the registration form is available in a number of different languages from the Electoral Commission. You can print them from Commission's website at https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/registration-forms-and-letters
What provision is there for wheelchair users?	<p>Each polling station is different but most are accessible for all voters.</p> <p>You can obtain more details about your polling station from the elections office.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they wish, provide contact details for the elections office.
What about access issues for postal voters?	I can give you contact details of the elections office, who will be able to discuss this with you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide contact details for the elections office.

8 The elections in your area

Issue/question	Answer	Action
Who is standing in the elections?	Refer them to the elections office or to the statements of persons (and parties) nominated if available on the council website [insert details locally] . The statements are usually published at 5pm on 31 March 2021. Refer also to next question below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If they wish, provide elections office contact details.
Where can I get information about the candidates?	<p>See answer above.</p> <p>Most candidates and parties will post leaflets through letter boxes before the election.</p> <p>They may also produce manifestos of their policies, display posters, hold meetings or have websites with information.</p> <p>You can also contact the candidates or parties for information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide local authority website details.

9 Count, results, etc.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
How are the votes counted?	<p>The constituency election is conducted using the first-past-the-post electoral system. Voters mark a cross (X) in the box to the right of the candidate they wish to vote for.</p> <p>The candidate who receives the most votes in the constituency will be elected.</p> <p>The regional election is conducted using the additional member system. Voters mark a cross (X) in the box to the right of the party or individual candidate they wish to vote for.</p> <p>Seats are awarded using a formula (called 'modified d'Hondt').</p> <p>This formula sees the number of votes cast in the regional election for each party or individual candidate divided by the number of constituency seats they have gained, plus one.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If they wish, provide contact details for the elections office.
When will the results be announced?	<p>Contact your local elections office for more information, or visit your local authority website.</p> <p><i>If local information is available:</i></p> <p>The votes will be counted on [insert local information] with the results declared following the count. The regional result can only be declared once all constituency results are received.</p> <p>Contact your local elections office for more information, or visit your local authority website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If they wish, provide contact details for the elections office.

What about recounts?	It is the responsibility of the Returning Officer to decide if a re-count is necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If they wish, provide contact details for the elections office. If you do not have the details go to https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information
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10 Candidates at the election

Issue/question	Answer	Action
How do I stand as a candidate at the Scottish Parliamentary election?	<p>You need to meet the qualifications for being a candidate and not be disqualified.</p> <p>To stand in the constituency election, you will also need to submit a set of nomination papers and a deposit of £500 to the Constituency Returning Officer by the nomination deadline (4pm on 31 March 2021).</p> <p>You can stand in the regional election either as a candidate on a party list, or as an individual candidate. Registered parties submitting a party list, and individual candidates, must submit a set of nomination papers and a deposit of £500 to the Regional Returning Officer by the nomination deadline (4pm on 31 March 2021).</p> <p>Refer to candidates' guidance on Electoral Commission website: https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/scottish-parliamentary-elections</p> <p>If they have further questions, refer to elections office.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More complex queries, refer to the elections office.
Can you offer advice on the nomination process given the COVID-19/coronavirus pandemic?	<p>[insert any other local information on how you will be managing the nominations process]</p>	

11 The Electoral Commission

Issue/question	Answer	Action
What is the Electoral Commission?	An independent body, not part of government, that regulates party and election finance and sets standards for well-run elections and electoral registration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If they want further information, direct them to, www.electoralcommission.org.uk or 0800 3 280 280.

12 List of Commonwealth countries and British Overseas Territories

Commonwealth countries

Antigua and Barbuda	Kenya	St Vincent and the
Australia	Kiribati	Grenadines
The Bahamas	Lesotho	Samoa
Bangladesh	Malawi	Seychelles
Barbados	Malaysia	Sierra Leone
Belize		Singapore
Botswana	Malta*	Solomon Islands
Brunei	Mauritius	South Africa
Cameroon	Mozambique	Sri Lanka
Canada	Namibia	Swaziland
Dominica	Nauru	Tonga
Fiji	New Zealand	Trinidad and Tobago
The Gambia	Nigeria	Tuvalu
Ghana	Pakistan	Uganda
Grenada	Papua New Guinea	United Kingdom
Guyana	Republic of Cyprus*	United Republic of Tanzania
India	Rwanda	Vanuatu
Jamaica	St Christopher and Nevis	Zambia
	St Lucia	Zimbabwe

*Although also EU member states, citizens of Cyprus and Malta are eligible to be registered to vote in respect of all elections held in the UK.

British Overseas Territories

Anguilla	Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands
Bermuda	St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
British Antarctic Territory	South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
British Indian Ocean Territory	Sovereign Base areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia on Cyprus
Cayman Islands	
Falkland Islands	Turks and Caicos Islands
Gibraltar	Virgin Islands
Montserrat	