

Voting in the 2022 Scottish council elections

FAQ for New Scots

Can I vote in the 2022 council elections?

Council elections are taking place on Thursday 5 May 2022. If you are a qualifying foreign citizen resident in Scotland who is 16 or over and registered to vote, you can participate in the elections. A qualifying foreign is a citizen of another country who has permission to enter or stay in the UK, or who does not need such permission.

If you have questions about registering to vote you can contact your local Electoral Registration Office. Find their contact details by entering your postcode at electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information.

What do councils do?

When you vote in these elections, you are voting for candidates who are standing to be elected as councillors. Councillors will represent you on your local council. Councils are responsible for making decisions about how money is spent to provide local public services. These include education, social care, housing, leisure services, rubbish and recycling collection, and more.

Each council in Scotland is divided into smaller areas called ‘wards’. Each ward will be represented by up to five councillors.

Why should I register to vote?

If you want to have your say about the issues that matter to you and who you want to represent you in your council, you need to register to vote.

How do I register to vote?

You can register online at gov.uk/register-to-vote. It only takes five minutes, and all you need is a few details, including your National Insurance number and date of birth. The

deadline for registering to vote in the 2022 local government election is **midnight on 18 April 2022**.

If you don't have a National Insurance Number, you need to state this on your registration application then continue to submit it. Your local Electoral Registration Officer may then contact you to ask you to provide documentary evidence to prove your identity.

If you need help with registering, you can contact your local Electoral Registration Office. Find their contact details by entering your postcode at electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information.

Do I have to vote?

In all elections in Scotland, your vote belongs to you. You can decide whether or not you want to vote and who you want to vote for. It's illegal for anyone to influence you to vote a certain way against your will.

How do I decide who to vote for?

The list of candidates standing at an election in each council ward is usually available on the council website a couple of weeks before the election. You should think about who you want to represent you. They might share your views or prioritise issues that you think are important.

Where do I go to vote?

Everyone in your household who is registered to vote will receive a poll card before the election. Your poll card tells you where you need to go to vote.

What happens when I go to vote?

When you arrive at the polling place a member of staff will ask for your name and address and then give you your ballot paper. You will then be directed to a polling booth where you can fill out your ballot paper in private.

For this election you vote using numbers. Your ballot paper will list all the candidates standing to be councillors in your ward. You will be asked to number the candidates in order of your choice using 1, 2, 3 and so on. You don't have to number every candidate. If you make a mistake on your ballot paper, you can ask for a new one.

Your ballot paper will look similar to this:

<small>[NAME OF COUNCIL] – [NAME OF WARD]</small> <small>[Number to be elected] of the candidates listed below will be elected.</small> <small>You can make as many or as few choices as you wish.</small>	
Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice .	
Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice .	
Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice . And so on.	
ANDERSON Hans 57 Easter Road, Anytown Rowan Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
CRANSTON Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown Beech Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
FLEMING Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAMILTON Flora 45 Hill Place, Anytown Willow Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
KUMAR Kuldip 3 Castle Wynd, Anytown Elm Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
MACDONALD Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Ave, Anytown Oak Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
MACKENZIE Robert William Sutherland 192 Blackhall Road, Anytown Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>
MASTERS Susan Caroline 93 Holyrood Road, Anytown Sycamore Party	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is my vote kept secret?

Yes. Your vote is yours alone and you do not have to tell anyone how you have voted. Once you have put your vote in the ballot box, or returned it by post, then it will be kept safe and secure until all the votes are ready to be counted. All the ballots papers are mixed together at the count so no one will be able to tell how you have voted.

I am concerned about Covid-19, will it be safe to vote in person?

Polling places will be safe places to vote. Hygiene and distancing measures may be in place to help you stay safe at the polling place. These could include hand sanitiser, floor markings and face coverings.

If you would prefer to vote by post or for someone else to vote on your behalf, you need to be registered to vote first and then you can apply to vote by post or proxy. For more information on postal and proxy voting go to electoralcommission.org.uk/voter or contact your local Electoral Registration Office.

Where can I find more information?

You can find more information about voting at electoralcommission.org.uk/voter, or by calling the Electoral Commission's helpline on 0800 3 280 280.