

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission

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Further information on the publication of guidance and supporting resources for the May 2021 polls.

May 2021 polls: update on our public awareness communications plans

Update on our public awareness plans for the May 2021 polls including three planned phases of activity.

EA Bulletins are issued on a regular basis. They are one of our key channels for communicating with Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their staff. Past issues of Bulletins for England, Scotland and Wales are available [here](#). You can also [subscribe to the EA Bulletins](#).

Please [keep us informed](#) of any staff changes within your team. This will help us to keep our mailing lists up-to-date.

We are sending you this newsletter as it contains important information about the Electoral Commission's work which is relevant to you. The newsletter forms part of the Electoral Commission's public task which has its basis in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. We will manage your personal information and contact details in line with the General Data Protection Regulation and UK data protection legislation as outlined in our privacy notice (<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/privacy-notice>)



Issue 269 (Scotland) – 8 October 2020

May 2021 polls: publication of guidance

We have now updated and published our core guidance for [Returning Officers](#) and for [candidates and agents](#) ahead of the scheduled Scottish Parliament election in May 2021.

The change log at the front of each section of the differing parts of guidance has been updated to reflect the amendments that have been made.

As per [Bulletin 266](#), this core guidance will continue to be available in its current (non-date specific) format and has not been amended to reflect specific challenges of COVID-19. Instead we are providing supplementary guidance and resources that reflect the specific requirements of managing the 2021 polls in a COVID-19 secure way. The first piece of supplementary guidance on [planning for the polls](#) has already been published, with further resources to follow covering the key parts of the electoral process such as the management of nominations and absent voting arrangements, as well as the conduct of polling day and the verification and count.

We are also making revisions to some of our existing supporting resources for the above polls. Some of these resources, such as briefing templates and FAQ documents, will be updated to include COVID-19 specific information. We will update you in a future Bulletin when these are available.

May 2021 polls: update on our public awareness communications plans

Further to [Bulletin 266](#), we can now provide you with more information on our public awareness plans for the May 2021 polls and the phased approach we will be taking. This phased approach will enable us to be as responsive as we can be in the current environment, while still supporting our wide range of stakeholders.

Phase one: mid-October to end December 2020

We are currently developing communication resources to support your activity locally, to save you having to create resources and to

help ensure consistent messaging. These resources will be designed to communicate that:

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- Polling stations will be safe places to vote
- There are a range of voting options
- Those who would prefer to vote by post should apply early

We are aiming to publish the majority of the additional resources by Friday 16 October and we will notify you in a future bulletin when they have been made available. We will provide:

- Template press release covering the messaging described above
- Q&A document to support you in responding to key likely questions, where a common approach across the sector will be helpful
- Posters, web banners and social media images

During this phase, we will also engage with potential partner organisations in civic society, who can provide us with direct routes to reach some of the more vulnerable audiences.

Phase two: January to mid-March 2021

Activity in phase two, which is likely to include press and partnership work, will be developed during phase one and informed by intelligence on:

- the development of the public health situation
- the level of public response to phase one communications

Phase three: mid-March to polling day

We will be running our 'Got 5?' voter registration campaign at this time across Scotland. Advertising will run across major multimedia online and offline channels, with the full strategy to be developed over the coming weeks. It will coincide with a voter information booklet delivery to all households, and specific activity targeted at newly enfranchised groups.

Alongside that, we will be working ever-more closely with partner organisations, including councils and EROs. Those relationships will be especially key in delivering not only registration messages, but also voter information messages which may vary for different demographics. We also plan to provide new stakeholder resources in February for both the voter registration and voter information stages of our campaign.

This will be supported by information on our website and social media channels, as well as press and PR coverage in key areas.

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