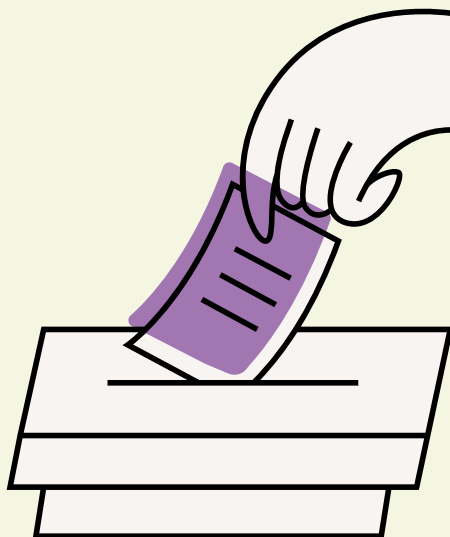


Politics and elections: useful words to know



connecting
equalities

outside the box

Useful words and phrases

When talking about politics and elections, many words can be unfamiliar, especially if English isn't your first language. This booklet provides definitions of the most common words or phrases you might hear around election time or when talking about your local area.

Constituency:

There are 73 areas across Scotland called 'Scottish Parliament constituencies'.

There are 59 constituency areas in Scotland for the UK Parliament.

Constituent:

A constituent is someone who lives in a constituency, each constituency differs in its total number of constituents.

Region:

Scotland has 8 big areas called Scottish Parliament regions. Seven people are elected as regional MSPs for each region.



MSP:

This is short for Member of the Scottish Parliament. People vote for MSPs to represent them in the Scottish Parliament.

MP:

This is short for Member of Parliament. MPs are elected to represent their constituents in the House of Commons.

Councillor:

A Councillor's role is to represent their ward, an area within a constituency. Councillors bridge the gap between the community and the Council.

Election:

This is when people can vote for who they want to run the country or region. There are elections for your MP, MSP and Councillor, elections fall on Thursdays.

Surgery:

MPs, MSPs and Councillors hold surgeries in their constituencies to give constituents an opportunity to meet them and discuss any matters of concern. These can be by phone, online or in local community buildings.

Electoral register:

This is a list of people who can vote in an election. You can see the list at your local library.

Polling place:

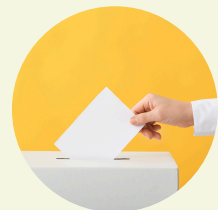
This is where you can go and vote in person. Polling places are usually primary schools or community halls.

Ballot Paper:

This is the sheet of paper you are given when you enter a polling place where you cast your vote. For each type of election there will be a different type of ballot paper. You will either put a number next to the candidate you wish to vote for or you will mark a cross.

Proxy Vote:

This is when you allow someone else to vote on your behalf. This might be a trusted friend or family member. To use proxy voting you will need to complete an application form and send it to your local electoral registration office by a set deadline.



Postal vote:

You can vote by post if you don't want to or cannot vote in person at a polling station. You can apply online or by post for a postal vote and you must apply no later than 11 working days before the election.

Voter ID/photo ID:

There is a new rule that requires voters to show photo ID when they vote at polling stations. This only applies to UK General Elections and you will not need photo ID for Scottish Parliament elections or local Council elections.

Manifesto:

Before an election a political party will publish a manifesto. This will contain a set of policies that the party stands for and would like to introduce if they are elected into Government.

First past the post:

MPs are voted into the UK Parliament through an election system called First Past the Post (FPTP). The candidate with the most votes, wins and the candidate only needs one more vote than another to win.

Living in the Scotland you are represented in both the Scottish Parliament by your MSPs and in the UK Parliament by your MP. There are different areas that the two Parliaments can make laws about, these are called devolved and reserved matters.

Devolved matters:

These are things that the Scottish Parliament can make laws about. This includes: the economy, education, health, justice, rural affairs, housing, environment, equal opportunities, consumer advocacy and advice, transport and taxation.

Reserved matters:

These are things that the Scottish Parliament cannot make laws about, like immigration, foreign affairs, nationality, defence and national security.



Consultation:

Consultations are usually open to the public and organisations and take place at a stage when there is scope to influence a policy. Consultations normally last for at least 12 weeks and allow Government to make informed decisions on policy.

Health Boards:

NHS Scotland provides public health care through 14 health boards across Scotland. Each board is responsible for the delivery of health care and services to the local population.

Petition:

You can create or sign a petition that asks for a change of law or policy. After 10,000 signatures the government must issue a response.

CPG:

Cross-party groups (CPGs) are groups of MSPs and other people who are interested in a subject or issue. There are CPGs on a whole host of subjects.

Notes

My MP:

My MSPs:

My Councillors:

My ward:



Connecting Equalities is a Scottish Government funded project for Equalities and Human Rights. We work alongside diverse groups of older people connecting their everyday experiences to rights and equalities to help shape what matters to them for a good life.

To read more about the project and see our other resources check out our website:
<https://otbds.org/projects/connecting-equalities/>

