The Electoral Commission

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Jenni Minto MSP
Convener
Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee
Scottish Parliament
By email: sppa.committee@parliament.scot

17 November 2026

Dear Convener,

Voter turnout

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence on the Electoral Commission's 2025-26 Annual Report and Accounts. We welcome the Committee's scrutiny of the Commission's current work, and the opportunity to discuss matters, such as the challenges mis- and disinformation and candidate abuse pose to the democratic system.

During the session, we committed to share further information on voter behaviour. This can be found in our report on the 2026 Scottish Parliament election, which includes survey data from voters on a number of issues including satisfaction with how the elections were run, postal ballot rates, disabled voters' experiences, and voter turnout.

The latter section details information on historic turnout at Scottish Parliament elections. As outlined during the session, while turnout at the 2026 election (53%) represented a decrease from 2021 (64%), it remained broadly in line with prior elections. Our research also found that awareness that the election was taking place was high (97%).

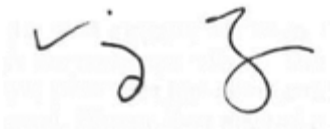
For those who told us they did not vote, our survey asked why they had not done so. The most common reasons given by non-voters were:

- Lack of time, too busy or I was busy at work: 13%
- I was away on polling day: 9%
- I'm just not that interested in politics or fed up with politics: 9%
- You just can't trust politicians to keep their promises, voter's wishes ignored or politicians do not care: 9%

Our survey approach has changed between elections, from being conducted by telephone to online, which impacts comparability. However, this pattern of the primary reasons for not voting has broadly been consistent across most elections. I hope the Committee finds

this additional context helpful. If you have any further questions, please contact Morton Dunlop at mdunlop@electoralcommission.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Vijay Rangarajan

Chief Executive