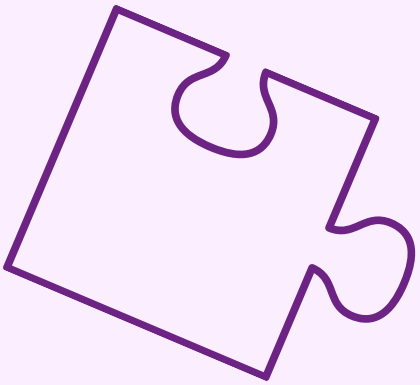
What's important to you? – Scottish Parliament Elections



There are lots of things to do and think about before elections. It's handy to imagine all these things as jigsaw pieces. Each piece is a practical step you need to take to be able to take part in an election or something to think about before you to go the ballot box.

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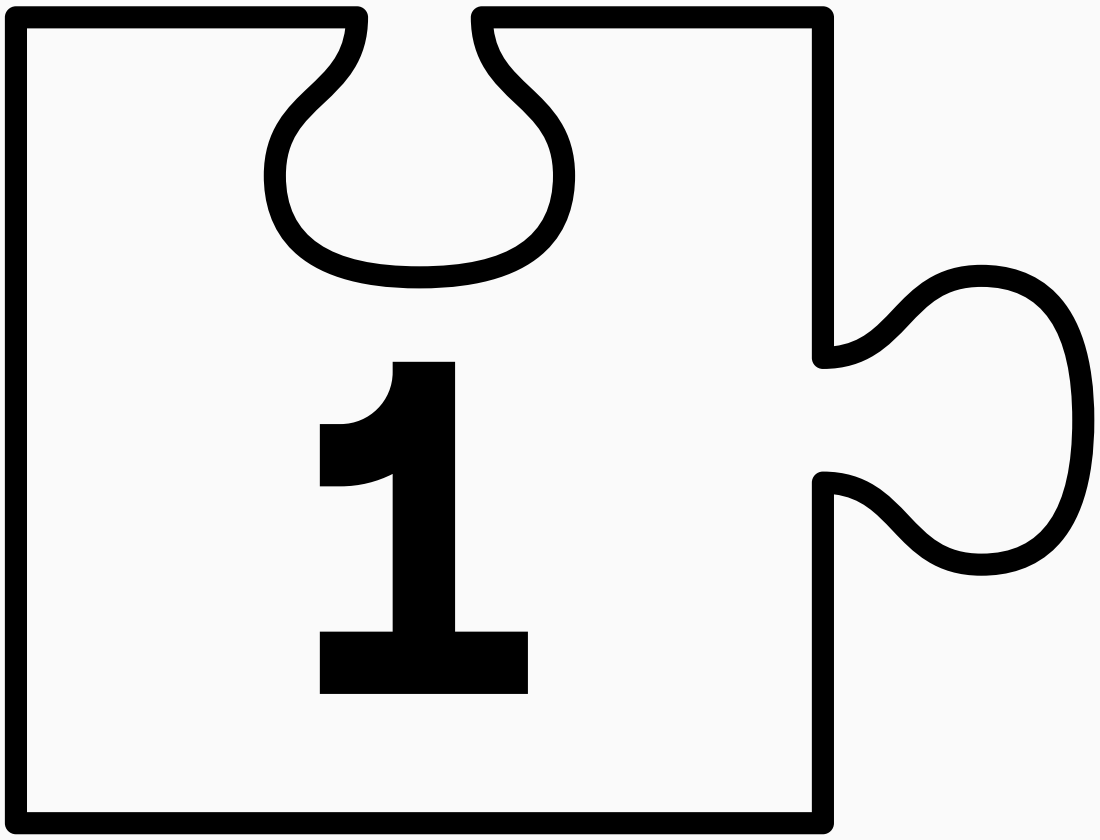
Register to vote

You can register to vote on the UK Government website: https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

You can use the register to vote service to:

- Get on the electoral register so you can vote in elections
- Update your name, address or nationality by registering again with your new details (if you live in the UK)

If you are unsure whether you are eligible to register to vote, or which elections you can vote in, you can contact your local Electoral Registration Officer (ERO). You can do this by going online to: electoralcommission.org.uk/voter, or you call the helpline on 0800 328 0280 to find contact details for your Electoral Registration Officer.



Get your voter ID ready

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.** You **will not** need photo ID for Scottish Parliament elections or local Council elections, but it is handy to get sorted ahead of the next General Election.

If you don't have one of the accepted forms of Photo ID, you can apply for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate. This is if you:

- Don't have an accepted form of photo ID
- Aren't sure whether your photo ID still looks like you

You can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate on the UK Government website: https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-idvoter-authority-certificate.

Find out who the candidates are

You can find out who your local candidates are for elections through your local Council. Their names and parties will be posted online, made available in Council buildings and you might also see notices in local magazines or newspapers.

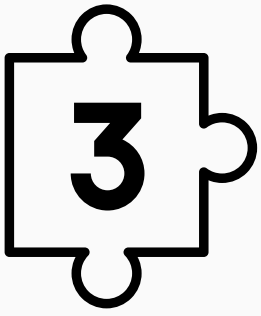
You can put your postcode in the Who can I vote for website to find out: https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/

There are 129 MSPs in the Scottish Parliament and you are represented by 8 of them. One MSP is your constituency MSP and 7 are from the wider electoral region you live in.

The eight electoral regions are:

- Central Scotland
- Glasgow
- Highlands and Islands
- Lothian
- Mid Scotland and Fife
- North East Scotland
- South Scotland
- West Scotland

For Scottish Parliament elections you will have 2 votes. You vote once for your constituency MSP and then once for a political party to represent the wider region you live in. You don't need to vote for the same party with your votes. For example one vote can be for a constituency MSP from 'Political Party Purple' and then your second vote can be for 'Political Party Indigo'.



Manifestos and flyers

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

Leading up to elections you will get various flyers or letters from the candidates. These will detail their values, ideas and more information about their plans.

Each candidate will have a social media page or website where you can read more about them or get in contact with them if you have any questions.

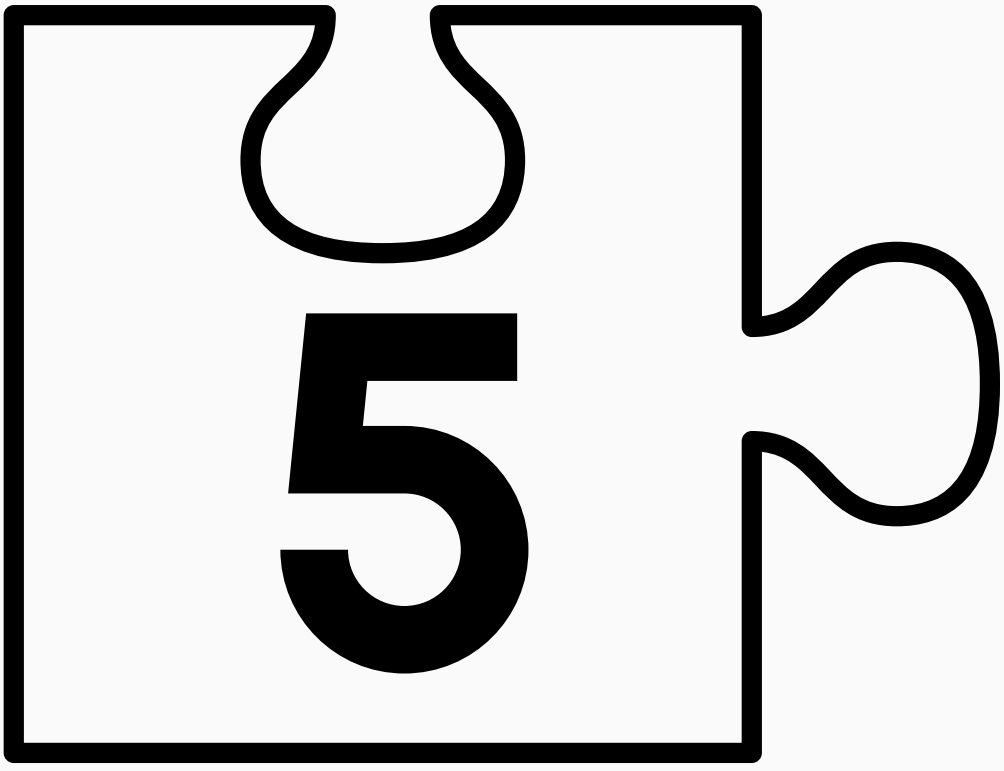
Find out your polling station

A polling place or polling station is where you can go and vote in person. Polling places are usually primary schools or community halls.

You will be sent a poll card just before an election which tells you when to vote and at which polling station.

You can only vote at the polling station location on your card and you do not need to take your poll card with you.

Polling stations will be open from 7am to 10pm on the day of an election.

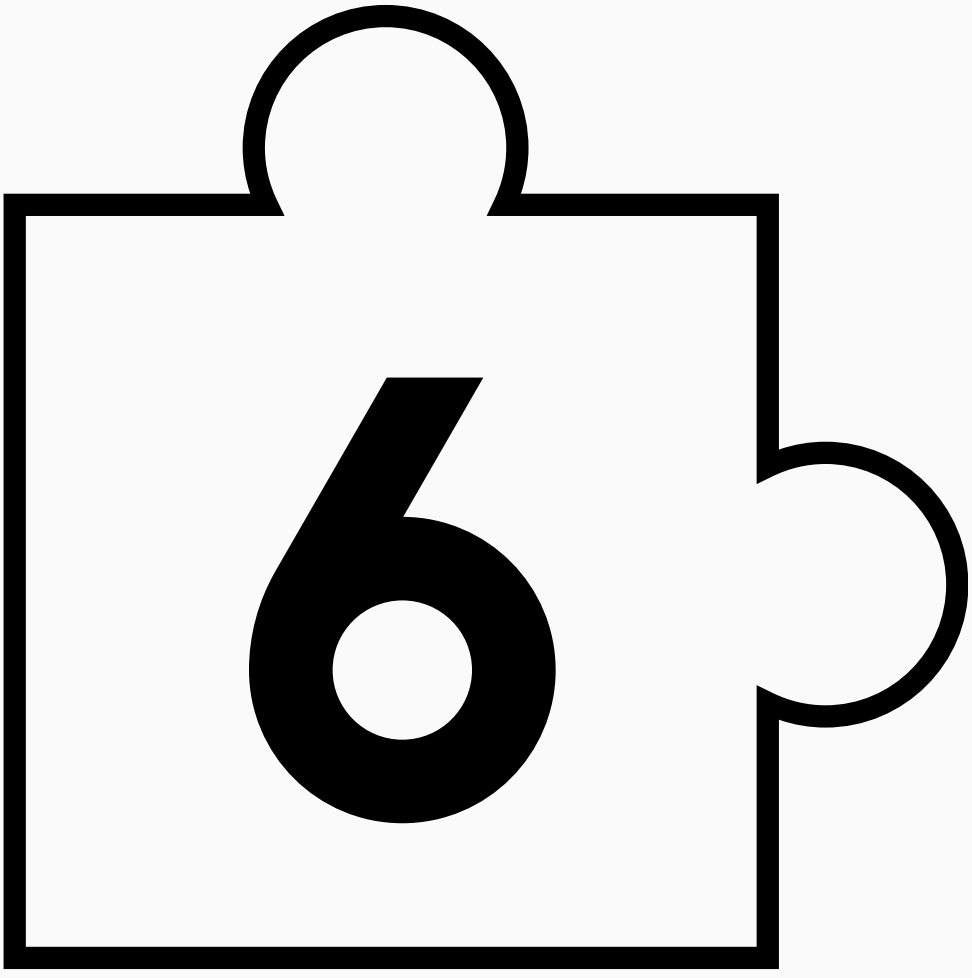


Ballot paper

When you arrive at your polling station you will say your name and address to the staff inside. The staff are there to help you, if you have any questions or concerns you can ask them.

You will then be given a ballot paper which contains a list of the people, parties or options you can vote for.

You will go into a polling booth to vote in private. There are instructions inside the booth which explain how to vote.



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/

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