

Scotland (devolved) annual report You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 On this page Summary Performance analysis Looking ahead Governance First published: 1 August 2022 Last updated: 1 August 2022 Summary Summary The Electoral Commission became formally accountable to the Scottish Parliament for our activities to support the delivery of devolved elections in Scotland. In this section we set out our key activities and achievements in this last year and look ahead to some of the challenges for 2021/22. The key focus for the Commission in Scotland in the last year has been on supporting the delivery of both the May 2021 Scottish Parliament election and the May 2022 council elections. Performance analysis We continued to work closely with the Electoral Management Board for Scotland to provide advice, support and challenge to Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their teams delivering elections across Scotland. In January 2022, we delivered a briefing session for 184 electoral administrators in Scotland focused on supporting them to deliver a well-run poll in their area. This was followed by a seminar with Police Scotland to support those officers acting as single points of contact (or SPOCs) for electoral officials at Scottish polls. Our performance standards help us to understand how Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers are performing in relation to delivering well run polls and electoral registration services, and enable us to target our support effectively. In the past year, we have met with all 32 Returning Officers and 15 Electoral Registration Officers in Scotland. The Scottish Parliament election in 2021 was the first election in the UK requiring imprints on digital campaign material and we worked closely with candidates, parties and campaigners ahead of the election to support them to comply with the new rules. Our experiences in supporting compliance with these rules helped to inform our advice to governments on the introduction of imprint rules at other elections. In February, the Scottish Parliament passed legislation to set our advice function for candidates and agents at Scottish council elections in statute. Although we had undertaken this function on a non-statutory basis since 2001, this is an important step and provides certainty for candidates and agents. In September 2021 we published our report on the administration of the Scottish Parliament election. This included delivering our new duty to report on the steps that Returning Officers took to support disabled electors to participate. We drew on research with voters, electoral administrators and polling station staff to inform our assessment. We have used our findings to develop new materials for supporting disabled people to know what they should be able expect at the polling station and also to develop a session focussed on accessibility at our pre-council elections briefing for Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers, which included input from disabled people. We have continued to provide expert advice to the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament throughout the last year. This has included giving evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee on our assessment of how well-run the 2021 Scottish Parliament election was, and also on the implications for Scotland arising from the UK Government's Elections Bill. We also advised the Scottish Government on the UK Elections Bill and were consulted on seven pieces of secondary legislation for the 2022 council elections and a further bill to extend candidacy rights to foreign nationals. Throughout the last year we have continued to expand our partnership and learning work, particular in relation to supporting newly enfranchised voters to engage in the council elections. We have published a new range of democratic education resources to enhance our support for the teaching of

political literacy in Scottish classrooms and in January, we ran a week of 'Welcome to Your Vote' activity targeted at 16 and 17 year olds in partnership with education and youth work organisations across Scotland. We have also expanded our work to reach 'New Scots' with information about registering and voting in Scottish elections including the production of new resources for community organisations. We also worked with the Scottish Prison Service to distribute a guide and promotional materials for staff working with eligible prisoners. Looking ahead The next scheduled devolved election in Scotland will be the Scottish Parliament election in 2026. In the interim, we will work with the electoral community and wider Scottish society to ensure that we continue to strengthen capacity and expertise in delivering elections which can retain high levels of public confidence, accessibility and engagement. In the next year we will build on the work we have done so far to support young people to engage in Scottish democracy by widening the range of education resources we produce and by expanding our programme of work to support teacher confidence in political literacy activity in schools. This will include ensuring that our education materials continue to be informed by the voices of young people and by running workshops with teachers. We will also be developing our work with community groups to provide tailored resources to support their work with groups experiencing barriers to democratic engagement. We will continue to support parties and campaigners to comply with the law, while ensuring that political finance is transparent. Working in partnership with the Electoral Management Board, we will support and challenge Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers to meet the challenges of delivering well-run electoral services and to build resilience and capacity. This includes adapting to the increasingly diverse approach to the delivery of devolved and reserved elections and the changing needs of voters. The Scottish Government has indicated that it will be taking forward further electoral reform in Scotland in the coming year and we will continue to provide expert advice to the Government and Parliament to ensure that any reforms can be delivered effectively. Commitment to EDI The Electoral Commission serves a diverse democracy and is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. Our programme of partnership work in Scotland has continued to develop resources to support democratic inclusion for those who experience particular barriers to voting. This has included providing election material in a variety of languages, including British Sign Language, and in a number of formats including Easy read, large print, audio and braille. We have also worked with partner organisations in Scotland to develop appropriate materials for Gypsy/Travellers, care experienced young people, domestic abuse survivors and people experiencing homelessness. Using resources During 2021/22, we utilised £2.59m of resources from the £2.62m available. This was predominately for staffing £1.48m (56%) and Campaigns £1.05m (40%); the remaining amounts represent the Scottish Parliament contribution to common activities and corporate overheads. The underspend is due to savings in design and print of guidance materials, savings on the Scotland core team and depreciation. Governance While the Electoral Commission has regularly reported to both the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments in relation to our role at devolved elections, formal accountability (through legislation) has previously only been to the UK Parliament, specifically to the Speaker's Committee of the House of Commons. From 1 April 2021 the Commission became formally accountable to, and received funding from, the Scottish Parliament for our functions in relation to devolved Scottish elections and referendums. The Commission reports to the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB) for accountability purposes. We continue to report to other committees for our work in different policy areas. In September 2021, we submitted our second estimate to the

SPCB for the funding of our work in the year 2022/23. The process for developing the estimate followed the 'Statement of Funding Principles' which we agreed in early 2021 with both the Scottish and UK Parliaments along with the Senedd. We also consulted the SPCB on our draft Corporate Plan for 2022/23 to 2026/27. [Navigation](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#)

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