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Scottish Parliament election 2026: Information for blind and partially sighted voters

A Scottish Parliament election will take place on Thursday 7 May, and there are steps you should take now to make sure you're ready to vote. The Electoral Commission has created this guide in partnership with Guide Dogs Scotland, RNIB Scotland, Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans, Visionary, and the Electoral Management Board for Scotland. It applies to the 2026 Scottish Parliament election.

Further information about voting in the elections is also available on the Electoral Commission website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voter. This website is accessible and can be used with assistive technology. You can also request a copy of this guide in braille, large print or audio by contacting RNIB Scotland at rnibscotland.mailbox@rnib.org.uk.

Key dates

Monday 20 April, midnight - Deadline to register to vote
Tuesday 21 April, 5pm - Deadline to apply for a postal vote or postal proxy vote, or to make changes to existing postal or proxy votes
Tuesday 28 April, 5pm - Deadline to apply for a proxy vote
Thursday 7 May, 7am to 10pm - Polling day

Who can vote in the election?

You can vote in the election if you are 16 or over on polling day. If you hold British, Irish, qualifying Commonwealth citizenship or are a qualifying foreign national living in Scotland you can vote in the Scottish Parliament election. A qualifying foreign citizen is someone who has or does not require leave to remain or is treated as having leave to enter or remain in the UK.

You do **not** need voter ID to vote in the Scottish Parliament election.

Registering to vote

To vote in the election you need be registered. If you've never registered, or your address or name have changed, register to vote now ahead of the deadline of midnight on Monday 20 April.

You can register at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote, or by completing a paper application form. To request an application form or further support, contact your local electoral registration office. You can find their contact details at the end of this document, or by entering your postcode at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/next-election.

Voting in person

Polling places will be open from 7am to 10pm on Thursday 7 May.

You'll receive a poll card which will tell you where your polling place is. It may not be the same place you voted last time. If your venue has changed you might need to plan your route in advance or take a family member or friend with you.

Closer to polling day, you'll be able check where your polling place is and find a list of candidates by entering your postcode at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/next-election or by calling the Electoral Commission on 0800 3 280 280.

As ballot papers for the Scottish Parliament election can be lengthy, you may find it useful to check your preferred candidate's number order on the constituency and regional list ballot papers in advance to help you vote independently and in secret.

At the polling station

When you arrive at the polling place, a member of staff will ask you for your name and address so they can find you on the register. They will then give you two ballot papers – one for electing a constituency MSP and one to vote for a party or independent candidate on the regional list.

You can take a companion with you to help you, or you can ask a member of polling place staff to help you. Your own companion must be either a close relative (father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, civil partner, daughter or son – if they are aged 16 years or over) or an

elector at this poll. Before they assist you, they will need to complete a form provided by the polling place staff.

The person helping you can guide you between the entrance, desk, polling booth and ballot boxes. They can also mark the ballot paper for you in accordance with your instructions.

Assistive equipment

Returning Officers (ROs) must provide reasonable equipment to support disabled voters to cast their vote independently and in secret. Assistive equipment will be available at the polling place to support you to vote.

Large print ballot paper

Every polling station must display a large print copy of the ballot paper for reference. You can take the reference copy into the booth with you. You can use the large print copy to read all the information on the ballot papers, but you must still cast your vote on the standard print ballot paper.

Tactile voting device

If you have difficulty completing the standard print ballot papers, you can use a tactile voting device to help mark your vote in the correct place. Each polling station must provide a tactile voting device.

The tactile voting device has a sticky backing, which is attached over your ballot paper. A staff member will attach the tactile voting device to the ballot papers. It has numbered lift up flaps (the numbers are raised and in braille) directly over the boxes where you mark your vote.

You will need to use the large print ballot paper or ask someone (a companion or polling place staff) to read out the list of candidates to you. The candidates will be in alphabetical order.

Ballot paper overlay and audio ballot paper

A new ballot paper overlay with a linked audio version will also be available in polling stations in Scotland at this election. The overlays are sized to fit and be placed on top of each of the two ballot papers. The overlays include cut-out sections which align with the voting boxes. They also include the word 'TOP' written in embossed writing and braille, a cutout corner for orientation, and embossed numbers with braille beside the voting boxes.

The overlay is designed to be used in conjunction with an audio recording which will enable voters to hear which candidate is lined up with which numbered box and navigate to the correct cut out box using the embossed and braille numbers alongside them.

The audio may be accessed in different ways dependent on local arrangements, such as via phone or online. You can contact the Electoral Commission on 0800 3 280 280 to find the contact details for your local Returning Officer or enter your postcode at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/next-election

How to find out what assistive equipment will be available

Additional equipment to assist blind and partially sighted voters may be available for use at your polling place.

You can contact your local Returning Officer to find out what equipment will be available in your polling place, discuss your needs and request additional equipment or support. They will work with you to decide what additional equipment or support they can reasonably provide.

You can contact the Electoral Commission on 0800 3 280 280 to find the contact details for your local Returning Officer or enter your postcode at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/next-election

Mobile phone apps and video magnifiers

Blind and partially sighted voters can use mobile phone apps or assistive equipment such as video magnifiers to help read their ballot papers. These can be used in conjunction with assistive equipment provided at your polling place.

Other ways to vote

Voting by post

If you would prefer to vote by post or won't be able to make it to the polling place on polling day, you can apply to vote by post up to 5pm on Tuesday 21 April.

To apply to vote by post you can contact your local electoral registration office to request an application form or [download one from the Electoral Commission website](#). You can find contact details for your local electoral

registration office at the end of this document, or by entering your postcode at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/next-election.

When you apply to vote by post you will be asked to provide your date of birth and signature. You will be asked to provide this again when you complete your postal vote, so your identity can be verified.

If you are unable to provide a consistent signature due to being disabled, you can apply for a postal vote with a signature waiver from your local electoral registration office, which will mean you won't need to provide a signature when you complete your postal vote. If you are also unable to write your date of birth when you complete your postal vote, someone can assist you with this, but you must complete your ballot paper yourself.

You will receive your postal voting pack around 5-11 days before polling day. You then need to complete and return the pack, ensuring you leave enough time for your postal vote to arrive by polling day.

Voting by proxy

If you won't be able to make it to the polling place on polling day, you also have the option to apply to vote by proxy, where you choose someone you trust to vote on your behalf. The deadline for applying to vote by proxy is 5pm on Tuesday 28 April.

To apply to vote by proxy contact your local electoral registration office. You can find their contact details at the end of this document, or by entering your postcode at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/next-election.

The person you choose to vote on your behalf will need to go to your polling place. They could also choose to apply to vote by post as your proxy, if they prefer.

Contact details for your local electoral registration office

This is a table, formed of four columns, headed Council; Electoral registration office; Telephone number; and Email address; and with 15 rows.

Council	Electoral registration office	Telephone number	Email address
East Ayrshire North Ayrshire South Ayrshire	Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board	01292 612221	avjb@south-ayrshire.gov.uk
Clackmannanshire Falkirk Stirling	Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board	01786 892289	registration@centralscotland-vjb.gov.uk
Dumfries and Galloway	Dumfries and Galloway Council	01387 260627	ero@dumgal.gov.uk
East Dunbartonshire West Dunbartonshire Argyll & Bute	Dunbartonshire & Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board	0800 980 0471	assessor@dab-vjb.gov.uk
Dundee City	Dundee City Council	01382 434444	ero@dundeecity.gov.uk
Fife	Fife Council	03451 555511	election.enquiries@fife.gov.uk
Glasgow City	Glasgow City Council	0141 287 4444	voters.roll@fs.glasgow.gov.uk
Aberdeen City Aberdeenshire Moray	Grampian Electoral Registration Office	01224 068400	ero@grampian-ero.gov.uk
Highland Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	Highland & Western Isles Valuation Joint Board	0800 393783	ero@highland.gov.uk
North Lanarkshire South Lanarkshire	Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board	0800 030 4333	ero@lanarkshire-vjb.gov.uk

City of Edinburgh East Lothian West Lothian Midlothian	Lothian Valuation Joint Board	0131 344 2500	enquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk
Orkney Islands Shetland Islands	Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board	01856 876222	ero@orkney.gov.uk ero@shetland.gov.uk
East Renfrewshire Renfrewshire Inverclyde	Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board	0300 300 0150	ero@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk
Scottish Borders	Scottish Borders Council	01835 825 100	ero@scotborders.gov.uk
Angus Council Perth & Kinross	Tayside Valuation Joint Board	01738 630303	perth@tayside-vjb.gov.uk forfar@tayside-vjb.gov.uk

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