



Scottish Youth Parliament Elections 2026

Information for parents and carers

What is the Scottish Youth Parliament?

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) is the democratically elected voice of Scotland's young people. We platform the voices of young people in spaces where decision makers are, at a local, national, and international level. We exist to make changes in young people's lives, to think differently about issues, and to create a meaningful impact to make Scotland the best place to grow up. You can find out more about SYP [here](#).

What are the Scottish Youth Parliament Elections?

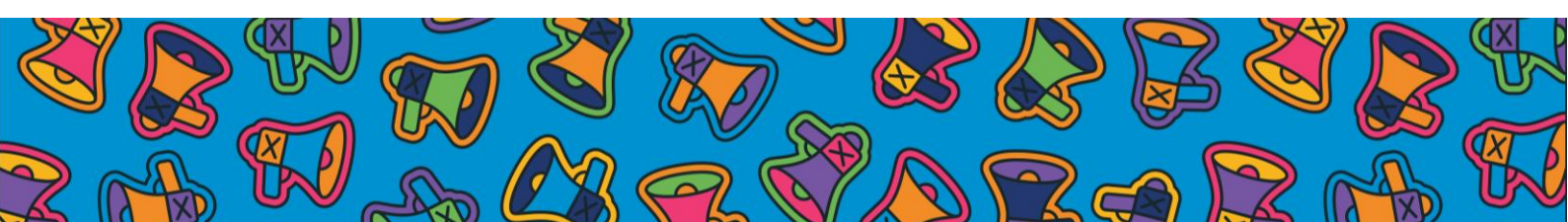
Every two years, around 160 members of the Scottish Youth Parliament - MSYPs - aged 14 to 25 are elected to represent young people in every part of Scotland and to campaign for positive change.


The next SYP elections will take place in November 2026, and this information sheet has been written to help you find out more!

Who are MSYPs?

Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) are young people aged 14 – 25. They are elected every two years to represent young people in every community in Scotland. This includes:

- Taking part in youth voice and participation activities in their local area or organisation, like the local youth forum or youth council.



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- Consulting young people in the area or organisation they represent to find out about the issues they care about. Consulting lots of different people helps MSYPs to understand a range of different views and experiences.
 - Meeting with local decision-makers, like Councillors and Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) to share the views of the young people MSYPs represent.
 - Campaigning for change and taking part in local and national events, like SYP Sitings and online workshops.
 - Attending trainings and meetings to develop their confidence, skills and experiences.
 - Meeting young people across Scotland and making new friends.

MSYPs are supported by a Support Worker – youth workers employed by each of the local authorities and national voluntary organisations which work with SYP. Support Workers work with MSYPs to make sure they are safe and supported, have all the information they need, and can represent young people effectively.

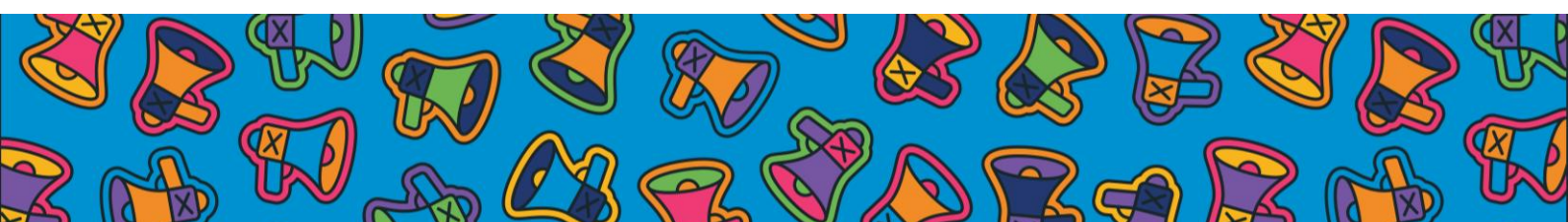
Who can stand to be a candidate in the SYP Elections?

To be a candidate in the SYP elections, young people must:

- Be aged between 14 and 25 on the day voting closes (Sunday 15th November 2026).
- Live, work, or study in the constituency, or be a member of the national voluntary organisation they want to stand for.

In line with SYP's rules relating to political impartiality, candidates do not represent a political party, political campaign, or a campaign in a referendum.

Young people can stand for election as an MSYP in two ways:

- As one of two MSYPs in their local constituency - SYP constituencies are the same as the Scottish Parliament constituencies. You can find out more [here](#).
 - Through a number of [voluntary organisations](#) which have representative MSYPs.
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What's happening when?

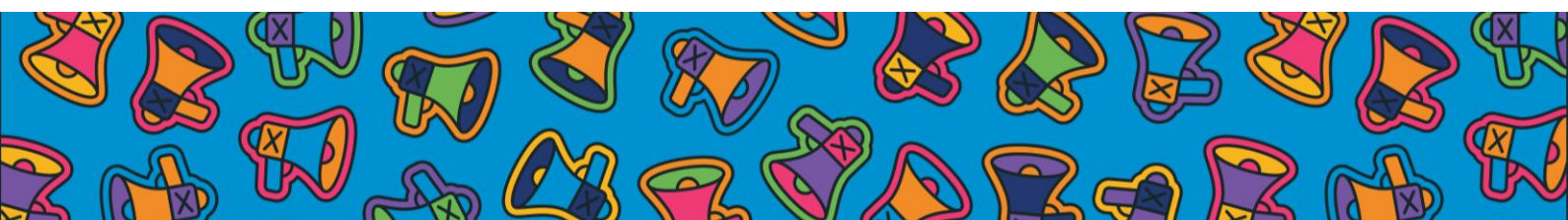
- **April to September 2026 – Applications:** Young people across Scotland will be able to apply to stand for election. Local authorities and voluntary organisations will be taking applications at different times during this period, and these dates will be shared on the SYP elections platform at elections.syp.org.uk.
- **May to November 2026 – Candidate experience:** Candidates will have lots of opportunities through the summer to develop skills, create their election campaign plans, and meet young people from across Scotland.
- **October 2026 – Campaigning:** Candidates will campaign in their local area or voluntary organisation to encourage young people to vote.
- **2nd November - 15th November 2026 – Voting:** Young people across Scotland will vote to elect the MSYPs who will represent them for the next two years.
- **Results will be announced from Monday 16th November 2026,** and the new SYP membership will begin.
- **December 2026 to February 2027 – MSYP induction and training:** all MSYPs will take part in an induction programme to help develop their skills and prepare them to get started in their new role.

How do young people apply?

The Scottish Youth Parliament runs a central application system through a secure online platform. Young people must apply by completing an application form on the SYP Elections Platform at elections.syp.org.uk. All information shared on this platform is stored in line with SYP's privacy policy, available [here](#).

The application form is a simple form which asks for the young person's contact details, emergency contact details, and some other information about them. Young people will also be asked to complete an optional demographics survey, which is anonymous and stored separately from the application form. The demographics survey helps SYP to understand who is engaging with us and ensure we reach a diverse range of young people across Scotland.

Some local authorities and national voluntary organisations haven't started accepting applications yet, but keep an eye on the elections platform at elections.syp.org.uk, and check back in the summer if your local authority or voluntary organisation isn't appearing yet. We'll





add a list of dates for each local authority and voluntary organisation to this page when these dates are confirmed.

What happens after young people apply?

After young people have submitted their application form, they will be asked to take part in a short online training to help them find out more about SYP and what being an MSYP means.

Their details will also be sent to the Election Coordinator for the area or organisation they've applied to stand in. The Election Coordinator will get in touch with the young people to let them know more about the process in their area or organisation. The Election Coordinator should also ask the young person and their parent/ carer to fill in a consent form.

During the elections process, young people will have access to a wide range of events, activities, and training to support them to prepare for and campaign for election. You can find out more about these opportunities in the benefits section on page 5.

Who are Election Coordinators?

Election Coordinators are youth workers in each local authority and national voluntary organisation who facilitate the SYP elections in their organisation. Election Coordinators are normally the Support Workers who work with MSYPs after they are elected.

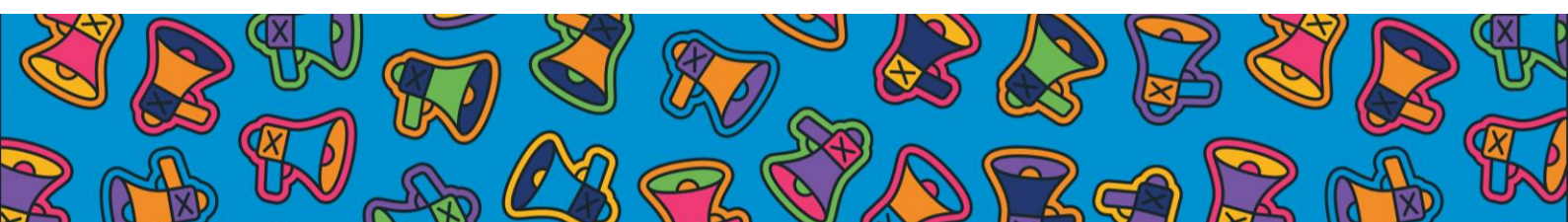
The Election Coordinator will be the main point of contact for young people and parents / carers during the SYP elections process.

Election Coordinators will:

- Keep in touch with young people through the election process.
- Help young people to take part in local and national events and training, and to reflect on their experiences through the process.
- Support young people to prepare their candidate profiles and promote their candidacy to young people in their constituency.
- Share local and national opportunities for candidates to get involved in.
- Coordinate the voting process and results announcement within their area or organisation.

What are the benefits of taking part in the SYP Elections?

Taking part in the SYP Elections is an exciting opportunity for young people across Scotland to have their views and opinions heard, to develop skills and awareness, and to make friends across the country.





SYP and our local authority and national voluntary organisation partners will offer candidates a range of local and national activities, opportunities, and training throughout the process.

Regardless of the outcome of the Scottish Youth Parliament elections, SYP expects all young people who take part in the SYP elections will develop:

- Skills and knowledge to help their overall personal development.
- Understanding and awareness of the Scottish Youth Parliament and the role of an MSYP.
- Local connections and involvement in local youth voice and participation activities.
- Awareness of other opportunities to have their voice heard and how to get involved in other organisations and activities with SYP.

Young people who are successfully elected to become an MSYP will take on the role for two years and will receive an in-depth induction programme to help them carry out this role effectively. They will be supported locally by their Support Worker (who will usually be the Election Coordinator they've worked with during the election process) and the other MSYPs in their area or organisation. They'll also work with the SYP staff team – you can find out more about our staff team [here](#).

Are there any risks of taking part in the SYP elections?

SYP maintains the highest possible standards of safeguarding, and we expect our local authority and national voluntary organisation partners to do the same. SYP takes safeguarding, wellbeing and child protection very seriously and we continually strengthen our guidelines and procedures in line with evolving national policies and best practice. This includes updating policies, training and support every two years. More information about our safeguarding policies and processes is available [here](#).

By applying to stand in the SYP Elections, young people must agree to follow the Candidate Code of Conduct, which is available [here](#). This Code of Conduct outlines the rules and expectations for all young people who take part in the SYP elections. It is designed to help young people and the people who work with them to make sure they are safe and supported throughout the SYP elections process.

Taking part in the SYP Elections is voluntary, and young people will have other commitments outside of their involvement as a candidate. SYP will always emphasise to candidates that their education, health and wellbeing, and personal lives are also important. If young people are struggling to manage their time effectively, they should contact the Election Coordinator in their area or organisation, who can help them explore ways to manage this and signpost





to support for their health and wellbeing in their local areas. Young people can also find information about mental health and wellbeing support services [here](#).

SYP is committed to the implementation of equal opportunities throughout our work, and we take a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of bullying and harassment. Bullying, harassment, and abusive acts of any kind are unacceptable in SYP. Any election candidate who is found to engage in behaviour of this type is likely to be removed from the elections process.

How can I support my young person to take part in the SYP elections?

Parents and carers play an important role in helping young people to take part in the SYP elections. You can support your young person by:

- Asking how they would like you to help them, and checking in with them occasionally to find out how they're getting on.
- Checking they're keeping in touch with their Election Coordinator.
- Learning about the Scottish Youth Parliament together – explore the SYP website ([here](#)) to understand what the Scottish Youth Parliament is and what MSYPs do.
- Encouraging them to take part in candidate opportunities, training, and events, to get the most of their involvement in the SYP elections process.
- Helping them plan their campaign (e.g. managing time, developing their candidate profile and campaign materials)
- Supporting practical needs such as transport to hustings or access to digital resources, if needed. Election Coordinators might also be able to help with this.
- Reassuring them that it's ok to withdraw if they decide the role isn't right for them, and helping them to explore other opportunities they might be interested in locally or nationally.

Candidates are not encouraged to spend money on promotional materials, to make sure the process is fair and accessible for everyone. Election Coordinators might set a limit locally, and they will let young people know about this.





**For more information, please visit
syp.org.uk/elections**

Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) is a charity registered in Scotland (No: SC032662) and a company Limited by Guarantee and registered in Scotland (No: SC227548).