

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission



Issue 289 (Scotland) – 11 May 2021

May 2021 election: post-election feedback and data collection

The counts for the Scottish Parliament election and other counts across Great Britain have now been completed and the results are in for all of the May 2021 elections. This was one of the most complex sets of polls held in recent times, with the additional and far-ranging challenges presented by the COVID pandemic. We know how challenging it has been to plan and deliver elections in this context, but thanks to the hard work, careful planning and dedication of election teams across the country over many months, voters, campaigners and polling station staff were able to take part safely and confidently.

While a detailed process of information gathering and evaluation will follow, our initial assessment is that the polls were well-run. Current evidence indicates that they took place without significant or widespread administrative issues, making best use of new and adapted processes to support COVID-safety, and supporting the participation of the electorate in these important democratic events. This apparent smooth-running of the democratic process is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the electoral community.

We know the process was not without its difficulties, and we will work with you to explore the issues you faced and understand the impact they had on the elections as a whole.

We will be reporting formally on the delivery of the polls in the autumn, so that important lessons can be captured and learned. We hope that you and your colleagues will share your experience of delivering these elections to inform our reporting. Our regulatory work also begins now, to support parties and campaigners to comply with the campaign finance requirements that provide for public transparency.

Electoral administration feedback

Thank you to everyone who has already completed the [survey](#). If you would still like to give us your feedback, the deadline for doing so is Friday 11 June.

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Information on how to submit feedback and data following last week's election.

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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

The survey is similar to those issued after previous polls and seeks your views on various aspects of the administration of the election, including voter registration, nominations, polling day and the counts, as well as your views on the guidance and support provided by the Commission. This year we would also like to hear how you dealt with the COVID-related impacts in your area and how these have affected your work during the polls.

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/privacy-notice>

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, you may [unsubscribe](#) at any time.

Should you have any queries about the survey, please contact researchsurvey@electoralcommission.org.uk.

Data collection

We will be sending out emails tomorrow (12 May) inviting you to fill in data through our online data portal. As set out in [Bulletin 287](#), this email will be sent from research@electoralcommission.org.uk to your generic local authority elections email address (in the majority of cases).

If you do not receive an email you can look at the [user guide](#) which at the end includes the list of the generic local authority election email addresses we have used to contact you. If you can see we have the wrong email address (or the right email address but you don't receive an email), please [contact us](#).

Most local authorities are already registered on the portal (from the 2019 UKPGE) so you can access it [here](#), although you will need to reset your password first.

The deadline for submission of data is Monday 21 June 2021. If you have any questions, please contact us at research@electoralcommission.org.uk.

May 2021 elections: polling place staff survey

As highlighted in [Bulletin 287](#), we are working with two academics to collect feedback from polling place staff who worked at the elections on 6 May, to help us better understand the impact of the COVID-related measures in place this year.

Thank you to everyone who has already helped us by sharing this survey with polling place staff. The survey is open until 11 June and we would be grateful if those who haven't already shared the survey could email a [link to the survey](#) to polling place staff who worked on 6 May.

If you have any queries about the survey, please contact researchsurvey@electoralcommission.org.uk.

May 2021 election: forwarding of candidate spending returns to the Commission

The Commission will be collecting copies of candidate spending returns for constituency and independent regional list candidates at the Scottish Parliament election.

We would be grateful if Returning Officers could please provide us with:

- Electronic PDF copies of constituency and independent regional candidate spending returns, declarations and any

accompanying invoices and/or receipts delivered to you after the election, to candidates@electoralcommission.org.uk

- Notification of any candidates who have not submitted a spending return at the point you send PDF copies of the returns to us
- Any passwords you have used to lock the PDF files. These should be sent in a separate email

There is no statutory deadline for you to provide the returns to us, but we would be grateful if you could do so by no later than **6 August 2021** to enable us to publish key data from these returns.

Please do not send:

- Paper copies of the returns
- Originals of the returns: you must retain these for public inspection for two years after their receipt

Further information on candidate spending returns can be found in Part F of our [guidance for Returning Officers](#).

If you have any questions, please contact infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk.

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