

Return of candidate spending for constituency and individual regional candidates: Scottish Parliamentary Elections (Long Campaign)

Who this form is for:

This form is for constituency and independent regional candidates and their agents contesting the Scottish Parliamentary election. It must be completed by the candidate's agent, or the candidate if you are acting as your own agent.

This form is for recording the details of campaign spending that is used during the period known as the long campaign, which begins on the 6 January 2021 and ends on the day you officially become a candidate.

The earliest date you can officially become a candidate is 25 March 2021.

You will become a candidate on this date if you or others have already announced your intention to stand. If your intention to stand has not been announced by that date, you will officially become a candidate on the earlier of the date you or another person announce your intention to stand, or the date when you are nominated.

Before completing the form, you should read our guidance for candidates and agents which is available on our website:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/scottish-parliamentary-elections>

More information about when you officially become a candidate is available in our [guidance for candidates and agents](#)

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Explanatory notes

Candidate identification mark (all forms)

As there are a number of forms that must be completed, it is important that the full set of documents in your return can be identified as yours.

In order to do this, please add an identification mark to the long and short campaign forms, the candidate's declaration and the agent's declaration.

You can choose anything as your identification mark. Many candidates use their initials with a combination of numbers or letters that reference the election or electoral area.

Whatever you choose, it is important to remember to use the **same** identification mark on all of the forms in your return.

Main form: Section 1 – Details of candidate and election

Please provide the details required under this section.

The table below explains how to calculate your spending limit

Candidate	Spending limit
Constituency	£21,500 plus: 4.2p per registered elector in a burgh constituency or 6.3p per registered elector in a county constituency
Independent Regional candidate	The total of the maximum spending limits for each constituency in the region you are contesting

The number of registered electors in a particular constituency is based on the electoral register as it stands on the last date for publication of the notice of election. Your local elections office will be able to provide elector numbers and tell you whether your constituency is a burgh or county constituency.

You can find contact details for your local elections office on [our website](#).

Main form: Section 2 – Details of election agent

If you have appointed an election agent, you must provide the details requested in this section. You should also indicate the date on which the agent was appointed. If you are a candidate acting as your own agent, please place a mark in the relevant box.

Main form: Section 3a and 3b – Summary of spending and the worksheets for spending categories

There are separate worksheets for each category of spending. More detailed information about the spending categories is available in our [guidance for candidates and agents](#).

You must provide a statement of each item of campaign spending you have used during the short campaign on the relevant worksheets for each spending category.

If you have no spending to report for a particular category, you do not need to complete the worksheet, but you must enter 0 (zero) for the relevant category of spending in the summary table in Section 3b of the main form.

If you are completing the Microsoft Excel version of this form, you can insert as many rows as you require on each worksheet to record each item of campaign spending. You should insert the totals from the worksheets into the relevant part under section 3.

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The categories of spending are:

Spending category	Description
A – Advertising	This includes advertising of any nature, e.g. posters, or advertisements in newspapers and online. It includes agency fees, design costs and any costs associated with preparing, producing and distributing advertising.
B – Unsolicited material to electors	This includes unsolicited material to electors, whether addressed by name or not. It includes design costs and all other costs in connection with preparing, producing and distributing such material. The cost of postage should be included except for election addresses sent using the candidate's free post entitlement.
C – Transport	This includes transport costs for you and your campaigners. For example, hire cars or public transport.
D – Public meetings	This includes costs in connection with people's attendance at meetings, the hire of premises for the purposes of meetings and the provision of goods, services or facilities at meetings.
E – Agent and other staff costs	This includes the agent's salary, or the costs of staff seconded to you by their employer. You do not need to include time spent on your campaign by volunteers.
F – Accommodation and administration	<p>This includes the agent's salary, or the costs of staff seconded to you by their employer. You do not need to include time spent on your campaign by volunteers</p> <p>This includes the general costs of campaign office rental and utilities such as telephone bills and stationery</p>

Each item of spending should be allocated to one category only. Most items will be easy to categorise, but others may appear to fit more than one category. In these cases, you should make an honest and reasonable assessment as to which category fits best.

Generally, items should be placed under the purpose that they naturally fall into, e.g. the transport costs of the candidate should be included under transport even if the transport is in connection with participation at a public meeting.

How to complete the spending category worksheets

For every item of spending on every worksheet you complete, please provide the following information:

- An item number for each payment. The first payment reported should be '1' and the items should be numbered consecutively. Item numbers should be unique because they are used to cross-reference with other sections of the form and supporting invoices/receipts.
- Confirmation of whether an invoice or receipt has been submitted. You must provide invoices or receipts for each item of spending with a value of more than £20 (except for notional spending). You should include the relevant item number on each invoice or receipt.
- Details of the item or service used, which should include the name and address of the supplier where this not on an invoice submitted with the return.
- The name of the person who made the payment, for example, the election agent.
- The dates on which the expense in relation to the item was incurred, the invoice or receipt was received and the date on which the invoice was paid.
- The value of the item of campaign spending, including notional spending with a value of more than £50
- The amount paid for the item, if different from its value
- Confirmation of whether the item is an unpaid or disputed claim. You will need to provide additional information about items that are unpaid or disputed.

You can find out more about notional spending in our [guidance for candidates and agents](#)

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Unpaid claims

Use the unpaid claims worksheet to tell us more about claims that remain unpaid on the day you submit your return. Please ensure that you use the same item number to cross-reference the two entries in the different worksheets. You must include the details of the court to which you have applied, or will apply to make a late payment.

Disputed claims

Use the disputed claims worksheet to tell us more about any claims that are disputed. Please ensure you use the same item number to cross-reference the two entries in the different worksheets. You must provide information about the nature of the dispute and any action that you are taking.

When you have completed all the relevant worksheets, complete the tables in Section 3a and 3b on the main form.

The totals for election spending in section 3a 'Types of payment' and 3b 'Categories of spending' should be the same. If your totals are not the same, you have made a mistake in your calculations. You should check the information you have entered and your calculations.

Unpaid claims are invoices that are not received by the agent within 21 days of the result of the election.

Disputed claims are invoices that are not paid by the agent within 28 days of the election result

More information about dealing with unpaid claims is available in our [guidance for candidates and agents](#)

Main form: Section 4 – Personal Expenses

Personal expenses are the reasonable travel and living expenses of the candidate for the purpose of campaigning in the election. Personal expenses also include any expenses that are reasonably attributable to a candidate's disability.

Personal expenses do not count against the candidate's spending limit and they should not duplicate anything already declared under section 3.

Use the personal expenses worksheet to provide the requested details about the candidate's personal expenses. When you have completed the worksheet, enter the total amount of personal expenses in Section 4 of the main form.

Other expenses

At Scottish Parliamentary elections there are a number of expenses that must be reported as usual, but which do not count towards the spending limit. These are:

- reasonable security costs at public events
reasonable costs for translation to languages other than English
- personal expenses, including costs relating to the candidate's disability, that are paid by the agent rather than the candidate
- costs relating to the disability of someone who is not the candidate

Use the other expenses worksheet to report these expenses, including the category of spending they fall under (i.e. public meetings, transport etc).

Expenses reported in this section do not count against the candidate's spending limit and they should not duplicate anything already declared under section 3.

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Submitting your return

Print each worksheet that you have completed and the main form. The return for the long and short campaigns must be submitted to the relevant Returning Officer by the election agent within 35 calendar days of the election result being declared.

If you have appointed an election agent, the forms must be accompanied by a declaration signed by the agent to verify the return.

Within seven working days of submitting the spending return, a declaration signed by the candidate must also be submitted to the relevant Returning Officer.

If the candidate is outside the UK when the declaration is due, the deadline is extended to 14 days after they come back. If you are acting as your own agent, you must complete the candidate's declaration and submit it within 7 working days of submitting your return.

Important

If the 35 day period ends on a weekend or bank holiday, the deadline is extended until the working day.

Where can I get further advice?

- Scotland: 0333 103 1928
infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk