

# Scottish Youth Parliament

## How To SYP: Elections 2021

Information for Local  
Authorities and National  
Voluntary Organisations



**#Stand4SYP**



## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
About the Scottish Youth Parliament.....	3
Elections 2021 Timeline .....	4
National Election Outcomes .....	8
SYP National Election rules and procedures can be found at <a href="http://www.syp.org.uk/syp_elections">http://www.syp.org.uk/syp_elections</a> .....	8
National Elections Objectives .....	9
Expectations of Named Election Coordinator .....	10
Expression of Interest Phase .....	11
Confirmed Candidates Phase .....	13
Confirmed Candidate Phase: Candidate Training.....	14
Election Announcements - Informing SYP .....	17

## Introduction

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) elections will take place between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021.

This pack is your guide to running elections in your local area or in your organisation.

SYP Elections is split into 5 main phases

1. Election Project Planning.
2. Expression of Interest Phase (EOI).
3. Confirmed Candidate Phase.
4. Promote the Vote Phase.
5. Vote Fortnight.

The SYP Elections are then evaluated and a report to influence the next elections will be produced with Named Election Coordinators (NEC) and SYP Staff.

This pack will outline:

- The Scottish Youth Parliament and our role in the elections process.
- 2021 Elections timeline and key milestones
- Expectations of the Named Election Coordinator.
- Pre Election Planning
- EOI Phase.
- Supporting young people to stand as candidates (Confirmed Candidate Phase).
- Supporting young people to campaign during electioneering (Promote the Vote Phase).
- Electing Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) (Vote Fortnight).

The Scottish Youth Parliament staff team are on hand to support you throughout the process of electing new Members. We look forward to working with you to elect the Membership of the Scottish Youth Parliament 2021-23

Jamie Dunlop - National Elections Coordinator  
Deputy Chief Executive of the Scottish Youth Parliament

## About the Scottish Youth Parliament

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) represents Scotland's young people. Our democratically elected members, aged 14-25, listen to and recognise the issues that are most important to young people, ensuring that their voices are heard by decision makers. We encourage all of Scotland's young people to play their part in achieving our vision and provide a national platform for their participation in democracy.

Our vision for Scotland is of a nation that actively listens to and values the meaningful participation of its children and young people. Our goal is to make this vision a reality, in order to ensure Scotland is the best place in the world to grow up.

We are a fundamentally rights-based organisation, and our mission, vision, and values are grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In particular, our purpose embodies Article 12:

*"Young people have the right to express their views freely and have their opinions listened to in all matters affecting them."*

As a completely youth-led organisation, the words and sentiment of Article 12 have profound importance for our work.

Our democratically elected members listen to and recognise the issues that are most important to young people, ensuring that their voices are heard by decision-makers. We exist to provide a national platform for young people to discuss the issues that are important to them, and campaign to effect the change they wish to see.

**Democracy** - We are youth-led and accountable to young people aged 14 to 25. Our democratic structure, and the scale of our engagement across Scotland, gives us a mandate that sets us apart from other organisations.

**Rights** - We are a fundamentally rights-based organisation. We are passionate about making young people aware of their rights, and ensuring that local and national government deliver policies that allow those rights to be upheld.

**Inclusion** - We are committed to being truly inclusive and work tirelessly to ensure the voices of every young person from every community and background in Scotland are heard.

**Political Impartiality** - We are independent from all political parties. By working with all stakeholders, groups, and individuals who share our values, we can deliver the policies that are most important to young people.

## Elections 2021 Timeline

Dates/Time	Phase of Elections	Event/Activity
February 2021	Local Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nominations of <b>Named Election Coordinators</b> within Local Authorities (LAs) or National Voluntary Organisations (NVOs) close.</li> </ul>
March 2021	NEC Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Online training sessions will be held for Named Election Coordinators.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March at 11am</li> <li>Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March at 11am</li> <li>Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 3pm</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Please email Kirstie Morrow <a href="mailto:morrow.k@syp.org.uk">morrow.k@syp.org.uk</a> to book your place.</p>
March 2021	Sitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>March Sitting</b> - Online information session for Named Election Coordinators and Support Workers on the expression of interest phase.</li> </ul>
March 2021	Local Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LAs and NVOs <b>Named Election Coordinators</b> plan their elections</li> <li>Further promotion to young people.</li> </ul>
1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021	Expression of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nominations for expressions interest to be a candidate open.</li> </ul>
April/May 2021	Expression of Interest	<p><b>Inspiring young people to stand as candidates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Named Election Coordinators</b> organise promotion in schools, youth groups and other organisations.</li> <li>Young people complete expression of interest form.</li> <li>Promotional materials available.</li> <li>Young people complete initial training and meet with Named Election Coordinator.</li> </ul>
June 2021	Sitting	<b>Session for Support Workers/Named Election Coordinators</b>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A session on the elections will take place at the Sitting, and will provide information and support for the ‘Confirmed Candidate’ phase of the Elections.</li> </ul>
<b>30<sup>th</sup> June 2021</b>	Expression of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The deadline for <b>Candidates: Expression of Interest Forms</b> is 5pm on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.</li> </ul>
<b>July 2021</b>	Confirmed Candidates	<p><b>Candidate Training</b></p> <p>This year, we will be doing a virtual training session for candidates. You are welcome to run your own candidate training in addition to the national candidate training. More about this will be covered in the NEC training.</p> <p><b>National Candidate Training Dates:</b></p> <p>Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> July at 16:00          Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> August at 16:00          Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> August at 16:00</p> <p><b>Manifesto Development</b></p> <p><b>Campaigning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Named Election Coordinators</b> organise training for candidates to help them develop manifestos and campaign locally.</li> </ul>
<b>August 2021</b>	Confirmed Candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 1<sup>st</sup> July - 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021, NECs will work with EOs to confirm candidacy. Early submissions are welcome.</li> <li>• The quicker this phase is complete, the longer candidates will have to promote their candidacy and campaign.</li> </ul>
<b>September 2021</b>	Promote the Vote!	<p><b>Campaigning, Election Promotion and Publicity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LAs and NVOs promote the vote in their local area, including through local hustings.</li> <li>• SYP work nationally to promote the elections.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YS Elections Platform information deadline:</li> </ul>
8 <sup>th</sup> - 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2021	Election	<p><b>Election</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online elections available via Young Scot.</li> <li>• LAs and NVOs run elections in line with SYP Elections Guidance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Election Announcement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election results should be announced. SYP encourage LAs and NVOs to host a local elections announcement during this time period. SYP will seek to promote each result and create an ‘election night’ atmosphere as results come in across the country, utilising social and new media along with traditional outlets.</li> </ul>
December 2021 - February 2022	Training for MSYPs- Elect	<p><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SYP will offer a programme of training to all MSYPs-elect; this training will cover an induction to the SYP, the role of an MSYP and skills for successful engagement with both constituents and decision-makers.</li> <li>• LAs and NVOs may choose to deliver training of their own to supplement that offered by the SYP.</li> </ul>
March 2022	Sitting and AGM	<p><b>SYP Sitting and Annual General Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recently elected candidates attend their first SYP meeting and are officially appointed as Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament.</li> </ul>

# National Election Outcomes

## 1. National Election Outcomes

A unified electoral process for the SYP does not mean completely uniform election procedures across the country. Local Authorities and NVOs will retain a degree of flexibility, but should adhere to delivering an election which meets specific outcomes.

These overarching outcomes is:

- To elect each and every single member of the Scottish Youth Parliament in an open and democratic election using a common process determined by SYP.

To support this outcome, the following general guidelines must be followed:

- 2.1. Any 14-25 year old living in Scotland may stand as an MSYP.
- 2.2. Potential candidates for MSYP should demonstrate a commitment to the role of an MSYP.
- 2.3. By their first official Sitting of the term all MSYPs will participate in a suitable training programme, by SYP (?).
- 2.4. All young people aged 12 (or in 1<sup>st</sup> year of secondary school) to 25 are permitted to vote for their MSYP. Particular attention must be given to ensuring that voting is accessible outwith schools and to ensure that those aged 18-25 year olds are able to participate.

In order to elect MSYPs, local authorities and NVOs must agree to deliver an election which meets the above outcomes.

SYP National Election rules and procedures can be found at [http://www.syp.org.uk/syp\\_elections](http://www.syp.org.uk/syp_elections).



## National Elections Objectives

The 2021 elections will see all Members chosen by their peers in **November 2021**. This year, the Scottish Youth Parliament is looking to build on previous successes and involve as many young people as possible in the process, both by standing as candidates and voting in the elections.

The national targets are:

- 600 expressions of interest from young people seeking to be candidates.
- 300 confirmed candidates.
- All constituencies contested.
- At least 80,000 votes cast.

We are also aiming to promote the elections to new and previously under-represented groups, including the 18-25 year-old age bracket and marginalised communities.

The Scottish Youth Parliament staff team will support local authorities and NVOs to make this the biggest election in the organisation's history and achieve the outcome of truly representative elected Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament.

# Expectations of Named Election Coordinator

Each local authority and NVO should nominate a **Named Election Coordinator**.

The role of this official will be:

- To run the elections according to SYP Election Procedures.
- To run the promotion of the elections, confirmation of candidates, local training programmes and support for candidates.
- To be the main contact for the Scottish Youth Parliament on the elections.

A form to nominate the **Named Election Coordinator** has been sent to local authority Youth Work Managers and Senior Managers NVOs which should be completed online: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/NECNomination/>.

You will note that there is a declaration at the bottom of this form. By signing this, you are confirming that your local authority or NVO will deliver SYP elections according to the Election Procedure outlined.

The deadline for returning this form is **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021**.

**Named Election Coordinator Training will be held on the following dates:**

- **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March, 11am**
- **Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March, 11am**
- **Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> March, 11am**

## Expression of Interest Phase

The first step is to inspire young people to stand as candidates. The Scottish Youth Parliament runs a controlled nomination system and those expressing an interest in candidacy must do so by completing a Candidates: Expression of Interest Form.

Nominations will officially open on **1st April 2021** and the deadline for the return of Expression of Interest Forms to the Scottish Youth Parliament team will be **30<sup>th</sup> June 2021**.

The initial method of registering interest in participating as a candidate will be through the 'Candidates: Expression of Interest' Form, hosted on the SYP Elections Platform [elections.syp.org.uk](https://elections.syp.org.uk).

Please see the Elections Platform User Guide and Instructions for more information.

A paper form is attached at the end of this document in Appendix D. Should you wish to use paper forms they must be inputted to the SYP Elections Site by the LA or NVO for the EOI to be registered. **Paper forms sent to SYP will not be accepted, please do not send them to SYP.**

It is anticipated some young people who may not be in contact with local youth services will hear about the elections for themselves; **Named Election Coordinators** should direct young people to this page.

**All expressions of interest must be inputted online for a candidate to be registered.**

All registrations must be completed online.

Young people who have submitted an EOI form will get an automatic welcome email sent to the email address that they have given. This email will contain:

- General information about SYP.
- Specific Named Election Coordinator Information.
- Link to online module which will talk about SYP, the role of a MSYP and some other general information.
- Information about the next steps (confirmed candidate stage) and SYP election dates.

NECs will be given a log in to the SYP election site which will allow them to amend EOIs, see status of forms, and eventually confirm the EOI as a candidate.

The elections platform will be covered in the NEC Training and a How to Guide Issued.

The registration form is a simple form which asks for contact details and some demographic information.

Please do not wait until the EOI Deadline to contact young people.

**We strongly recommend to contact young people who have expressed an interest in the EOI phase frequently and arrange an information session/initial contact with young people to maintain their interest.**

During this time, the elections and being part of the Scottish Youth Parliament should be promoted throughout the local area or organisation. A variety of resources are available to support this:

- **Engagement Team:** The Scottish Youth Parliament Youth Engagement Team can be booked to run an Elections 2019 Session with young people. Please contact Kirstie Morrow, [morrow.k@syp.org.uk](mailto:morrow.k@syp.org.uk) to discuss.
- **Promotional Video:** SYP has put together a video explaining more about SYP and what it is like to be a MSYP. This will be available from the Scottish Youth Parliament website and other means. This is available from [www.syp.org.uk/elections](http://www.syp.org.uk/elections)
- **Posters and Leaflets:** Advertising materials are available to download from [www.syp.org.uk/elections](http://www.syp.org.uk/elections). Further materials will be available at the Confirmed Candidate and Promote the Vote phases of the elections (Please see the Timeline for Elections 2019 section of this document).
- **National advertising campaign:** In addition to your own local communication plans, the Scottish Youth Parliament will be promoting the elections using social media, and other channels

*Please contact the Scottish Youth Parliament for further support in planning your local promotion and advertising campaign at [elections@syp.org.uk](mailto:elections@syp.org.uk)*

## Confirmed Candidates Phase

The confirmed candidate phase will launch on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

In this phase we ask that prospective candidates undergo a 'Commitment Pledge' with the **Named Election Coordinator**. The role of a Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament requires passion, determination and, perhaps most importantly, commitment.

It is important to stress that commitment to the role, rather than ability, will be assessed. Any young person who is not able to make the time commitment to the role should not stand in the election. This also enables NECs to get to know the prospective candidate better and find out their motivations for becoming a MSYP.

Further information and examples of activities to run with candidates will be given at the NEC Training.

In previous elections NECs have also held information sessions, drop in evenings or larger events to get all of the prospective candidates together. This has been very beneficial in creating a stronger working relationship between NEC and candidate.

When the tasks are completed to the **Named Election Coordinator's** satisfaction, the candidacy of the individual should be accepted by the local authority or NVO and this information confirmed to the Scottish Youth Parliament via the Elections Platform.

NECs can confirm a candidate on the SYP Elections Site. Once a candidate is confirmed on the SYP Elections site, the confirmed candidate will receive a link to start working on their candidate profile.

NECs will have the ability to edit profiles or send the profile back to the candidate to revise.

The deadline for completing candidate profiles is **31<sup>st</sup> August 2021**. Early submissions are welcome - This is the absolute latest that we can have candidate profiles to ensure that they are all put up on the site in time for the 'promote the vote' phase which starts in September.

Candidate profiles can be finished and uploaded prior to this date - and we ask that you plan time to ensure that the final deadline is met. SYP welcomes early submissions!

## Confirmed Candidate Phase: Candidate Training

The Scottish Youth Parliament recommend **Named Election Coordinators** run local training for candidates who have confirmed their intention to stand during the period November 2018 - January 2019. This training should incorporate:

- **A Confirmed Candidate Training Toolkit will be available on the SYP website.**
- **Open training dates:** the Scottish Youth Parliament will be running a series of open training sessions which candidates can book via their **Named Election Coordinator**. Training will be held on the following dates:
  - Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July
  - Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> July
  - Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> August
  - Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> August

### **Candidate Profiles (formerly called Manifestos)**

In order to run as a candidate for SYP Elections 2019, each candidate must submit a candidate profile. Each candidate will do so by submitting an online profile on the elections website outlining key issues for young people in their local area and what they wish to change. They must also attach a picture, and words to describe themselves. We have also included an option to add a link to a YouTube Video or a PowerPoint presentation. More information and guidance about this will follow.

We have also included options to link a promotional video or a PowerPoint to the candidate profile. Information about this will be in the SYP Elections Platform User Instructions.

The deadline for the submission of candidate profiles is **5pm on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021**.

**NECs should read each of the candidate profiles and ensure that they are suitable and then using the online elections site submit them to SYP.**

## Promote the Vote

During September and October 2021, promotion of the elections to young people across Scotland will take place, mainly via social media. Candidates, **Named Election Coordinators**, local authorities, NVOs, current MSYPs and SYP will all have a part to play in ensuring as many young people as possible vote in the elections, leading to increased awareness of democratic processes and providing a mandate for MSYPs once elected.

**Named Election Coordinators** should:

- Make and execute a plan for local promotion, including hustings events for candidates.
- Work with schools, youth groups and other voluntary groups to encourage voting.

**The Scottish Youth Parliament** will provide:

- Materials aimed at encouraging people to vote in the elections.
- Youth Engagement Team Sessions aimed at encouraging voting.

Internally at SYP, this will be the time where we approve all of the Candidate Profiles and make the elections platform live.

# The Election

Elections must take place during the election fortnight 8<sup>th</sup> November - 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021. These must take place according to the Election Rules and Procedures which can be found on the SYP website.

**SYP Elections 2021 will take place from 10am on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November and run until 2pm on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021. The results will be announced from 4pm onwards on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021.**

## Electoral Systems - Online and Offline

NECs can use either traditional ballots or an online system.

Using the Young Scot online system will allow each area or organisation to upload all their candidates, together with manifestos and pictures if desired, to a central location. This allows young people to directly log in using their Young Scot card number or a temporary number issued to them to cast their vote for their preferred candidate.

When all votes are cast, the system will automatically provide the result, using the STV system.

For more information about the Young Scot Online system please contact Gavin Crosby at Young Scot [gavinc@young.scot](mailto:gavinc@young.scot).

If you wish to use traditional ballot boxes, the election must be carried out according to the Election Procedure (Appendix B) in a fair, open and transparent way which engages as many young voters as possible. Offline ballots should incorporate support from local elections teams (Democratic Services departments, Chief Executives/Returning Officers).

It is worth noting that promotion of the elections is important regardless of the system being used. In many cases, the only difference between an online and offline election is the voting process ends with a computer terminal rather than a traditional paper ballot.



*Further details on the online system will be covered in the training session at the Sitting in October 2018. Please contact the Scottish Youth Parliament if you have any questions or would like to arrange training ahead of this.*

## **Election Announcements - Informing SYP**

SYP should be informed of the outcome of your elections as soon as possible and before a public announcement. This is to ensure the SYP is able to support your announcement. From 4pm on **21<sup>st</sup> November 2021** we will re-create an 'election night' atmosphere with live updates via Facebook and Twitter.

You are encouraged to hold announcement events to inform the electorate of the outcome.

## **After the Elections**

The elections will be evaluated and feedback for future years will be incorporated, as it has been in this document based on feedback from the previous election.

We would be grateful if as many NECs as possible could provide us with feedback on the process.

## **New MSYPs - Training**

The SYP team will offer bespoke training for the new MSYPs in your areas, along with materials to help support your local programme.

MSYPs-elect should have training in the organisation and their role ahead of their first Sitting.

## **Election Night**

Those who are elected as MSYPs will go on to take part in further training with both their supporting organisation and the SYP.

Those who are not elected should also receive support and assistance. There are other opportunities locally and nationally which they could be encouraged to go for to maintain their momentum and interest in joining the organisation. Most of all, they should be encouraged to stand again and learn lessons from the campaign.

The Scottish Youth Parliament team is on hand to assist with any queries you may have about the elections process.



If you require any of these documents in any other formats, please contact us and we will do our best to accommodate you.

## Key Contact

Elections 2019 Mailbox

[Elections@syp.org.uk](mailto:Elections@syp.org.uk)

Scottish Youth Parliament Office

[Hello@syp.org.uk](mailto:Hello@syp.org.uk)

0131 557 0452