

# SCOTTISH YOUTH PARLIAMENT RISK ASSESSMENT FORM



<b>Activity:</b> SYP Elections 2026	<b>Date(s) of activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 2026 - Planning and preparation</li> <li>• April - September - Candidate Applications</li> <li>• May - November - Candidate Experience Programme</li> <li>• October - Promote the Vote</li> <li>• 2nd - 15th November - Voting period</li> <li>• 16th November (onwards) - Results announcements</li> <li>• November - February - MSYP induction</li> </ul>	<b>Number of participants:</b>  <i>No set numbers. SYP elections programme involves:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SYP staff and Board</li> <li>• Election Coordinators in every local authority and national voluntary organisation.</li> <li>• Young people aged 12 - 25 across Scotland.</li> <li>• National voting platform provider.</li> <li>• Other partners and stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<b>Location(s):</b>  Scotland-wide	<b>Purpose and benefits of activity:</b>  The overarching aim of the Scottish Youth Parliament elections is: <b>To elect every member of the Scottish Youth Parliament in an open and democratic election using a process determined by SYP.</b>	<b>Type of activity</b> (delete as applicable):  National election of all MSYPs for 2026-28 membership
<b>Risk Assessment carried out by (Activity Lead):</b> Rosy Burgess, Head of Participation and Programmes	<b>Risk Assessment carried out on (date):</b> March 2026	<b>Risk assessment reviewed and approved by (Manager / Senior Manager):</b>  Jamie Dunlop, Chief Executive

## Risk and Impact Calculator:

- Low - this represents a low risk, but control measures must still be in place to prevent risk escalation
- Medium - this represents a medium risk - control measures must be in place but interim measures may be required in the short term
- High - urgent action will be required to control risks, and additional support/ resources may be needed

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HAZARD	DESCRIPTION OF RISK	RISK EVALUATION		CONTROL MEASURES	ACTION		
		Likelihood (L / M / H)	Impact (L / M / H)		What is already being done to minimise the risk?	What else needs to be done to minimise the risk?	Responsibility
LA / NVO is unable to nominate an election coordinator / EC is unavailable for a long period (eg, due to sickness or other absence)	<p>Candidates not supported in LA / NVO</p> <p>Low number / no candidates and/or votes in constituency(s) in affected LA / NVO</p> <p>Young people being prevented from participating</p>	M	M	<p>SYP lead staff member will liaise with LA / NVO Youth Work Manager (or equivalent) to identify an alternative person to act as EC.</p> <p>SYP will support the acting EC to carry out the elections within their organisation.</p>	<p>Ensure clear guidance and processes are available for all ECs, which can be shared with acting ECs quickly if necessary.</p>	<p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP)</p> <p>LA / NVO Youth Work Managers as required</p>	Ongoing

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<p>LA / NVO unable to deliver elections within timeline</p>	<p>Young people being prevented from participating</p> <p>Distress/ upset</p> <p>Reflects poorly on SYP/ local authorities / NVOs</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>A detailed elections guide and Standing Orders will be provided to ECs at the start of the process outlining the timeline and what should happen at each stage, to ensure clear guidance is available.</p> <p>All LA's / NVOs will be encouraged to submit an elections plan to SYP at the start of the process, and to speak to the SYP staff lead as early as possible if they will struggle to meet the timeline.</p> <p>Flexibility will be built into the elections timeline so phases can be extended if necessary, and to minimise the impact of delays nationally.</p>		<p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP)</p> <p>LA / NVO ECs and Youth Work Managers as required</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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<p>Problems with SYP Elections Platform</p>	<p>Young people cannot submit an application, candidate profiles, or complete online training module</p> <p>Candidate profiles do not appear correctly</p> <p>ECs unsure how to use the platform</p> <p>NVOs cannot vote during the voting period</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>SYP election platform has been used for three SYP elections previously, and improvements were made ahead of 2023 elections.</p> <p>Testing of the SYP Elections Platform ahead of applications going live in April 2026.</p> <p>SYP staff are in regular contact with platform developer, who maintains the platform and can investigate / fix problems quickly.</p> <p>SYP will deliver training and resources for ECs and SYP staff outlining how to use the elections platform, and will be available to answer questions / show individual ECs how to use it throughout the elections process.</p> <p>In the event of a problem with the voting feature, SYP has used alternative platforms for SYP AGM (eg, OpaVote) and will arrange alternatives as quickly as possible to ensure robust voting process for NVOs.</p>		<p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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<p>Problems with national voting platform</p>	<p>National voting platform not confirmed early enough for LA's to feel able to commit to carrying out elections in November</p> <p>Young people in LA's cannot vote during the voting period</p> <p>Financial / reputational impact for SYP, national voting platform provider, and LA's</p> <p>Results cannot be announced as scheduled</p> <p>Impacts on SYP timeline for 2026-28 membership</p> <p>Distress / upset</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>SYP staff are liaising with a preferred provider to arrange funding and timelines for implementation ahead of voting in November. If funding is not secured, alternative platforms are available and SYP will go to second preference provider in summer 2026.</p> <p>SYP Elections Standing Orders outline options for online and paper ballots, and LA's may choose to use an alternative platform or format to carry out voting, providing this is in line with the rules as outlined in the Standing Orders.</p> <p>SYP staff will keep in regular contact with national voting platform provider to ensure they have all candidate info as required to set up votes before voting open.</p> <p>SYP staff will liaise with ECs in each LA to confirm their plans for carrying out the elections in their area.</p> <p>Preferred platform (COSLA CONSUL platform) has been used for a range of different types of votes, and was piloted for by-elections in Glasgow (2025). Feedback has been gathered from Glasgow to inform planning for 2026 voting period.</p>	<p>National voting platform provider is responsible for maintaining and delivering votes through their voting platform, and for issuing temporary numbers to ECs.</p> <p>SYP to confirm whether SYP staff or national voting platform provider will liaise directly with ECs in LA's who will be using the national voting platform to ensure ECs have all info required to carry out voting in their areas.</p> <p>SYP to work with national voting platform provider to develop and deliver briefings for ECs to understand how the system works.</p> <p>Guidance to be provided to help young people understand how to vote.</p> <p>Feedback on the national voting platform to be gathered from voters, ECs, SYP and national voting platform provider after voting closes to inform improvements for future SYP elections.</p>	<p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP)</p> <p>COSLA</p> <p>SYP staff</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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<p>Election targets not met</p>	<p>Reflects poorly on SYP/ local authorities / NVOs</p> <p>May impact on support from LA's &amp; NVOs for future events/ projects</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>SYP Elections Review led to changes in the way the SYP Elections are monitored and evaluated, including the removal of numerical targets. Instead, a Quality Assurance Framework has been introduced against which elections progress and impact will be monitored.</p> <p>SYP works closely with every LA and NVO to support them to carry out the elections within their organisation. These relationships have been established over a number of years.</p>	<p>SYP will provide a range of resources to support ECs to carry out the elections locally, and to promote the elections nationally.</p> <p>SYP will meet ECs regularly to ensure support throughout the elections process.</p> <p>SYP will monitor progress throughout the elections process, producing quarterly reports, and a detailed evaluation will be carried out at the end of the elections to inform future elections.</p>	<p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP)</p> <p>Local Election Coordinators (LA / NVO)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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<p>Negative feedback from candidate(s) about their experience during the Elections programme</p> <p><i>See also 'Accessibility'</i></p>	<p>Negative social media posts about SYP and/or LA/NVOs.</p> <p>Formal complaint raised by a candidate.</p> <p>Candidate chooses to withdraw due to a negative experience</p> <p>Candidate is concerned about a safeguarding or wellbeing issue</p> <p>Candidate does not feel engaged with the SYP elections programme</p> <p>Candidate is unable to engage with the programme due to personal circumstances (including, but not limited to, digital poverty, caring or parental responsibilities, experience of the justice system, work or education commitments, etc)</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>SYP is introducing a new Candidate Experience Programme to increase the number and range of opportunities for candidates throughout the elections process - this will aim to maintain candidate engagement with the elections programme.</p> <p>Feedback will be gathered from candidates at the end of each candidate training session, and at various set points during the election programme (in line with the SYP Elections Evaluation Framework).</p> <p>A complaints process is outlined in the Candidate Code of Conduct and SYP Elections Standing Orders, and this will be followed in the event a complaint is raised by a candidate.</p> <p>All SYP staff have been trained on and must follow SYP's Safeguarding policies and procedures (available <a href="#">here</a>).</p> <p>SYP staff will assess risks associated with each candidate training and/or opportunity, and a summary will be included in session plans. Any additional opportunities will be risk assessed in line with SYP processes.</p> <p>SYP staff and any MSYPs facilitating candidate training must be a member of the PVG scheme via SYP.</p>	<p>Dates for all candidate training sessions will be scheduled in April 2026 and will be shared with ECs. Information sheets will be shared with candidates as part of their candidate welcome packs.</p> <p>All candidates must be supported by an Election Coordinator within their own organisation. ECs are responsible for coordinating the elections and supporting candidates in their LA or NVO (in line with the SYP Elections Standing Orders), and for ensuring their own organisations' processes and plans are followed.</p> <p>SYP will provide materials and guidance to support ECs to deliver the candidate experience programme locally.</p> <p>SYP will promote opportunities for candidates to participate in wider SYP activities throughout the SYP elections programme. These will be shared with and promoted through ECs.</p>	<p>SYP Participation and Programmes Manager (PPM)</p> <p>Local Election Coordinators (LA / NVO)</p>	<p>Planning in April and May 2026</p> <p>Ongoing, with regular reviews of feedback in line with evaluation framework</p>
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<p>Low number of candidates / uncontested seats / vacant seats</p>	<p>Candidates withdraw</p> <p>LA / NVO does not have capacity to promote the elections during the application phase</p> <p>Low diversity in new membership</p> <p>Lack of representation in some constituencies</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>In previous SYP elections, around 40-50 seats have been uncontested.</p> <p>ECs are responsible for promoting the elections within their own LA / NVO.</p> <p>Promotional materials and guidance provided by SYP will more clearly outline the role of an MSYP, what SYP is, and what the SYP elections process entails, to ensure young people better understand the expectations and opportunities available to them by taking part in the SYP elections.</p> <p>There will always be a number of young people who decide to withdraw due to other commitments and/or priorities. SYP recognises that young people must be able to self-select and make the decision to stand or not.</p> <p>SYP will support LAs / NVOs to carry out a by-election after the national elections if required (normally after 2-3 months, or on a timescale which works for the LA / NVO).</p>	<p>SYP staff will monitor application numbers throughout the process, and will liaise directly with ECs in areas who appear to have low numbers to identify any support available to help increase numbers.</p> <p>LA's / NVOs will be provided with resources including session plans, videos, template social media assets and press releases for use during the elections process.</p> <p>SYP is introducing a new Candidate Experience Programme to increase the number and range of opportunities for candidates throughout the elections process - this will aim to maintain candidate engagement with the elections programme.</p> <p>When candidates withdraw, they will be asked to fill in a short survey to give feedback to inform future election planning.</p>	<p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP)</p> <p>SYP Communications Officer</p> <p>Local Election Coordinators (LA / NVO)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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<p>Vulnerable young people are at risk from others who are not known to them.</p> <p>SYP does not have the capacity to be familiar with all candidates.</p> <p><i>(see also 'Poor behaviour / candidate breaches candidate code of conduct')</i></p> <p><i>(see also 'Accessibility')</i></p>	<p>Abuse, anxiety, injury</p> <p>Candidates withdraw</p> <p>Reflects poorly on SYP/ local authorities / NVOs</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>All candidates must be supported by an Election Coordinator within their own organisation. ECs are responsible for ensuring their own organisations' processes are followed.</p> <p>All SYP staff, Board, CDCs, and current MSYPs aged 16-25 are PVG'd. A staff member will always be present at online SYP-led meetings with candidates.</p> <p>All candidates must agree to abide by the Candidate Code of Conduct before submitting an application, and are expected to adhere to this at all times.</p>	<p>SYP staff will always copy ECs into emails with candidates.</p> <p>SYP Elections Risk Assessment, EQIA and CRWIA will be produced during the elections planning process, and will be reviewed every two months.</p>	<p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP)</p> <p>SYP staff</p> <p>Local Election Coordinators (LA / NVO)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Poor behaviour / candidate breaches candidate code of conduct</p>	<p>Reflects poorly on SYP/ local authorities / NVOs</p> <p>May impact on support from LA's &amp; NVOs for future events/ projects</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>All candidates must agree to abide by the Candidate code of conduct before submitting an application, and are expected to adhere to this at all times.</p> <p>Election Coordinators are responsible for supporting candidates within their organisations.</p> <p>EC may decide whether or not the candidate may remain in the process.</p>	<p>The process for addressing complaints or concerns is more clearly outlined in the SYP Elections Standing Orders and the revised Candidate Code of Conduct. This will be clearly communicated to Election Coordinators and Youth Work Managers.</p>	<p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP)</p> <p>Local Election Coordinators (LA / NVO)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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<p>Accessibility</p>	<p>Young people being prevented from participating</p> <p>Distress/ upset</p> <p>Reflects poorly on SYP/ local authorities / NVOs</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>SYP will make every effort to ensure national SYP-led activities are accessible for all young people who want to take part in the SYP Elections Programme.</p> <p>Young people will be asked to indicate any access or support requirements on their candidate application form, and on any activity sign up forms.</p> <p>ECs are responsible for ensuring accessibility of any activities within their own LA / NVO.</p>	<p>SYP will create large-print and subtitled versions of elections resources.</p> <p>SYP will liaise with ECs and candidates who require additional support to provide accessible materials / BSL etc where required.</p> <p>In addition to online training modules (during candidate experience programme), SYP will provide ECs with ppt / session plans to use locally, which include suggested adaptations. A video summarising each session will also be available for young people who can't attend an online / in person training.</p>	<p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP)</p> <p>SYP staff</p> <p>Local Election Coordinators (LA / NVO)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Young people aged 18+ / not in school unable to participate in elections process</p>	<p>Young people being prevented from participating</p> <p>Distress/ upset</p> <p>Reflects poorly on SYP/ local authorities / NVOs</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>SYP will focus promotional activities on 18+ and seldom-heard groups, including liaising with colleges, universities, and other national organisations.</p> <p>ECs are responsible for ensuring accessibility of any activities within their own LA / NVO.</p> <p>SYP Elections Standing Orders outline requirement for LA's / NVOs to ensure opportunities available for young people not in school to participate.</p>		<p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP)</p> <p>SYP Communications Officer</p> <p>SYP staff</p> <p>Local Election Coordinators (LA / NVO)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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<p>National emergency / external incident impacting delivery of SYP Elections</p>	<p>Cancellation or postponement of SYP elections</p> <p>Financial impact - loss of cost of running elections</p> <p>Reputational impact - reflects poorly on SYP and partners</p> <p>May impact on support from LA's &amp; NVOs for future events/ projects</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>All possible measures will be taken to avoid cancellation of the elections. However, if this does occur, ECs and candidates will be informed as soon as it is recognised that the elections may need to be postponed or cancelled.</p> <p>Alternative plans will be made in conjunction with ECs and YWMs to ensure elections can be carried out at a suitable time.</p>	<p>Following the delay to the 2023 SYP Elections, scenario planning took place to identify processes to enable the SYP Elections to restart as quickly as possible in the event of an unexpected issue impacting the delivery of SYP elections in line with the established timeline. These scenario plans are still available and will be updated for the 2026 SYP elections.</p>	<p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP)</p> <p>SYP Board and SMT</p> <p>Local Election Coordinators (LA / NVO)</p> <p>Youth Work Managers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Low SYP staff capacity to support / deliver elections</p> <p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP) is off work unexpectedly</p>	<p>Impacts on contact with Election Coordinators</p> <p>ECs may not receive support or answers to questions in a timely manner</p> <p>May delay elements of the elections process</p> <p>Candidates withdraw</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>A detailed elections guide and SYP Elections Standing Orders will be provided to ECs at the start of the process outlining what should happen at each stage, to ensure clear guidance is available.</p> <p>Election plans and resources (including the admin side of the SYP elections platform) will be accessible to all SYP staff.</p> <p>SYP staff will hold fortnightly EC meetings for LA and NVO ECs. If the lead SYP staff member is not available, another staff member will attend in their place and feed back to the lead staff member. If another staff member is not available, the meeting will be rescheduled to another time.</p>	<p>Minimise key-person dependency by ensuring multiple SYP staff are aware of and understand key SYP Elections processes and procedures.</p> <p>SYP staff to have separate guidance and process documents which clearly outline SYP-led processes (eg, administration of the SYP Elections Platform, template email responses, FAQs, etc)</p>	<p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP)</p> <p>SYP Staff</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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<p>Negative media or social media coverage of SYP / elections</p>	<p>Candidates withdraw</p> <p>Reflects poorly on SYP/ local authorities / NVOs</p> <p>May impact on support from LA's &amp; NVOs for future events/ projects</p> <p>Distress/ upset</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>LA's / NVOs will be provided with template social media assets and press releases for local use during the elections process.</p> <p>SYP works with an External Communications Advisor and will liaise with them throughout the elections programme.</p> <p>SYP External Communications Advisor will liaise with national media during the elections process to promote our work.</p>	<p>If candidate posts negatively about SYP / elections, this is a breach of the Candidate code of conduct and will be addressed in line with the SYP Elections Standing Orders (<i>see 'Poor behaviour / candidate breaches candidate code of conduct'</i>)</p> <p>SYP will work with external communications advisor to address negative coverage in the event this occurs.</p>	<p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP)</p> <p>SYP Communications Officer</p> <p>SYP Board / SMT</p> <p>(SYP External Communications Advisor)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Safeguarding and child protection</p>	<p>A safeguarding or child protection concern is raised about SYP or LA/NVO practices</p> <p>A young person discloses a safeguarding concern</p> <p>Parents/ carers or other adults raise a concern relating to SYP or LA/NVO</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Section 12 of the SYP Elections Standing Orders outlines SYP's expectations in relation to Safeguarding and Risk Management for the SYP elections.</p> <p>SYP staff and partner organisations must follow their own organisations' relevant safeguarding policies, and should carry out their own risk assessment in line with their organisation's processes.</p> <p>A copy of the SYP elections risk assessment (this document), EQJA and CRWIA will be shared with ECs.</p> <p>This risk assessment and the SYP Elections CRWIA / EQJA will be reviewed every two months.</p>	<p>SYP will provide information sheets for parents and carers / youth workers / teachers about the SYP Elections, which will include detail about SYP's safeguarding procedures. These info sheets will be available on the SYP website and on the SYP Election Coordinator Hub.</p> <p>Joining information and/ or briefings will be provided to participants ahead of any SYP-led training and/ or event, which will include staying safe information. Templates of these documents will be shared with ECs for local use.</p> <p>Facilitators should share a content warning and signposting information ahead of discussing any potentially upsetting topics.</p>	<p>National Elections Coordinator (HoPP)</p> <p>Local Election Coordinators (LA / NVO)</p> <p>SYP staff</p>	<p>Ongoing, with regular review every two months</p>

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