



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Guidance for Members and their staff during the 2026 Scottish Parliamentary Election campaign

Stiùireadh do Bhuill
agus an luchd-obrach
rè iomairt taghaidh
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba 2026



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Foreword

Election periods can be a very demanding time for Members and their staff. There is a great deal of work to complete, not to mention the range of emotions that come with fighting the election or standing down as an MSP. Throughout this time, staff of the Scottish Parliamentary Service remain dedicated to providing comprehensive support and assistance to Members.

Members will know that the Scottish Parliament normally goes into dissolution around 6 weeks before the election. During dissolution, Members are no longer MSPs and therefore cannot access parliamentary resources. This approach ensures a level playing field for all candidates who are standing in the election.

A different approach was taken in relation to the 2021 election due to the Covid-19 pandemic, to ensure the Parliament could be recalled if necessary during the public health emergency. Instead of the usual dissolution, the Parliament entered a period of recess from late March 2021, with dissolution taking place the day before polling day.

In October 2025, the Parliament agreed legislation to reduce the dissolution period of the Scottish Parliament before a general election from the normal 28 days to 20 days. This aims to ensure that in the event – however unlikely – of a snap UK Parliament general election being called on the same date as a scheduled Scottish Parliament general election, the Scottish Parliament could be recalled as required to respond to that situation. This is the only purpose of this change in approach and it is not expected that the Parliament would be recalled for any other reason.

To replicate the usual 6-week dissolution period as far as possible for the 2026 election, the Parliament will go into a pre-election recess and the Office of the Clerk will be closed on 26 March 2026, before it is dissolved on 9 April 2026. During the pre-election recess, no parliamentary business will take place unless the Parliament is recalled. Taken together, the pre-election recess and dissolution are referred to throughout this guidance as the “campaign period”.

Parliamentary resources must not be used at any time for party political or election campaign purposes. To ensure that there remains a level playing field at the election for all candidates in relation to the use of parliamentary resources, the SPCB has agreed that the following guidance will apply for the duration of the campaign period. This period will start on Thursday 26 March 2026, the start of the pre-election recess, and will extend to the date of the poll. Members should also read the policy statement from the SPCB on the use of MSP status during this period.

The guidance has been produced to provide all Members and their staff with advice on how parliamentary services will be affected before and during the election period. Members and their staff are encouraged to make themselves fully aware of all parts of this guidance. Additional guidance has been prepared specifically for [Members who are not standing at the election](#).

In preparing this guidance, we have included as much detail as possible to help Members through the campaign period. Should there be any changes which impact on the guidance, this document will be updated and Members advised accordingly.

Rt Hon Alison Johnstone MSP

Presiding Officer

David McGill

Clerk/Chief Executive

SPCB policy statement – MSP status

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) has made the following policy statement:

The next Scottish Parliament general election is due to take place on Thursday 7 May 2026. Dissolution of the Parliament has previously taken place around six weeks before each Scottish Parliament general election (with exceptional arrangements in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic).

In the case of the 2026 election, the Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Order 2025 amends the “minimum period” used in article 84 of the Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Order 2015, for determining the start of dissolution. A 20-day minimum period is set out in the amending Order, and further to that, the Parliament will be dissolved from the beginning of the day on 9 April 2026. In addition, the Parliament has agreed that, in advance of dissolution, there will be a pre-election recess from 26 March to 8 April 2026 (inclusive) which will also form part of the campaign period. Members of the Scottish Parliament will retain their status as MSPs during the pre-election recess up to the date of dissolution on 9 April 2026.

During the campaign period, the SPCB seeks to ensure that public resources are not used in any way that might prejudice, or be seen to prejudice, the result of an election, and for all candidates standing to be treated the same. The SPCB has policies in place that restrict use of parliamentary resources for any party political or election campaigning activity, to create a degree of parity with non-MSP candidates.

As well as restrictions on the use of parliamentary resources set out in this ‘Guidance for Members and their staff during a Scottish Parliamentary Election Campaign’ and the ‘Guidance for Members not Standing at the 2026 Scottish Parliamentary Election’, Members should not use their MSP status or refer to another Member’s MSP status, in any election-related activity. This means, for example, any party political or election campaigning material should refer to the Member’s name only and not include the title ‘MSP’.

If Members are in any doubt as to what they can and cannot do, they should contact the [Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office](#).

Guidance to assist Members and their staff during an election campaign

This guidance has been produced to assist all Members and their staff before, during, and after the election period in 2026.

The current five-year session of Parliament will end at 23:59 on **Wednesday 8 April 2026** and dissolution will begin immediately thereafter on **Thursday 9 April 2026**, with the election taking place on **Thursday 7 May 2026**.

While Members will continue to be MSPs up to the date of dissolution, some restrictions on use of parliamentary resources, and use of the title 'MSP', will apply during the pre-election recess period. The Parliament has agreed that this period will begin on **Thursday 26 March** and end on **Wednesday 8 April 2026**, i.e. the date before dissolution on **Thursday 9 April 2026**.

Taken together, the pre-election recess and dissolution are referred to in this guidance as the "campaign period". Most restrictions will apply to this whole period, including the date of the election. i.e. from **26 March 2026 to 7 May 2026 inclusive**.

The Parliament has also agreed to close the Office of the Clerk for the campaign period, as well as making some variations to the Standing Order rules.

These steps are intended to ensure that there remains a level playing field at the election for all candidates while still allowing for a recall of Parliament if legislation were required to move the Scottish Parliament general election date during the pre-election recess (owing to any clash of polling dates with a UK general election). SPCB resources cannot be used for campaigning purposes in support of any candidate.

Members are asked to direct questions on the information in this guidance to the contact details provided throughout the text and below. Any questions relating to this guidance document itself should be directed to the [Chief Executive's Office](#).

Any specific access arrangements which are required to be implemented during the campaign period, dissolution or immediately after the election will be notified at the time.

Contacts

Office	Phone Number	Email Address
Allowances Office	0131 348 6610 0131 348 6447	allowancesenquiries@parliament.scot travelenquiries@parliament.scot
Business IT	0131 348 6100	ithelpdesk@parliament.scot
Education Services	0131 348 5000	educationservices@parliament.scot
Facilities Management	0131 348 5100	FMHelpdesk@parliament.scot
FOI/Data Protection	0131 348 5281	foi.officer@parliament.scot
Language Services	0131 348 5000	info@parliament.scot
People Services	0131 348 6500	PeopleServices@parliament.scot
Colleague Experience (for internal communication and learning and development)	0131 348 6500	colleagueexperience@parliament.scot
Lobbying Register Team	0131 348 5408	lobbying@parliament.scot
Parliament Communications Office	0131 348 6852	communications@parliament.scot
Pay and Pensions	0131 348 6501	PayandPensionEnquiries@parliament.scot
Public Information	0131 348 5000	info@parliament.scot
Scottish Public Pensions Agency	01896 893 000	mspscheme@gov.scot
Security Office	0131 348 6554	memberssecurity@parliament.scot
SPCB Secretariat	0131 348 5307	SPCB-secretariat@parliament.scot
SPICe	0131 348 5300	SPICe@parliament.scot
Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments (committee clerks)	0131 348 5177	SPPA.Committee@parliament.scot
Visitor Services	0131 348 5200	Visit@parliament.scot

Key dates

To replicate the usual 6-week dissolution period for the 2026 election, there will be a campaign period made up of both a pre-election recess and dissolution as follows:

- **Pre-election recess:** Thursday 26 March - Wednesday 8 April 2026
- **Dissolution:** Thursday 9 April - Thursday 7 May 2026 (date of the poll)

Most restrictions on the use of parliamentary resources and the use of 'MSP' as a title will apply to this entire campaign period, including the date of the election.

Before the campaign period (pre-Thursday 26 March 2026)

Access to the Parliament

1. What access will there be to Holyrood and parliamentary services in the run-up to the campaign period?

Members and their staff will continue to have full access to parliamentary services up until Wednesday 25 March 2026.

Automatic access to Holyrood for those who are MSPs at that point will be ended at 23:59 on Thursday 26 March 2026. This 24-hour grace period will enable Members and their staff to collect their belongings during the first day of the campaign period.

2. When will Members and their staff be expected to start removing their belongings from Holyrood offices?

During the campaign period, one of the SPCB's objectives will be to prepare all MSP offices for re-occupation after the election by cleaning all offices, redecorating and refurbishing offices as necessary and carrying out any essential maintenance. This will ensure that all Members elected on 7 May 2026 will be welcomed into a clean and freshened office.

Members and their staff are asked to start removing their belongings following the last meeting of the Parliament on 25 March 2026, although they will still have access to the Holyrood building to collect belongings up to and including 26 March 2026. i.e. the first day of the campaign period. Members and their staff are asked to clear their personal belongings, papers and books from their rooms, desks and storage cabinets, along with items kept at tea points and in fridges.

All keys for the doors of vacated offices should be left in the digital key cabinets in Members' offices. Keys for desks and storage furniture should be left in the appropriate locks.

Facilities Management will be in contact with Members regarding the storage of any items which Members prefer to leave on site until after the election. Facilities Management will also provide crates, labels and security tags to facilitate the packing operation, and will help any Members who need additional support. A notice will be issued nearer the time giving further information and guidance.

Access to parliamentary services

3. Will there be any implications for parliamentary services in the run-up to the campaign period?

We have detailed below those areas where there are implications to a service for Members, such as the issuing of newsletters, availability of equipment or support to Members in preparing for the campaign period.

MSPs' salaries and pensions

4. Will there be any effect on my salary?

All Members who are standing at the election will continue to receive their salary up to and including the day of the election. Members not standing will be paid up to and including the day before dissolution (8 April 2026). Salaries will be paid on the last working day of the month, in the normal way.

MSPs' staff

5. Can my employees, paid from the Expenses Scheme, help with my campaigning?

A member of staff whose salary is met out of the Members' Expenses Scheme can only participate in the election campaign outwith their contracted hours, or provided they take leave (either paid accrued annual leave or unpaid leave). Therefore:

If a member of staff is taking annual leave in accordance with their contract of employment, no adjustment needs to be made as they are free to do as they wish in their own time and there is no need to tell People Services or the Pay and Pensions Team. Members should record any annual leave themselves in the normal way.

OR

If a member of staff is taking unpaid leave, People Services and the Pay and Pensions Team must be informed accordingly to enable the appropriate adjustments to their pay and contractual status.

Where an individual provides their services voluntarily, in their own time and free of charge, this is not treated as election expenditure. Members should note however that the cost of services provided by an individual who assists candidates with their campaign in other circumstances could be treated as election expenditure and be subject to the related accounting rules.

Members are reminded that it is the candidate's responsibility to be clear whether any particular individual is acting in a voluntary capacity when campaigning.

If Members have any doubts, we recommend that they check how the rules apply to their circumstances with their local electoral returning officer.

Members are encouraged to contact People Services as early as possible for help and guidance should they have any concerns or questions on any issue relating to the employment of staff paid through the Members' Expenses Scheme or other provisions and their participation in campaigning and electioneering on the Member's behalf.

6. What are my responsibilities as an employer in relation to the election?

Members are required to take a number of essential steps in respect of potential staff redundancy such as issuing of early-warning letters, consultation meetings, etc. This process needs to begin early. Full details and support will be provided by People Services who will arrange to meet all Members individually from November 2025 onwards to guide Members on the steps that must be taken.

Career support/advice

7. What career support is available to MSPs and their staff?

In the lead up to and following the election, People Services and Colleague Experience will be offering a programme of career support and assistance to MSPs and their staff. The programmes on offer aim to ensure MSPs and their staff are best prepared for the future, whatever that might be: retirement, starting a business, being a consultant or securing full time employment. The programmes will be delivered in-house, supported by external specialists.

In addition to career support, MSPs and their staff will have access to sessions focused on wellbeing and resilience, recognising the emotional and psychological impact that career transitions can bring. Alongside this, a range of learning and development opportunities will be available to help individuals build new skills and prepare confidently for future roles.

Further information will be communicated to Members and their staff over the coming weeks. If you are interested in exploring how this might look for you, please contact peopleservices@parliament.scot.

SPICe services

8. Will all my enquiries to SPICe be answered before the campaign period?

We will make every effort to complete outstanding Members' enquiries by the start of the campaign period, but any enquiries that cannot be answered by then will fall. Members will be informed if their enquiry is unlikely to be answered.

9. Do I need to return any books I have borrowed from SPICe before the campaign period?

Members and their staff are asked to return, by close of normal office hours on Wednesday 25 March 2026, all books, inter-library loans and other items borrowed from SPICe. This is to ensure that Members and their staff are not subject to the charge which will be made for any missing title that has to be replaced.

10. Do I need to cancel the newspapers I get in my office?

No. SPICe will cancel these subscriptions automatically at the start of the campaign period.

IT Services

11. What is the deadline for submitting IT work requests?

Members will be able to submit work requests up to the start of the campaign period (Thursday 26 March 2026) as normal and we will continue to action requests up to this time. However, as BIT staff will be supporting Members in preparing for the campaign period, we may not be able to undertake work requests for development, installations, or upgrades received after 1 January 2026. All work requests submitted after this date will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

12. What help will I be given from BIT to prepare for the campaign period?

BIT will assist Members in carrying out any IT-related tasks that need to be completed before the campaign period. For example:

- how to set up a voicemail message for the duration of the campaign period
- how to set up an automated email response from your parliamentary email for the duration of the campaign period
- any general IT guidance.

Please feel free to contact the Engagement Manager, BIT Engagement desk or IT Helpdesk (x86100) with any queries.

Expenses

13. Can the cost of annualised payments such as insurance, security or software costs be charged to my expenses?

Such costs will be met, but in the event the Member is not returned, a proportion of the costs may require to be repaid to the Allowances Office.

14. What do I need to think about in relation to terminating my local office lease?

This is a matter for each individual Member to consider. If Members keep up their leases for the period of the campaign period, this will mean that their local office will be available for dealing with casework. It would also enable staff, whose salaries continue to be met out of the Members' Expenses Scheme and who would not be involved in campaigning, to work from the local office during this period.

Any Member wishing to terminate their lease for the period of the campaign period should contact the Allowances Office for guidance.

All costs incurred in giving up a local office will be charged to the Office Cost Provision, if incurred during the campaign period in relation to a Member's parliamentary duties. Members will be required to supply a copy of formal termination agreements to the Allowances Office.

Any equipment and furniture provided by the Parliament or purchased using the Members' Expenses Scheme may be used only for on-going constituency case work.

If Members are closing or moving their local offices, they can contact the Facilities Management helpdesk on 0131 348 5100 to arrange support with removal needs. This includes the uplift, moving, storage and disposal of furniture. Facilities Management will also provide necessary packing materials such as crates, security tags, labels etc. Members should also let the IT Helpdesk know so that broadband services can be arranged or cancelled.

Office supplies and equipment

15. Can I obtain any new equipment/furniture from the Parliament in the run-up to the election?

Requests for new equipment/furniture may be submitted up to 1 January 2026.

Thereafter Members can be provided with equipment and furniture only to replace lost, damaged, stolen or faulty equipment or furniture.

16. What should I do if I need to purchase equipment from expenses?

Members can also purchase equipment and furniture and meet the costs from the Members' Expenses Scheme, where it is not provided centrally by Parliament.

From 1 January 2026, Members can only make purchases where it is to replace any lost, broken, stolen or faulty items. Members should seek the endorsement of the Allowances Office prior to incurring any such costs where they are more than £100.

Newsletters, circulars and annual reports

17. Can I continue to issue non-party political material during the campaign period?

Communications such as annual reports, newsletters, surveys, circular letters, leaflets, surveys, and web or other digital materials used to contact, consult or inform constituents or local groups about the work of the Member may not be issued within four months of a Scottish parliamentary election. This means that in 2026, no such publications funded from parliamentary resources may be distributed or delivered in the period from **6 January 2026 until 7 May 2026 inclusive**.

Adverts which provide information about how to contact a Member or provide surgery meeting details only may be issued up to the campaign period but cannot be issued during the campaign period.

As Members can continue to issue contact details and surgery adverts and hold surgeries up to the start of the campaign period, any signs, banners or hoardings which are used solely for these purposes, or which are used at surgery meetings to provide contact details can also continue to be used. However, no new signs, banners or hoardings should be purchased from 6 January 2026, and Members should ensure that any such signs, banners or hoardings are removed or covered up from the start of the campaign period until after the election, in line with the requirements for contact and surgery adverts.

Under this policy, publication of annual calendars is not permitted in an election year. Calendars for 2026 may be circulated, prior to the deadline of 6 January 2026, but can only include dates up to the campaign period. i.e. up to and including 25 March 2026.

Please also see question on 'Advertising'.

Surgeries

18. Can I continue to hold surgeries in my region or constituency?

Members can continue to hold surgeries in their region or constituency prior to the start of the campaign period. However, parliamentary resources must not be used to support surgeries from the start of the campaign period (26 March 2026).

Postal voting

19. Can I use parliamentary stationery and resources to issue information on postal voting?

Parliamentary resources must not be used to issue information on postal voting. Where a Member receives an enquiry about postal voting, parliamentary resources may be used to respond to the enquirer directing them to their local returning officer.

Advertising

20. Can I use expenses to pay for advertising before the campaign period?

From 6 January 2026, only adverts sharing a Member's contact details and surgery details can be issued prior to the campaign period (26 March 2026). The cost of these communications can be met from the Members' Expenses Scheme, provided they meet the requirements of the SPCB's policy on Members' parliamentary funded communications and are issued to support a Member in carrying out their parliamentary duties.

Broadcasting and photography

21. Are there any implications on the use of broadcasting or photography material I should be aware of before the campaign period?

Prior to the campaign period, Members are free to film and photograph material in the building as an engagement tool. The clips can also be used by Members to promote a local campaign they might be running providing they do not stray into party political territory. To film in the Chamber, Members must have prior approval of the Presiding Officer.

The SPCB permits the use of Parliament copyright material under our open copyright licence. The material cannot be used for advertising endorsements or for party political activity such as electioneering.

Clips of parliamentary business must not be used for any party-political purposes and should not be edited.

The Rules of Coverage state that Members must seek approval of other Members before using material featuring them.

Education services

22. Can school visits take place as usual before the campaign period begins?

Members can continue their involvement in school visits up to and including Wednesday 25 March 2026.

Language services

23. Up until what date can I call on the services of the Gaelic Development Officers, British Sign Language Communities Officer and other language services?

Access to support for Gaelic, British Sign Language and other languages supported by the Parliament will only be available for ongoing casework during the campaign period.

Events and exhibitions

24. Up until what date can I arrange Member-sponsored events and exhibitions?

Members can continue to arrange Member-sponsored events and exhibitions through the Events and Exhibitions team for dates up to and including 25 March 2026.

Visitor services

25. Up until what date can I book seats for my visitors in the public gallery or Members' tours?

Members can continue to book tickets for Chamber business and tours as normal up to and including Wednesday 25 March 2026.

During the pre-election recess, no Chamber business is expected to take place (unless Parliament is recalled to pass legislation to change the date of the Scottish Parliament general election). As such, tickets for Chamber business cannot be booked after Wednesday 25 March 2026.

Members can continue to book guided tours during the pre-election recess as usual. At dissolution on 9 April 2026, there will be no further Member services for tickets. Access to guided tours will be available to former Members during dissolution as members of the public.

No bookings for Session 7 proceedings will be taken until after the election.

Clerking services

26. Will I be able to lodge motions and amendments up until the campaign period?

Members may continue to lodge motions and amendments to motions up to **4:30 pm on Wednesday 25 March 2026**. These will be included in the Business Bulletin published on Thursday 26 March, but Members should keep in mind that they will be unable to indicate their support for them once the Office of the Clerk is closed at midnight on Wednesday 25 March.

27. Will I be able to lodge oral parliamentary questions up until the campaign period?

It is expected that time for oral questions (First Minister's Question Time and Portfolio Question Times) will be scheduled as normal until the commencement of the campaign period. Announcements relating to oral parliamentary questions will be included in the Business Bulletin. Any published oral questions not taken at the last Question Time will be treated as written questions and answered by the following day.

28. Will I be able to lodge written parliamentary questions up until the campaign period?

No. The last date on which written questions can be lodged will be 4:30pm on Thursday 12 March 2026. Questions lodged on that day will be due for answer on Wednesday 25 March 2026.

29. When is the last date for me to introduce a Member's Bill?

Standing Orders stipulate a cut-off point for Members' Bills of the first sitting day in June (or, exceptionally, the last sitting day of September) of the year preceding the general election. The final day for introducing Members' Bills having now passed, no more may be introduced.

Proposals for Members' Bills may be lodged up to close of business on Wednesday 25 March 2026, but Members should keep in mind that:

- draft proposals normally require to be accompanied by a consultation document and it is already too late for a consultation (which must run for at least 12 weeks) to be completed before dissolution
- it will not be possible for other Members to indicate support for any final proposals during the campaign period.

Any Member considering lodging a proposal before the beginning of the campaign period should contact the Non-Government Bills Unit (ngbu@parliament.scot) for further advice.

All proposals, and any Members' Bills which have not been passed by the Parliament before the start of the campaign period, will fall at dissolution on 9 April 2026.

30. What do I need to be aware of in relation to the work of committees?

Committees are required to conclude their business before 26 March 2026 and will not be able to meet thereafter. The exception to this would be if the Parliament was recalled, in which case a committee may meet but only to consider procedural matters related to the subject of the recall, such as consideration of subordinate legislation.

At dissolution on 9 April 2026, all committees will cease to exist.

31. What will happen to a petition lodged before the campaign period?

As the Office of the Clerk will be closed, petitions may not be lodged during the campaign period. A petition lodged in the current session, which has not been disposed of by the date of dissolution, does not fall and may be continued over to the new session.

During the campaign period (Thursday 26 March – Thursday 7 May 2026)

As a reminder, the campaign period is made up of both:

- a pre-election recess, from Thursday 26 March until Wednesday 8 April (inclusive)
- dissolution, from Thursday 9 April until Thursday 7 May (the day of the poll).

Most restrictions on the use of parliamentary resources and the use of 'MSP' as a title will apply to the entire campaign period, including the date of the election.

Information on what Members can do during the campaign period is set out in more detail below.

Casework

32. Can I take on new casework during campaign period?

Members may continue with existing casework. Where Members are approached to take on new casework during the campaign period, we would encourage Members to ask correspondents whether they would accept a delay in dealing with the matter. We realise however that in certain circumstances, some correspondents may require urgent assistance and this is permissible under the guidance.

In offering help, Members may continue to draw on the support of their staff funded from the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme and to use parliamentary stationery. However, the SPICe enquiry service will be suspended during the campaign period. Members and staff would be expected to undertake any casework in their local office or at home.

In replying to correspondents there should be no party political or electioneering material included in any replies nor should any publicity be generated in respect of the casework.

33. Can I provide contact details for the campaign period?

Yes, Members should advise correspondents of any change to contact details during the campaign period for dealing with casework. This is to ensure anyone with casework can continue to have contact with the Member.

Members should, however, be aware that the cost of advertising their contact details as candidates before or during the campaign period cannot be met out of parliamentary expenses.

34. What can I use for casework during the campaign period?

During the campaign period, when dealing with constituency casework, Members may continue to use office supplies provided for parliamentary use.

Members can claim any postage costs for this type of correspondence during the campaign period from the Engagement Provision.

Members are reminded that any party-political or election-related business must be carried out using stationery supplied by the Member or the party, not parliamentary stationery or other parliamentary resources.

Access to the Parliament

35. Where can staff work if they are not permitted to work from the Parliament?

To ensure that all candidates or prospective candidates are treated equally the SPCB has agreed that Members and their staff may not work in the Parliament estate.

Members' staff may work in Members' local offices or from home if they are going to assist with constituency work during the campaign period. Members will wish to note that any travel costs associated with this temporary re-location, if being met from public funds, would require to be met from Members' Expenses. Please see also questions 53 and 54.

Security issues

36. I was provided with a lone worker device by the Security Office. What should I do with it?

If a Member and/or their staff was issued with lone worker devices by the Security Office, these devices can be retained during the campaign period.

37. I have opted-in to the Members' Social Media Monitoring Service. Will my social media continue to be monitored during the campaign period?

The Security Office will continue to monitor the social media profiles of Members who are standing for election and have opted into the service.

38. If I am standing for election, will I and my staff have to hand in our photographic security passes?

Members and their staff will not be required to hand in their security passes at the start of the campaign period if the Member is standing at the election. However, it should be noted that all such passes will be temporarily disabled at midnight on Thursday 26 March 2026. The retention of these passes will make the re-enabling of passes after the election an easier process for Members, their staff and parliamentary staff. Passes will be re-activated automatically if Parliament is required to sit during the pre-election recess.

Members who are not standing for election and their staff should see the additional guidance that has been prepared specifically for [Members who are not standing at the election](#).

39. What will happen to the photographic passes of those I have sponsored as a Member?

Organisations or individuals who have sponsored photographic passes will not be required to hand in their security passes during the campaign period if the sponsoring Member is standing at the election. However, it should be noted that all such passes will be disabled at midnight on 26 March 2026.

40. What will happen to my partner's pass?

Members' partners will not be required to hand in their security passes during the campaign period if the Member is standing at the election. However, it should be noted that all such passes will be disabled at the same time as the Member's on Thursday 26 March 2026.

SPICe services

41. Can I make use of SPICe services during the campaign period?

No. All SPICe services, including the research and enquiry services, will be closed to Members and their staff from the start of the campaign period until the day after polling day. Passwords to online services will also be disabled.

42. Will I still have access to my Press Association subscription during the campaign period?

No. All electronic news and information services will be unavailable to Members and their staff from the beginning of the campaign period (26 March 2026) until the day after polling day. Passwords will be disabled for this period.

Registers of Interests

43. What are Members' responsibilities in relation to their Registers of Interests?

Members' obligations in relation to the registration and declaration of interests continue until dissolution. This includes the annual assessment they are required to make in relation to the value of any heritable property or interest in shares on 5 April every year. The Standards Clerks will write to all Members in relation to this assessment in early March 2026.

Any queries or requests to update Registers should be directed in the normal way to the Standards Clerks.

Lobbying Register

44. What about the Lobbying Register and relevant Information Returns?

As Members cease to be MSPs at dissolution, regulated lobbying of those individuals does not apply from 9 April 2026. [The Lobbying Register](#) is a public document and former Members can search for and scrutinise published returns which relate to regulated lobbying relevant to their role as an MSP in previous sessions of the Scottish Parliament.

If any former Member standing for election finds a return is inaccurate, they can use the 'Report Inaccurate Information' function button within that return to report this (or feel free contact the [Lobbying Register Team](#)).

IT services

45. What access to IT systems and support will my staff and I have during the campaign period?

During the campaign period, all MSP and MSP staff accounts will remain active, and although MSPs and their staff will not have access to the Holyrood building, they will continue to have use of their laptops and IT services remotely (including via mobile devices and local offices) and access to IT support. Members are reminded that during this period, parliamentary resources must not be used to undertake any party-political work or for any election campaigning.

Members using mobile devices for constituency casework may continue to have these costs met as per the normal arrangements.

46. Can I send emails from my Parliament email account during the campaign period?

Yes, however Members are reminded that the email system is not to be used to undertake any party-political work or any election campaigning.

In the event of a complaint involving misuse of IT resources and services, the SPCB reserves the right to interrogate all usage and email log files.

47. If I experience a problem with parliamentary IT during the campaign period, what should I do?

BIT will continue to provide support for the following:

- mobile devices (smartphones and tablets)
- centrally provided Surfaces and laptops.

Please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#) for assistance.

48. What will happen to my Parliament phone number?

Webex accounts will remain active, and the phone system may be used for ongoing casework during the campaign period.

If you would like any assistance in setting up a voicemail message please contact the Engagement Manager, the BIT engagement desk, or the IT helpdesk.

Mobile devices

49. I am standing at the election. Will I be able to use my mobile devices (phones, smartphones, tablets) where provided by Parliament or purchased via the Expenses Scheme and will the on-going costs during the campaign period continue to be met?

The use of these mobile phones, smartphones and tablets by Members standing at the election may continue throughout the campaign period. However, whilst Members will be able to use their mobile devices, all charges incurred while carrying out party political or election campaign activities, must be met personally. This will help to ensure that Members are not seen to be gaining an unfair advantage over other candidates standing at the election.

Members can continue to use these mobile devices for constituency casework and have those costs met through BIT or from the Members' Expenses Scheme as appropriate.

Websites

50. I have a personal website funded from the Members' Expenses Scheme. Can I continue to use it during the campaign period?

The website cannot be used for political electioneering or canvassing. All links to Members' websites from the Scottish Parliament website will be removed from the first day of the campaign period.

51. I have a private website paid for by myself. What do I need to do?

Websites which have been paid for by the Member themselves need not be removed from the web, however all reference to being a Member of the Scottish Parliament must be removed from the website.

52. I have social media accounts (such as X, Facebook, Bluesky and Instagram) which I use as an MSP. What do I need to do?

All social media profiles must be amended so that there is no reference to being an MSP.

Expenses

53. What expenses can be claimed/ paid after the start of the campaign period?

Under Rule 1.1.2 (the Principles of the Members' Expenses Scheme), a Member is entitled to the reimbursement of expenses which have been incurred only for the purpose of carrying out parliamentary duties.

Any necessary parliamentary business costs incurred during the campaign period such as rent, utilities etc will be charged to the provision entitlement for that period.

Expenses in connection with political campaigning, fund raising, party membership appeals or any other party-political content cannot be paid from any provision made in the Members' Expenses Scheme.

The maximum level for all expenses during the campaign period will be calculated on a pro-rata basis for the period 1 April 2026 until polling day.

Any monies owed will require to be repaid to the Allowances Office before dissolution. All costs incurred prior to the date of dissolution will require to be charged against the expenses entitlement up to the date of dissolution.

54. I have accommodation in Edinburgh using my Edinburgh Accommodation Provision (EAP) and I am standing at the election. What expenses can I claim?

Eligibility to claim the EAP will continue during the campaign period up to the end of polling day. The amount of EAP Members are entitled to in the financial year 2026-27 will be calculated on a pro-rata basis from 1 April 2026 until polling day. All expenses normally met from the EAP will continue to be met providing there are sufficient funds to do so.

Party Leaders' Allowance

55. Is there any effect on the party leaders' allowance during the campaign period?

The party leaders' allowance is to assist the non-government party leaders to carry out the extra duties required as parliamentary party leaders and parliamentary party spokespersons and should in no way be used for party-political purposes. Party activities, and activities in connection with the election, are therefore wholly outside the scope of the parliamentary duties which are covered by the party leaders' allowance.

Financial Assistance for Registered Political Parties

56. Will my party still be able to claim financial assistance during the campaign period?

Payment of financial assistance is paid on a yearly basis and will therefore be available during the campaign period; however, all expenses incurred by parties under the Scottish Parliament (Assistance for Registered Political Parties) Order 1999 or any resolution of the Parliament under section 97 of the Scotland Act 1998 must be incurred solely to enable their Members to perform their parliamentary duties. This means that this assistance must not in any way be used in connection with the election campaign.

Local offices

57. Can I use my region or constituency office during the campaign period?

Local offices can remain open.

As Members' offices are paid for from the Members' Expenses Scheme, the office (or, in the case of a shared office, the relevant part of that office), or any equipment provided to the Member cannot be used for any canvassing or election campaigning or any party-political activity.

Office signage does not need to be covered or removed during the campaign period.

58. Can I use the furniture and equipment provided by the Parliament or bought through the Members' Expenses Scheme during the campaign period?

The equipment, furniture and supplies provided by the Parliament or bought through the Expenses Scheme are for use in undertaking parliamentary duties only and cannot be used for the purposes of canvassing, election campaigning, or any party activity including those related to elections.

Equipment and furniture in local offices must only be used in connection with undertaking parliamentary activities.

59. How would I pay for staff travel to the local office?

Where staff are temporarily re-located to the local office during the campaign period to work on constituency casework, Members can pay for their staff travel from their Staff Travel Provision or the Staff Cost Provision.

60. Is there a generic voicemail message I should use in my region or constituency office during the campaign period?

Should Members have the use of voicemail in their local offices, all reference to the office being that of a Member of the Scottish Parliament should be removed at the start of the campaign period.

If you would like any assistance in setting up a voicemail message, please contact the IT Helpdesk.

Surgeries

61. Can I hold, or advertise to hold, surgeries during the campaign period?

No, surgeries may not be advertised to be held between the date of the start of the campaign period (26 March 2026) and the date of the election (7 May 2026) inclusive.

Parliamentary resources and provisions under the Members Expenses' Scheme can only be used to support Members to carry out their parliamentary duties and as such must not be used to support surgeries following the date of the start of the campaign period (26 March 2026).

Postal services

62. What will happen to mail addressed to me at the Parliament?

All mail received in the Parliament for Members and their staff during the campaign period will be forwarded by the mail room. Addresses for this purpose will be taken from the information supplied by Members to SPICe.

Parliamentary stationery and corporate identity

63. Can I use the Parliament's Corporate Identity (logo) during the campaign period?

The Parliament logo must not be used for the issue of election material or material of a party-political nature at any time including during the campaign period.

For further guidance on the use of the Parliament's logo please see the [Policy on the use of the Scottish Parliament corporate identity by MSPs](#).

64. Can I use Scottish Parliament stationery during the campaign period?

Material in relation to any election campaign must not be photocopied or printed using parliamentary equipment or supplies.

Parliament stationery, the Parliament logo, pre-paid envelopes or stamps provided through the stationery and postage provision and the Parliament's mail system must not be used to issue election material or material of a party-political nature.

Data protection

65. What should I do if I need to process personal information during the campaign period?

You can continue to process personal data for the purposes of carrying out constituency casework during the campaign period in the usual way. Members, as individual data controllers, are required to process personal data in terms of the requirements for data protection in the UK which are set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

To assist you with this, the UK Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has provided [detailed guidance](#) aimed at elected representatives (which includes MSPs) who process personal data for the purposes of undertaking constituency casework. The guidance provides the most up to date information on constituency casework and the processing of sensitive personal data.

Special category and criminal offence data

There are specific requirements for processing special category and criminal offence data for constituency casework in terms of which Members must have a condition for processing. For Members who are either not seeking re-election or not returned, the condition for processing these types of data will last until the fourth day after the day of the election. i.e. 11 May 2026.

Members may wish to note that the Data Use and Access Act 2025 has extended the period for which the conditions for processing will last to the thirtieth day after the election is held. This provision is expected to come into force by the end of December 2025.

Broadcasting and photography

66. Can I use SPCB copyright photography/broadcasting material during the campaign period?

SPCB copyright photography must not be used during the campaign period. In accordance with the copyright information published on the Scottish Parliament website, photographs should not be used for party-political material or for marketing purposes, including electioneering or campaigning.

Clips of parliamentary business must not be used for any party-political purposes and should not be edited.

SPCB copyright photographs previously issued must not be used in material published from the beginning of the campaign period. i.e. From 26 March 2026.

67. Can I continue to film/record/take photographs inside the Parliament?

Recording/filming/photography of a party-political nature or for party-political purposes is not permitted within the building at any time.

Education Services

68. Will there be outreach sessions or education visits during the campaign period?

There will be no Member involvement in any education activities during the campaign period. Education services will continue to facilitate school visits without Members during the campaign period.

Events and exhibitions

69. Can I arrange an event at the Parliament during the campaign period?

There will be no Member-sponsored events held at the Parliament during the campaign period.

70. Can I arrange Member-sponsored exhibitions in the Garden Lobby and Members' Lobby during the campaign period?

There will be no Member-sponsored exhibitions in the Parliament during the campaign period.

Public Information Office

71. Will I be able to use the Public Information Office's services during the campaign period?

During the campaign period, former Members will be able to use Public Information to obtain information about the work of the Parliament on the same basis as members of the public.

Members are welcome to return any unused public information leaflets to the Public Information Office prior to the start of the campaign period.

Visitor Services

72. What if people want to visit during the campaign period – can I still take them round?

During the campaign period, Members can access Visitor Services tours as members of the public. After the deactivation of their pass, Members will be unable to gain access to passholder areas or sign in visitors to the parliament building.

Clerking services

73. Can I make use of Clerking services during the campaign period?

Clerks cannot provide any assistance to Members from the start of the campaign period whether or not they are standing for re-election, unless it is connected to matters that require to be considered as a consequence of a recall of the Parliament.

74. Will a Business Bulletin be produced during the campaign period?

Unless Parliament is recalled, there will be no bulletin produced during the campaign period. The last two Business Bulletins will be published on the last day of business (25 March 2026) and the first day of the campaign period (26 March 2026).

75. What happens if I have parliamentary questions that have not received substantive answers before the campaign period?

The Government has given its commitment to answer all questions before the campaign period if at all possible. However, there may be questions (for example, ones requiring a lot of research) where this is not possible. The Scottish Government has indicated that in those cases, answers will be sent in letters to the Member who asked them and copies of the letters placed in SPICe. Any such answers will be published on the Parliament's website and included in a **Written Answers Report** after the Parliament resumes.

76. What happens if I have motions or amendments outstanding that have not been considered by the Parliament?

All motions or amendments will continue to be live during the pre-election recess, but they cannot be supported by other Members. They will fall at dissolution on 9 April 2026.

Any Member who is re-elected will, of course, be able to lodge such motions again in the new session, should they wish to do so. Members will be able to lodge motions provided that they have sworn the oath or made an affirmation.

77. What happens to Bills at the date of the campaign period?

All Bills that have not been passed by the start of the campaign period will continue to exist but in practice there can be no further scrutiny of these Bills. Any such Bill, and all outstanding amendments lodged for such a Bill, will fall at dissolution on 9 April 2026. However, a Bill in the same or similar terms may be introduced in the new session. (Where the new Bill is a Private or Hybrid Bill, special rules apply).

Bills which have been passed by the Parliament but have not yet received Royal Assent at the start of the campaign period may still be submitted for Royal Assent and become Acts. If such a Bill is subject to a reference under sections 32A or 33 of the Scotland Act 1998 or to an order under section 35 of that Act, Parliament may reconsider the Bill in the new session.

78. What happens to subordinate legislation?

Statutory instruments can be made during the pre-election recess but such instruments cannot be laid before the Parliament until after the period of dissolution has ended.

Instruments laid in the current session may be subjected to continued scrutiny in the new session (that is, they do not require to be laid afresh). Where an instrument is subject to parliamentary scrutiny for a period (e.g. 40 days) prescribed under statute and under the Standing Orders, that period is suspended while the Parliament is in recess in the campaign period.

79. What will happen in relation to the work of committees during the pre-election recess and dissolution?

Committees are required to conclude their business before 26 March 2026 and will not be able to meet thereafter. The exception to this would be if the Parliament was recalled, in which case a committee may meet but only to consider procedural matters related to the subject of the recall, such as consideration of subordinate legislation.

At dissolution on 9 April 2026, all committees will cease to exist.

Correspondence received by any Member during the campaign period in their capacity as convener, deputy convener or member of a committee should be forwarded to the clerk of the committee. The clerk will then issue a holding reply and bring the matter to the attention of whoever is appointed convener of the relevant committee in the new session.

80. What will happen to petitions?

As the Office of the Clerk will be closed, petitions may not be lodged during the campaign period. Petitions lodged in the current session (prior to the start of the campaign period) and not disposed of by the date of dissolution do not fall and may be proceeded with once the new session has begun.

Since the Public Petitions Committee (PPC), and any subject committees established in the new session will be new committees and not merely continuations of the committees established in the present session, any referral of a petition by the PPC to a subject Committee in the present session is terminated on dissolution. It will be for the PPC in the new session to decide what referrals to make in respect of petitions carried over from the current session.

Cross-Party Groups

81. What will happen to Cross-Party Groups?

The Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee is responsible for the registration of Cross-Party Groups. The Committee has agreed that recognition should be removed from all Cross-Party Groups from midnight on 25 March 2026 and that they therefore cease to exist from 26 March onwards. All Cross-Party Groups will be contacted to advise them of this decision.

After the Scottish Parliamentary election, Cross-Party Groups must seek to establish themselves through the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee and should contact its clerks at the start of the session.

Information on the process will be posted on the Cross-Party Group webpage and emailed to all Conveners and secretaries of existing Cross-Party Groups, prior to 25 March 2026.

After the Election

Access to the Parliament

82. What access will I have to parliamentary services after the election if I am returned?

Returning Members and their staff will have full access to and use of parliamentary services following the election.

Security passes

83. What should my staff and I do with our photographic security passes if I am returned?

Any Members who are returned and any existing staff being employed by a returned Member will have their passes reactivated after the election.

Clerking services

84. What can a Member do before taking the oath or affirmation?

A Member is not able to take part in any other proceedings of the Parliament until they have taken the oath of allegiance or made their solemn affirmation at a meeting of the Parliament before the Clerk.

85. What will happen in relation to the work of committees in the new session?

All committees established in a new session, whether mandatory or subject committees, are new committees. Although new committees may choose to continue any work begun by their predecessors, they are not bound to do so.

MSPs' salaries and pensions

86. What happens to my salary if I am re-elected at the election?

If Members are re-elected, their salary will continue, provided they have taken the oath of allegiance or have made a solemn affirmation at a meeting of the Parliament, as required by section 84 of the Scotland Act.

For Members who are not returned, please see the separate guidance which includes information regarding salary and pensions.

87. Can you summarise the overall impact on my pay and expenses if I am successfully returned to the Parliament after the election?

A Member's salary will continue and will be paid into their bank account on the last working day of the month in the normal way, provided the oath is taken or affirmation made (payment of salary or allowances cannot be made unless the oath of office is taken or affirmation made although entitlement to salary and payment can subsist before that provided the oath of office is then taken or affirmation then made). Members' staff salaries will also continue unless the Pay and Pensions Office has been told to stop the salary.

Members' Expenses provision limits are pro-rated from 1 April to polling day at the beginning of the financial year. Where Members are returned at the election, the full annual figure for each provision they are entitled to will be available. If Members leave the Parliament, they will only be entitled to the pro-rated amount up to polling day and Winding Up provision thereafter. New Members will be entitled to pro-rated expenses from the election date to the end of the financial year.

Expenses

88. When can I start claiming expenses?

New and returning Members will be required to take the oath of allegiance or make a solemn affirmation and sign the Expenses Scheme Declaration before they can access the provisions within the updated Members' Expenses Scheme for the new session and claim reimbursement for any expenses incurred.

Members who are returned at the election will be entitled to claim the cost of travelling to the Parliament and, if eligible, overnight expenses where necessary to take the oath or make an affirmation.

Members who are not returned at the election will be entitled to claim travel expenses to and from the Parliament complex and, if necessary, overnight expenses where eligible, to collect any belongings stored at the Parliament during the campaign period. These costs will be met from the Winding Up Provision. Any necessary parliamentary business costs incurred during the campaign period such as rent, utilities etc will be charged to the provision entitlement for that period.

IT Services

89. What will happen to my Holyrood office and IT equipment?

Members are encouraged to return to their current office where their IT equipment (such as monitors, keyboards and printers) will remain. Members should record a new voicemail message to replace any campaign period message.

BIT and FM will then liaise with Business Managers to plan new office allocation arrangements, which will be scheduled and implemented as soon as possible after the election.

90. What happens to my work requests submitted prior to the campaign period?

Returned Members will not be required to re-submit work requests, however BIT will request confirmation that any work is still required.

Local offices

91. If I am re-elected, when after the elections can I re-open my regional or constituency office to conduct new parliamentary duties?

Members may re-open their regional or constituency office to conduct new parliamentary duties at any point after they have been elected.

However, we would advise Members to seek advice from the Allowances Office before extending any current office leases or seeking a new office.

In considering a local office, Members should ensure they understand the requirements of the updated Members' Expenses Scheme for Session 7, as it related to local offices along with associated Scheme guidance.

Should Members choose to extend current leases for the new session please provide confirmation of this extension or a new lease to the Allowances Office.

92. What do I need to think about in relation to terminating my local office lease if I am not returned?

Members should ensure they are aware of the notice requirements of their local office lease. Each Members' notice period will vary depending on when they entered into the agreement and the terms of their arrangement.

Awareness of the notice period allows Members to ensure that following the election, should they not be returned, they can provide the required notice to their landlord in good time before the deadline and in line with the requirements of their particular arrangements.

Any Member needing to terminate their lease can contact the Allowances Office for further guidance.

All costs incurred in giving up a local office following the election will be charged to the Winding Up Provision. Members will be required to supply a copy of formal termination agreements to the Allowances Office.

Any equipment and furniture provided by the Parliament or purchased using the Scheme may be used only for winding up the Member's parliamentary business.

If Members are closing their local offices, they can contact the Facilities Management helpdesk on (0131) 348 5100 to arrange support with removal needs. This includes the uplift, removal, and storage or disposal of furniture. Facilities Management will also provide necessary packing materials such as crates, security tags, labels etc.

Office supplies and equipment

93. If I am re-elected, what should I do with all the equipment and furniture provided by the Parliament?

Re-elected Members will be expected to use their existing equipment and furniture wherever possible. BIT will contact returning Members regarding any equipment upgrades required once new Members' needs have been addressed. Faults or problems with existing equipment should be reported as normal via the IT Helpdesk.

If Members are moving their local offices after being re-elected, they can contact the Facilities Management helpdesk on 0131 348 5100 to arrange support with removal needs. This includes the uplift, removal, storage or disposal of furniture. Facilities Management will also provide necessary packing materials such as crates, security tags, labels etc.

Members should also contact the IT Helpdesk who can help with arranging broadband services and advise on cancellation of current services.

If Members do move their local office after being returned, they should either contact the Security Office on 0131 348 6562 or email MembersSecurity@parliament.scot to discuss arranging a security review of their new premises.

BT A-Z Directory

94. What will happen to my entries in the online BT A-Z Directory after polling day?

Printed versions of the BT Phone Book were discontinued in 2024, but PDF versions remain available on the BT website.

Members are responsible for inserting, amending and removing the entries against their names under 'Members of the Scottish Parliament' in the Business Listings section of the online BT A-Z Directory PDFs. Parliament staff do not have the authority to make any changes to these entries as communication providers and BT will not accept instructions from them in relation to Members' entries.

After polling day, Members who wish the telephone number of their local office to appear in the Business Listings section of the A-Z Directory under 'Members of the Scottish Parliament' should contact the communication provider (phone service provider) for the local office and ask them to add or update the Member's name and contact information on the Directory Management Solutions (DMS) portal, if required. (For example, if the communication provider for the local office is Vodafone, the Member should contact Vodafone.)

Members who currently have an entry in the BT A-Z Directory and who are not re-elected should contact their communication provider as soon as possible and ask them to arrange for:

- removal of the Member's data from the DMS portal
- redaction of their listing from the relevant directory PDF.

Both instructions are necessary for permanent deletion.

Once changes made through a Member's communication provider have been processed, the entry in the PDF should be changed in approximately 10 days.

Engagement activities

95. When will engagement activities start again?

Arrangements for engagement activities such as inward and outward education visits; access to parliamentary business; events and exhibitions; etc will be advertised to Members as they resume after the election. If you are looking for particular support after the election, please contact Public Information who will ensure you receive a response from the relevant service area.