

Elections FAQs (frequently asked questions)

Issues and actions for staff supporting
the Scottish Parliamentary and local
government elections, 3 May 2007

March 2007



Translations and other formats

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We are an independent body that was set up by the UK Parliament. Our mission is to foster public confidence and participation by promoting integrity, involvement and effectiveness in the democratic process.

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1 How to use this guide

This publication has been designed as a resource for Returning Officers (ROs) and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to support the training and briefing of support staff working on the Scottish Parliamentary and local government elections on 3 May 2007.

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

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 electoral processes. Staff are advised to elevate complex questions to the local ERO or elections office.

The guide is designed for use by the following ranges of staff who may be asked to support the election locally:

- call centre staff
- local council reception staff
- staff working in information centres and one-stop shops
- other customer service staff (community offices, library information desks, etc.)

2 Registration

Issue/question	Answer	Action
Am I registered to vote?	Your Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) can tell you. However, if you filled in the annual canvass form that came through your door between August and November last year you should still be registered and do not need to register again unless you have moved home since then.	Transfer caller to ERO. If they wish, provide ERO contact details.
How do I register to vote for the May elections?	<p>The deadline to get on the register for the May elections is 18 April 2007, if you are not already on it.</p> <p>You can register to vote by filling in an application form and returning it to your local Electoral Registration Officer.</p> <p>However, if you have not recently moved home and you filled in and returned the annual canvass registration form that came through your door between August and November last year, you do not need to register again. You can check with the Electoral Registration Officer whether or not you are on the register.</p> <p>If it is later than 18 April: You have missed the deadline to get on the register for the May elections, if you are not already on it. However, you can register now for future elections and referendums if you wish.</p> <p>If you believe you may be registered at a different address you will need to contact the relevant ERO for that address for confirmation of this.</p>	<p>Offer to send them a registration form and take their address, or direct them to the Electoral Commission's About My Vote website, www.aboutmyvote.co.uk or a local council/ERO website to download one.</p> <p>Supply ERO address to send form.</p> <p>Supply contact details of ERO if required.</p> <p>Remind them of the 18 April deadline for registration.</p>

Issue/question	Answer	Action
How do I register for future elections?	By filling in a form and returning it to your ERO. However, if you filled in the annual canvass form that came through your door last year and returned it to your ERO, you do not need to register again.	Process as above.
I sent my electoral registration form in ages ago but I'm still not on the register.	<p>It can take up to seven weeks for your name to be added to the register.</p> <p>The register of electors is updated on a monthly basis, and there is a cut off date each month for the receipt of forms. If you missed this date your details will not be included in the next month's update but will be included in the update the month after. However, you will be added to the register in time to vote at these elections as long as your registration form was received by the ERO before 18 April 2007.</p> <p>If you are not sure whether your form was received please contact your ERO.</p>	<p>Elevate more complex queries to the ERO.</p> <p>If they wish, provide ERO contact details.</p>
Am I eligible to register to vote?	<p>You can register to vote if you are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aged 16 years or over (but you cannot vote until your eighteenth birthday) • a British citizen • an Irish Republic or a qualifying Commonwealth citizen resident in the UK (a list of Commonwealth countries can be found in Chapter 14) • a citizen of a member state European Union country 	<p>If they want more info, direct them to the Electoral Commission website, www.electoralcommission.org.uk or local council websites.</p> <p>If they wish to register, send registration form or tell them they can download one from www.aboutmyvote.co.uk.</p>

Issue/question	Answer	Action
How can I contact my local Electoral Registration Officer?	I can give you the contact details for your Electoral Registration Officer.	Provide Electoral Registration Officer contact details, or direct them to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk .
I have a second home and I'm not sure where I should register to vote.	<p>If a substantial amount of your time is spent at both properties you may be able to register to vote at each address, but this is a rare situation.</p> <p>You need to contact your local electoral registration office to find out.</p> <p>If you are permitted to register in respect of both addresses, although it is an offence to vote more than once in a national election (including a Scottish Parliamentary election), you can vote in the local elections at both of your addresses.</p>	If they wish, provide ERO contact details.
I am 16/17. Can I register to vote?	<p>Yes. If you are 16 or 17 you can register to vote, however you cannot actually vote unless you are 18 or over on polling day.</p> <p>If you will be 18 soon it is a good idea to register now.</p>	<p>Offer to send the caller a registration form and take the caller's address, or direct them to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk to download one.</p> <p>If you are sending a form to the caller, offer to supply the Electoral Registration Officer address to send form to.</p> <p>Remind them of the 18 April deadline for registration for the May 2007 elections.</p>

Issue/question	Answer	Action
What elections can I vote in?	<p>You are eligible to vote in all elections in the UK if you are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a British Citizen • a qualifying Commonwealth citizen resident in the UK (a list of Commonwealth countries can be found in Chapter 14) • a citizen of the Irish Republic <p>If you are a European Union citizen (see Chapter 14) and not also in one of the categories listed above, you can vote in Scottish Parliamentary and local government elections but are not eligible to vote in UK Parliamentary elections.</p> <p>Anyone who is not a British, qualifying Commonwealth, Irish or EU citizen is not entitled to vote in any election in the UK. Having leave to stay does not give anyone the right to vote, unless they qualify on grounds of nationality.</p>	
If I pay council tax am I automatically registered?	No, electoral registration is a separate process performed by the Electoral Registration Officer appointed by your local council.	If they wish, provide ERO contact details.
I'm a student and I'm not sure where I should register to vote.	Students are entitled to register at both their home address and their university address. It is an offence to vote more than once in a national election, but you can vote in both sets of local elections.	<p>Offer to send them a registration form, or direct them to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk to download one.</p> <p>Remind them of the 18 April deadline for registration for the May 2007 elections.</p> <p>Elevate more complex queries to the ERO.</p>

Issue/question	Answer	Action
I've just turned 18 and want to register.	Same process as 'How do I register to vote for the May elections?'	
What are the full and edited registers?	<p>In 2002 new legislation created the full and the edited register of electors.</p> <p>The full register includes the names of all those registered to vote in a local area and is used for electoral and limited statutory purposes only. One of these purposes is credit referencing.</p> <p>The edited register can be sold on to anyone for any purpose and includes the names of all those who have not 'opted out' of their details being included on it.</p>	Elevate more complex queries to the ERO.
How do I find out if my details are on the edited register and how do I remove them if they are?	<p>You will need to contact your local Electoral Registration Officer.</p> <p>If your details are on the edited register and you wish to have them removed, your ERO will be able to advise you.</p>	Elevate complex queries to the ERO.

3 Overseas voters

Issue/question	Answer	Action
Can British citizens living abroad vote in the Scottish Parliamentary and local government elections?	No. British citizens living abroad are only eligible to register to vote in UK and European Parliamentary elections.	If they want more info direct them to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk , or to the <i>Overseas electors</i> factsheet available on the Electoral Commission's website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk .
How do I register to vote in European and UK Parliamentary elections if I'm living abroad?	<p>You will need to complete an overseas electors form which can be downloaded from www.aboutmyvote.co.uk.</p> <p>The form should then be sent to the Electoral Registration Officer for the area you believe you were last registered in the UK.</p>	<p>Refer caller to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk for the form, or print off and send out if they have no internet access.</p> <p>If last address in the UK is known provide ERO contact details.</p>
I can't remember where I was last registered to vote.	There is no centralised register of electors as electoral registration takes place locally, and so you will need to contact the Electoral Registration Officers covering your last few addresses.	Provide contact details where possible, or refer caller to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk .

Issue/question	Answer	Action
<p>What methods of voting are available?</p>	<p>Overseas voters can opt to vote by post or proxy.</p> <p>Postal votes can only be sent out after 18 April, so if you are living abroad you will need to consider whether you have enough time to compete and return your form in time. It may be better to appoint a proxy to vote on your behalf.</p> <p>If you are in the country on polling day, and you have not opted for a postal vote, you can vote in person. You will need to notify your proxy that you intend to vote in person as you can only do so if they have not already voted on your behalf and have not applied to vote by post as proxy. To find out where to vote in person contact the Returning Officer.</p>	<p>Send an application to vote by post or proxy, or refer caller to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk where the overseas electors form can be downloaded (this already includes the postal and proxy forms). If the caller has no internet access, offer to send them a hard copy – you will need to print this off.</p>
<p>I don't know any British citizens here to sign my witness statement.</p>	<p>Provided the form is signed by a British citizen living abroad, they do not need to be resident in the same country as you.</p> <p>If this is also not an option, then British consulate or embassy staff often sign forms for those in your position.</p>	<p>Refer to the Electoral Commission if the caller is not satisfied with the responses.</p>

4 Service voters

Issue/question	Answer	Action
<p>I am in the Armed Forces (Army, Navy or RAF) posted abroad – how do I register to vote?</p>	<p>Service personnel and their spouses posted abroad can register to vote by making a service declaration, which is available to download from the Commission’s website, or is available from your Electoral Registration Officer if you don’t have access to the internet.</p> <p>You can register for the address where you would be living if not posted overseas or for an address where you have lived in the past.</p> <p>The service declaration should be sent to the Electoral Registration Officer for the address where you wish to be registered.</p>	<p>Provide ERO contact details from www.aboutmyvote.co.uk.</p> <p>Service voter registration form can be downloaded from www.aboutmyvote.co.uk, or if they do not have internet access offer to print off and send to them.</p>
<p>I am in the Armed Forces living in the UK – how do I register to vote?</p>	<p>Service personnel and their spouses have the option of making a service declaration as above, or can opt to register to vote in the traditional way (as described in Chapter 2, ‘Registration’) at their permanent address.</p>	<p>Provide ERO contact details from www.aboutmyvote.co.uk.</p>
<p>What methods of voting are available to me?</p>	<p>Service voters and their spouses can vote in person or can opt to vote by post or proxy.</p> <p>Postal votes can only be sent out after 18 April, so if you are living abroad you will need to consider whether you have enough time to complete and return your form in time. It may be better to appoint a proxy to vote on your behalf.</p>	<p>Send an application to vote by post or proxy, or refer caller to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk where the forms can be downloaded. If they do not have internet access, offer to print off the relevant forms and send to them.</p>

5 Postal and proxy voting

Issue/question	Answer	Action
Who can apply for a postal vote?	Anyone who is registered to vote.	
What is the deadline for applying?	<p>The deadline is Wednesday 18 April at 5pm for requests to change or cancel an existing postal vote or proxy appointment or for a new application to vote by post. The last date for new applications to vote by proxy (except for medical emergencies) is Wednesday 25 April at 5pm. In the event of an elector becoming incapacitated on medical grounds after 5pm on 25 April the elector may make an application for a proxy appointment up to 5pm on polling day.</p> <p>If someone calls after the deadline for application: You have missed the deadline to apply for a postal vote for the May elections. However, you can still apply for one for future elections now if you wish.</p>	<p>Offer to send an application form out to them or direct them to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk to download one.</p> <p>If they wish, provide ERO address to send form to.</p>
Who can apply for a proxy vote?	<p>Only those with a specific reason such as a disability or being overseas can apply to vote by proxy for more than one election. Contact your Electoral Registration Officer for more information and an application form.</p> <p>To vote by proxy for just one election, you must have a reason, e.g. you will be on holiday.</p>	If they wish, provide ERO contact details.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
How do I get a postal vote?	We can send you a form or you can download one from www.aboutmyvote.co.uk . Then return it to the Electoral Registration Officer.	Offer to send an application form out to them or direct them to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk to download one. If they wish, provide ERO address to send form to. Remind them of the 18 April deadline (see above).
When will my postal ballot papers arrive?	One to two weeks before the elections.	
I haven't received my postal ballot papers yet.	You'll receive them one to two weeks before the elections. If they haven't arrived by polling day you can still get replacements in person from the election office at your local council, until 5pm. If you have spoilt your ballot papers, you can get replacements until 5pm on polling day. You will need to return your spoilt ballot paper(s).	If they wish, provide election office contact details.
I have lost my postal ballot papers.	If you have lost your postal ballot papers, you can get replacements from your local council until 5pm on polling day.	If they wish, provide election office contact details.
I have spoilt my postal ballot papers.	If you have spoilt your postal ballot papers, you can get replacements from your local council until 5pm on polling day.	If they wish, provide election office contact details.
I'm too late to post my postal ballot papers. What can I do?	You can hand in your completed postal votes either to any polling station in your electoral area up to 10pm on polling day or to the local council offices (before they close).	Refer the voter to the election office for details of the most convenient polling station within the voter's electoral area.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
For what period does my postal vote last?	You can apply for just this election, for a specific time period, or for a permanent one.	Direct the caller to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk for more information or elevate to election office.
How does the postal voting statement enclosed with a postal vote work?	Instructions will be provided in your ballot pack, or you can contact the election office at your local council for more information.	If they wish, provide election office contact details.
Why do I have to sign the postal voting statement? or How is the ballot secret?	You must sign the postal voting statement for your vote to be counted. You must personally fill in the ballot papers and the postal voting statement. If the signed statement is not received, your votes will not be counted. However, rest assured that the statement is separated from the ballot papers when they are received and before the votes are counted. Nobody is able to match your name against your votes.	If they want to discuss any aspect of postal vote security or who has their personal details further, elevate to the election office or refer on to the Electoral Commission.
How secure is a postal vote? or any question or challenge about the security of postal voting.	It is an offence to complete a postal vote that is not your own, and to intimidate voters. If you have any allegations of fraud, they should be referred to the police.	Refer on to the Electoral Commission if the caller seeks further clarification or discussion.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
I opted for a postal vote but I don't want to post it/I'm too late to post it.	<p>If you have had your postal vote sent to the address you are registered at you can drop your ballot paper off on polling day at any polling station within your electoral area. If you are not sure where your nearest polling station is you will need to contact the election office at your local council for further details.</p> <p>You can also drop your postal ballot off at your local council offices – but make sure you do it before they close on 3 May 2007.</p>	If they wish, provide election office contact details.
What is voting by proxy?	Voting by proxy is when you ask someone else to vote on your behalf.	
A relative/friend has been suddenly incapacitated/taken ill. Can I vote on their behalf?	If that person applies to vote by proxy for medical reasons and appoints you as their proxy, you can vote on their behalf. They have up until 5pm on polling day to apply to vote by emergency proxy.	<p>Offer to send them an application to vote by emergency proxy form and take the caller's address. Provide Electoral Registration Officer address to send form to.</p> <p>Remind them of the 5pm on 3 May deadline for applications to vote by emergency proxy.</p>

Issue/question	Answer	Action
How do I get a proxy vote?	I can send you an application form to vote by proxy. You will need to give a reason for wanting to vote by proxy.	<p>Find out why the caller wants to vote by proxy and offer to send them the appropriate proxy vote application form or direct them to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk to download one. Provide Electoral Registration Officer address to send form to.</p> <p>Remind them of the 5pm on 25 April deadline for applications. After 5pm on 25 April, offer to send the emergency proxy form if appropriate.</p>
I've been made the proxy for someone and I don't know how it works.	<p>It's very simple to vote as someone's proxy. You will be sent a proxy poll card with details of where you should go to vote.</p> <p>If you can't attend the polling station you can vote by post as proxy – contact the Electoral Registration Officer for further information.</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. Don't forget to take your proxy poll card – this will make it easier for polling station staff to issue your ballot paper.</p>	Provide ERO contact details if required.

6 How and where to vote

Issue/question	Answer	Action
Date of elections?	3 May 2007	
Polling hours?	7am to 10pm	
How do I find out where my polling station is?	It will be on the poll card that will be delivered to you. Otherwise, contact the election office at your local council.	If they wish, provide contact details for the election office.
What forms of voting are there?	All elections are traditional (polling station), with postal voting on demand. Voters may also apply to vote by proxy.	Refer to Chapter 5, 'Postal and proxy voting'.
How do I fill in the ballot papers?	See voting systems section below.	Elevate complex queries to the election office.
My whole block/street hasn't received their poll cards.	Report it to the election office, however you do not need the poll card to vote – it is for information purposes only	If they wish, provide election office contact details.
What is the number on my ballot paper? or any question about the secrecy of the ballot.	Numbers on ballot papers have been in place since the Ballot Act 1872. They are in place to prevent impersonation but can only be matched up with an elector by Court Order.	Refer caller to the <i>Ballot secrecy</i> factsheet on www.electoralcommission.org.uk . Elevate more complex queries to the election office.
I will be on holiday on the day of election – can I still vote?	You have the option to vote by post or to appoint a proxy to vote on your behalf.	Refer to Chapter 5, 'Postal and proxy voting'.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
I've moved house – how do I ensure I keep my vote for the May elections?	You can register for your new property up to 18 April 2007. After this date you would need to go back to where you are currently registered to vote in these elections. Contact the Electoral Registration Officer for further advice.	<p>Offer to send a registration form out to them or direct them to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk to download one.</p> <p>Provide ERO address to send form to.</p> <p>If they wish, provide ERO contact details.</p>

7 Access issues

Issue/question	Answer	Action
What provision is made for people with disabilities?	Local authorities have to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and other laws. See further details below.	If they wish, provide election office contact details.
What provision is there for blind voters?	Devices to enable blind and partially sighted voters to vote without assistance and large-print versions of ballot papers are available at all polling stations. You can take a companion with you to assist you or ask the Presiding Officer at the polling station for help. Alternately, you could apply for a postal or proxy vote (see Chapter 5, 'Postal and proxy voting'). Contact the election office for more details.	<p>If they wish, provide election office contact details.</p> <p>Offer to supply postal vote application form or direct them to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk to download one.</p> <p>If they wish, provide ERO address to send form to.</p>
What provision is there for non-English speakers?	All ballot papers are in English only – this is the law. However, there may be guidance notes available in other languages.	Direct the caller to www.votescotland.com where information on voting is available in other languages.
What provision is there for wheelchairs?	Each polling station is different. Contact the election office at your local council to find out the accessibility at your polling place and polling station. Alternately, you could apply for a postal or proxy vote (see Chapter 5, 'Postal and proxy voting'). Contact the election office for more details.	<p>If they wish, provide election office contact details.</p> <p>Offer to supply postal vote application form or direct them to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk to download one.</p> <p>If they wish, provide ERO address to send form to.</p>
I need a lift to the polling station.	Unfortunately there is no official provision for lifts to the polling station.	If they wish, provide election office contact details.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
What provision is there for people with learning difficulties?	<p>Provisions vary between local authorities, and you will need to contact them to find out the provisions in your area.</p> <p>However, the Electoral Commission has produced an <i>Easy guide to voting</i> leaflet.</p>	<p>Elevate more complex queries to the election office.</p> <p>Supply <i>Easy guide to voting</i> leaflet if requested.</p>
What about access issues for postal voters?	Contact the local Electoral Registration Officer.	Provide ERO contact details.
Can I get help filling in my postal vote?	You need to contact your local election office to find out.	Provide election office contact details.

8 Elections taking place in your area

Issue/question	Answer	Action
Where can I get information about who is standing?	<p>Information as to which candidates and parties are standing for election will be available following the close of nomination period on 11 April 2007. In many areas, this information will be made available on the council's website.</p> <p>Information about candidates will also probably be covered in national and local press from 12 April 2007.</p>	
How do I find out what candidates stand for?	There is no official website for information about candidates' or parties' policies, although individual candidates or parties may have their own websites. Issues such as this may also be covered in local and national press.	
Who is standing in my constituency and ward?	<p>This information should be published on the council's website after the close of nominations on 11 April 2007.</p> <p>Contact the election office for more information.</p>	If they wish, provide election office contact details.

9 Count, results, etc.

Issue/question	Answer	Action
When are the results announced?	The votes for the Scottish Parliamentary election will be counted electronically after the close of poll on the evening of Thursday 3 May. The results from the local government elections will be announced on Friday 4 May.	
Who decides if recounts are to be conducted?	Recounts are the responsibility of the Returning Officer and may be conducted at their discretion, and will depend on local circumstances at the count.	If they wish, provide elections office contact details.
How does the count work?	<p>Each count is managed locally by the Returning Officer.</p> <p>There are two different voting systems being used – the Additional Member System (AMS) for Scottish Parliamentary elections and the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system for local elections. (Further details can be found in Chapter 11, 'Voting systems').</p> <p>Ballot papers will be scanned into specially designed machines and results will be produced automatically. Candidates and agents will have an important role in witnessing the process, including where decisions are made about doubtful ballot papers.</p> <p>For further details about how the count will be run in your area, contact the election office.</p>	<p>Elevate complex queries to the election office.</p> <p>If they wish, provide election office contact details.</p>

Issue/question	Answer	Action
How can I find out about attending the count?	<p>You can apply to the Electoral Commission to observe at Scottish Parliamentary elections.</p> <p>You may additionally apply to the Returning Officer to observe at the local government elections – contact the election office for details.</p>	<p>Refer caller to the Electoral Commission website, www.electoralcommission.org.uk.</p> <p>If they wish, provide Electoral Commission contact details.</p> <p>If they wish, provide election office contact details.</p>
How can I find out about working at the count?	You need to contact your election office to find out.	If they wish, provide election office contact details.

10 Candidates

Issue/question	Answer	Action
How do I stand as a candidate?	<p>Guidance for candidates is available at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/elections2007.</p> <p>If you have further questions, contact the election office.</p>	Provide contact details for the election office.
Where do I get nomination papers from?	<p>Nomination papers are available from the Returning Officer for the area you are standing in.</p> <p>Nomination papers will also be available on the Electoral Commission website, www.electoralcommission.org.uk/elections2007.</p>	Provide contact details for the election office.
When is the close of nominations?	Close of nominations for both the Scottish Parliamentary and local government elections is 4pm on Wednesday 11 April 2007.	If they wish, provide contact details for the election office.
Any other nomination query.	Should be referred to the election office.	Provide relevant election office contact details.

11 Voting systems

Issue/question	Answer	Action
<p>What voting systems are being used in the May elections?</p>	<p>The Scottish Parliamentary elections will use the Additional Member System, while the local government elections will use the Single Transferable Vote system.</p>	<p>For additional information refer caller to www.votescotland.com or for those with no internet access offer to print out information from the website and send it to them.</p> <p>If they wish, provide contact details for the Electoral Commission.</p>
<p>Why has the voting system for the local government elections changed?</p>	<p>The Scottish Parliament agreed in 2004 to introduce the Single Transferable Vote for local government elections.</p>	<p>For additional information refer caller to www.votescotland.com or for those with no internet access offer to print out information from the website and send it to them.</p> <p>If they wish, provide contact details for the VoteScotland helpline (0800 0141 012).</p>
<p>How many councillors will represent my ward?</p>	<p>The Single Transferable Vote system requires larger wards represented by either three or four councillors.</p> <p>Contact the election office at your council to find out more about your ward.</p>	<p>For additional information refer caller to www.votescotland.com or for those with no internet access offer to print out information from the website and send it to them.</p> <p>If they wish, provide election office contact details.</p>

Issue/question	Answer	Action
<p>Why isn't proportional representation being used in the Scottish Parliamentary elections as well?</p>	<p>It is. The Additional Member System is a form of proportional representation.</p>	<p>For additional information refer caller to www.votescotland.com or for those with no internet access offer to print out information from the website and send it to them.</p> <p>If they wish, provide contact details for the Electoral Commission.</p>
<p>What will the ballot papers look like?</p>	<p>There will be one ballot paper for the Scottish Parliamentary elections.</p> <p>The left-hand (brown) side of the ballot paper contains the list of parties and individual candidates standing for election as regional Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs).</p> <p>The right-hand (lilac) side of the ballot paper will contain the list of candidates standing for election as constituency MSPs.</p> <p>The local government ballot paper will be white.</p>	<p>For additional information refer caller to www.votescotland.com or for those with no internet access offer to print out information from the website and send it to them.</p> <p>If they wish, provide contact details for the Electoral Commission.</p>
<p>How do I fill in my Scottish Parliamentary ballot paper?</p>	<p>For the regional vote on the left-hand side of the ballot paper, mark an 'X' next to the party or individual candidate you want to represent you in your region.</p> <p>For the constituency vote on the right-hand side of the ballot paper, mark an 'X' against the candidate you want to be elected in your constituency.</p>	<p>For additional information refer caller to www.votescotland.com or for those with no internet access offer to print out information from the website and send it to them.</p> <p>If they wish, provide contact details for the Electoral Commission.</p>

Issue/question	Answer	Action
How do I fill in my local government ballot paper?	For the local government ballot paper you number candidates in order of preference. Mark a '1' in the box to the right of the candidate you like best, then a '2' for your second choice, '3' for your third choice, '4' for your fourth choice and so on. You can express preferences for as many or as few candidates as you like.	For additional information refer caller to www.votescotland.com or for those with no internet access offer to print out information from the website and send it to them. If they wish, provide contact details for the VoteScotland helpline (0800 0141 012).
Do I have to number all the candidates on the local government ballot paper?	No – you can vote for as many or as few as you choose.	For additional information refer caller to www.votescotland.com or for those with no internet access offer to print out information from the website and send it to them. If they wish, provide contact details for the VoteScotland helpline (0800 0141 012).
Will there be anyone at the polling place to help me understand how to vote using the different systems?	Most polling places will have an Information Officer who is there to provide impartial help and advice. However, you can also ask the polling station staff for assistance.	

12 The Electoral Commission

Issue/question	Answer	Action
What is the Electoral Commission?	An independent body, not part of government, whose aim is to increase public confidence in the democratic system and knowledge of elections and referendums.	If they want further information, direct them to the Electoral Commission's corporate website, www.electoralcommission.org.uk .

13 Additional materials

The Electoral Commission has developed a range of resources that staff supporting the elections will be able to send out to provide additional information for electors.

These include:

- voter registration forms (EC 1.4)
- postal vote application forms (EC 2.2)
- proxy vote application form (you will need to print this off if required)
- application to vote by emergency proxy form (you will need to print this off if required)
- *Who has my personal details?* leaflet (EC 7.2)
- overseas voter registration form (you will need to print this off if required)
- service voter registration form (you will need to print this off if required)
- other languages and formats of the above

14 List of Commonwealth countries, British Overseas Territories and European Union member states

Commonwealth countries

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

British Overseas Territories

Anguilla	Montserrat
Bermuda	Pitcairn Island
British Antarctic Territory	St Helena
British Indian Ocean Territory	St Helena dependencies (Ascension Island, Tristan da Cunha)
British Virgin islands	South Georgia and the South Islands
Cayman Islands	Turks and Caicos Islands
Falkland Islands	
Gibraltar	

European Union member states

Austria	Germany	The Netherlands
Belgium	Greece	Poland
Cyprus*	Hungary	Portugal
Czech Republic	Italy	Republic of Ireland
Denmark	Latvia	Slovakia
Estonia	Lithuania	Slovenia
Finland	Luxembourg	Spain
France	Malta*	Sweden

* Also Commonwealth countries.