

#READYTOVOTE

A TOOLKIT TO HELP YOU ENCOURAGE 15 – 17 YEAR
OLDS IN SCOTLAND TO REGISTER TO VOTE



THE 2016 SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ELECTION IS THE FIRST IN WHICH 16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS CAN VOTE

People who are 16 or over on 5 May 2016 will be able to vote but they need to register first.

Help them get **#ReadyToVote** by running a registration event in your school, college, or youth centre during March 2016.

Let the young people of Scotland know: their opinion matters; their voice should be heard; and registering to vote can be the first step in influencing the future of their country.

This toolkit provides you with everything you need to run your registration event.



partners@electoralcommission.org.uk



electoralcommission.org.uk/partnershipworking



[@electoralcommuk](https://twitter.com/electoralcommuk)

RUNNING YOUR REGISTRATION EVENT

1. Select a day in March 2016 to run your event.
2. Use the copy and images in this toolkit to promote your event.
3. On the day, make sure your young people have access to the internet and the registration website at gov.uk/register-to-vote.
4. Start a discussion to get young people thinking about why they should register and vote.
5. Use the step-by-step guide to registering online and the frequently asked questions in this toolkit to help your young people register.

PROMOTING YOUR REGISTRATION EVENT

We encourage you to promote your event in as many ways as possible, including:

- publishing content and images on your website and in your newsletters, emails and online portals
- sharing content through your text message and social media channels
- displaying and distributing posters

Everything you need to do this is in this toolkit.

WEBSITES, NEWSLETTERS, EMAILS AND ONLINE PORTALS

You can use the text and images below on your website and in newsletters, emails and online portals.

TEXT

Get [#ReadyToVote](#)

The 2016 Scottish Parliament election is the first in which 16 and 17 year olds can vote.

This means that if you're 16 or over on 5 May 2016, you'll be able to vote but you need to register first. It only takes a few minutes to register online.

On <INSERT DATE> we will be helping 15-17 year olds get [#ReadyToVote](#) by running a registration event at <INSERT LOCATION>.

You'll need your date of birth and National Insurance number to register (you only need your National Insurance number if you are 16 or over), which you can find on official documents such as letters from HM Revenue and Customs. Otherwise, for help you can visit:

gov.uk/lost-national-insurance-number. Don't worry - if you are not yet 16 you won't need your National Insurance number to register.

WEBSITES, NEWSLETTERS, EMAILS AND ONLINE PORTALS

IMAGES

DOWNLOAD IMAGES

You can download the images below
to make your content stand out.



WEBSITES, NEWSLETTERS, EMAILS AND ONLINE PORTALS

TEXT MESSAGES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

You can use the text below in your social media channels or in text messages at different times, to help your young people get ready for your event.

TEXT

A WEEK BEFORE

On <INSERT DATE> we will be helping 15-17 year olds register so they are **#ReadyToVote** in the 2016 Scottish Parliament election. If you have it, please bring along your National Insurance number so you can register on the day.

THREE DAYS BEFORE

Remember that on <INSERT DATE> we are helping 15-17 year olds register so they are **#ReadyToVote** in the 2016 Scottish Parliament election. If you have it, please bring along your National Insurance number so you can register to vote.

THE DAY BEFORE

Tomorrow we're helping 15-17 year olds register so they are **#ReadyToVote** in the 2016 Scottish Parliament election. If you have it, please bring along your National Insurance number so you can register.

THE DAY AFTER

If you missed out on registering to vote yesterday you can get **#ReadyToVote** by visiting: gov.uk/register-to-vote.

WEBSITES, NEWSLETTERS, EMAILS AND ONLINE PORTALS

DOWNLOAD POSTERS

Download and print our poster as it is or add your logo to it first.



START THE CONVERSATION

WHY SHOULD YOUNG PEOPLE REGISTER AND VOTE?

1. Ask your young people to get into groups and discuss why they should register and vote. You can use the discussion points below to get started.
2. Share the debate as a class and decide on three points to convince other young people to register.
3. Please send these to Jonathan Mitchell at the Electoral Commission (jmitchell@electoralcommission.org.uk) where they will be used to shape future campaigns.

DISCUSSION POINTS: WHY SHOULD I REGISTER AND VOTE?

- Voting gives you a say on who represents you. At any election in your area, candidate(s) will be selected to represent you whether you vote or not. If you're registered, you'll have the chance to have a say on who represents you by voting. Some people are quick to say when they disagree with politicians, but if you don't register and don't vote, you won't be able to have your say.
- Elections can be called at short notice, and if you're not registered you won't be able to vote.
- Across the world people have died fighting for the right to vote, by registering to vote you'll be showing that you think that right is important.
- Think about it this way, less than 100 years ago, people were killed during their struggles to get the vote for women. In South Africa, not until the end of apartheid in 1994 were black people able to vote for the first time. Today, many people across the world are still denied the right to vote.
- Voting gives you a say on important issues that affect you. Everything from tuition fees to climate change. You may think you don't want to vote now, but if an issue comes up that you want to have your say on, if you're registered you'll have the chance to vote on it. Remember, registering to vote doesn't mean you have to vote; it just means you can if you want to.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO REGISTERING ONLINE

The steps below show you the process you'll need to guide young people through to help them register online.

1. Go to gov.uk/register-to-vote
2. Click Start now:
A green rectangular button with the text "Start now" in white, followed by a white right-pointing chevron.
3. **Q1 - Where do you live?** Click on the country you live in and then click Continue.
4. **Q2 - What is your nationality?** Click on all options that are relevant to you and then click Continue.
You can also click on "**Help with nationality**" if you require more assistance.
5. **Q3 - What is your date of birth?** Enter your date of birth then click Continue.
6. **Q4 - What is your full name?** Add your full name (including any middle names) then click Continue.

7. **Q5 - What is your National Insurance number?** Type in your National Insurance number and click Continue. If you do not know your National Insurance number click on: “**I don’t know my National Insurance number**”. You’ll be presented with the following screen:

▼ [I don't know my National Insurance number](#)

You can:

- look for your National Insurance number on payslips or official letters about tax, pensions or benefits
- [ask for a reminder through the post](#)

If you can't provide a National Insurance number you will need to explain why. You'll also need to send copies of identity documents through the post. This could delay your name getting on the electoral register.

[I can't provide a National Insurance number](#)

Why can't you provide a National Insurance number?

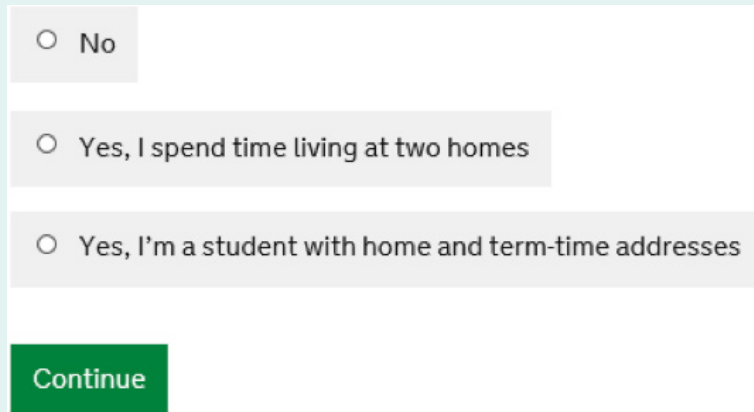
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v

[Continue](#)

If you cannot provide a National Insurance number you should type the reason why in the box provided. Click Continue.

8. **Q6 - What is your address?** Use the postcode finder to find your address. If you can't find your address click on "I can't find my address in the list" and type in your address manually.
9. **Q7 - Do you also live at a second address?** You will be presented with three options:



The screenshot shows a form with three radio button options and a green 'Continue' button at the bottom. The options are:

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, I spend time living at two homes
- ☐ Yes, I'm a student with home and term-time addresses

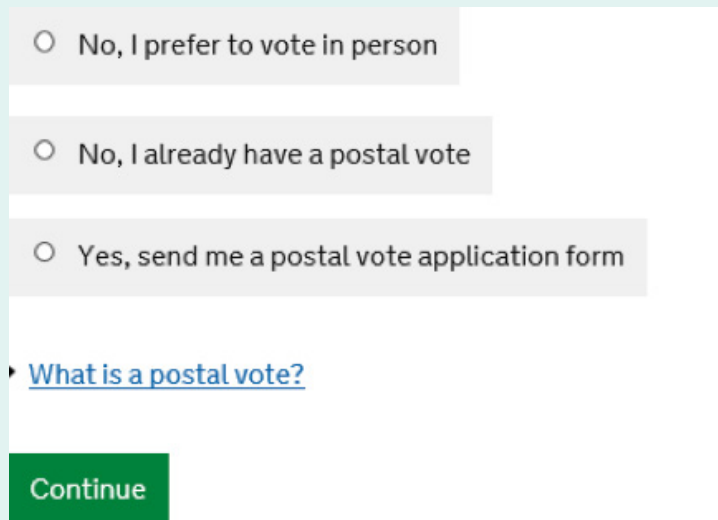
Continue

Click the one that applies to you and then click Continue.

10. **Q8 - Have you moved out of another address in the last 12 months?** This is so your details can be removed from the register at your previous address. Only give an address if you've moved out permanently.
11. **Q9 - Do you want to include your name and address on the open register?** The open register is an extract of the electoral register, but is not used for elections. It can be bought by any person, company or organisation. For example, it is used by businesses and charities to confirm name and address details.

If you want to opt out of the open register, check the **"No, I don't want my name and address on the open register"** box.

12. **Q10 - Do you want to apply for a postal vote?** Most people vote in person at a polling station. But if you prefer to vote by post, you can be sent an application form. Select one of the three options below then click Continue.



☐ No, I prefer to vote in person

☐ No, I already have a postal vote

☐ Yes, send me a postal vote application form

▶ [What is a postal vote?](#)

Continue

13. **Q11 - If we have questions about your application, how should we contact you?** Click either “Email” “Phone call” or “Post”. You will need to enter an email address if you want an email confirmation of your registration.
14. **Send your application** - You will be asked to check all of your answers before sending your application. Once you have done this click on:

I accept – send my application

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. WHO CAN REGISTER TO VOTE IN SCOTLAND?

You can register to vote if you are:

- a Scottish resident (you usually live in Scotland) **and**
- aged 14 or over¹ (but you cannot vote at Scottish Parliament or local government elections until you are 16. You will not be able to vote at UK Parliament or European Parliament elections until you are 18) **and**
- a British, Irish, European Union, or a Commonwealth citizen who has leave to remain in the UK or does not require such leave

2. IN WHICH ELECTIONS IN SCOTLAND CAN 16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS VOTE?

If you are 16 or 17, you meet the residency and nationality criteria then you can vote at Scottish elections including Scottish Parliament and local council elections.

3. WHY DO I NEED TO REGISTER?

You need to register to be able to vote. You are not automatically registered. You can register online at gov.uk/register-to-vote

1 You can register if you will be 16 before 1 December 2017, but you cannot vote at Scottish elections until you are 16.

4. DO I NEED A NATIONAL INSURANCE NUMBER TO REGISTER?

When you apply to register you must provide your date of birth and National Insurance number if you are 16 or over. This information is used to verify your identity against Department for Work and Pensions records.

5. WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A NATIONAL INSURANCE NUMBER?

UNDER 16 YEARS OLD

If you are under 16, you do not need to provide a National Insurance number. Instead electoral registration staff will verify your identity by comparing the information you provide against education data or other local records. If they are unable to do this, staff may ask you to send them proof of identity.

16 YEARS OLD OR OVER

If you are 16 or over, you need to provide your National Insurance number or a reason why you are not able to do so. The easiest place to find your National Insurance number is on official paperwork such as documents you have received from the Department for Work and Pensions or HM Revenue and Customs. For help finding your National Insurance number you can visit gov.uk/lost-national-insurance-number.

If the information you provide doesn't match Department for Work and Pensions records, then electoral registration staff can use local records to check your identity.

If electoral registration staff can't use local data to check your identity, then they will ask you to provide proof of identity.

6. WILL MY DETAILS BE GIVEN TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS?

Electoral registration staff keep two registers – the electoral register and the open register (also known as the edited register).

The electoral register lists the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote in public elections. The register is used for electoral purposes, such as making sure only eligible people can vote. It is also used for other limited purposes specified in law, such as: detecting crime (e.g. fraud), calling people for jury service and checking credit applications.

The open register is an extract of the electoral register, but is not used for elections. It can be bought by any person, company or organisation. For example, it is used by businesses and charities to confirm name and address details.

If you are 16 or over, your details will be included in the open register, unless you ask for them to be removed by contacting your local electoral registration office. You can find their contact details by entering your postcode in the pink 'Your local area' box at: aboutmyvote.co.uk. Removing your details from the open register does not affect your right to vote.

If you are 14 or 15 years old, your details will **not** be included in the open register. They will be included on the electoral register, but only electoral registration staff can see these details. Your details will not be included in any register that is published.

About six weeks before an election certain people need details of everyone who can vote in that election. If you will be 16 on the date of a Scottish Parliamentary or local government election, your name and address will be given to people who run the elections, and to candidates who want to provide information to voters.

7. I AM CONCERNED ABOUT MY NAME APPEARING ON THE REGISTER; CAN I REGISTER ANONYMOUSLY?

You can register to vote anonymously if including your name and address on the electoral register would pose a risk to your safety. Anyone you live with would also be able to register anonymously. You will need to provide evidence such as a court order or attestation (validation process) from certain people to support your application.

If you have concerns about your name and address appearing on the electoral register, you should contact your local electoral registration office for further information. You can find their contact details by entering your postcode in the pink 'Your local area box' at: aboutmyvote.co.uk.

8. CAN I REGISTER TO VOTE WITH NO FIXED ADDRESS?

You can still register to vote even if you do not have a fixed address. This may be because you are:

- a patient in a mental health hospital
- homeless or have no fixed address
- a person who has been remanded in custody, but you have not yet been convicted of any offence
- you are under 16 and are or have been a child looked after by a local authority or are being kept in secure accommodation

To register, you need to fill in a form called a 'declaration of local connection'. You can get this form from your local electoral registration office. You can find their contact details by entering your postcode in the pink 'Your local area' box at: aboutmyvote.co.uk.

For more information about registering or casting your vote please visit: aboutmyvote.co.uk.

ABOUT THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The Electoral Commission is an independent body established in 2000. We regulate party and election finance and set standards for well-run elections and referendums. We work to support a healthy democracy, where elections and referendums are based on our principles of trust, participation and no undue influence.

For Scottish Parliament and local government elections in Scotland, we take on a number of roles to administer the elections for which we report directly to the Scottish Parliament. You can find out more about us at: electoralcommission.org.uk.