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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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# Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

## Subordinate legislation considered on 6 November 2025



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# Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

To consider and report on the following (and any additional matter added under Rule 6.1.5A)—

- (a) the practice and procedures of the Parliament in relation to its business;
- (b) whether a member's conduct is in accordance with these Rules and any Code of Conduct for members, matters relating to members interests, and any other matters relating to the conduct of members in carrying out their Parliamentary duties;
- (c) the adoption, amendment and application of any Code of Conduct for members;
- (d) matters relating to public appointments in Scotland;
- (e) matters relating to the regulation of lobbying; and
- (f) matters falling within the responsibility of the Minister for Parliamentary Business.

2. Where the Committee considers it appropriate, it may by motion recommend that a member's rights and privileges be withdrawn to such extent and for such period as are specified in the motion."



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# Committee Membership



**Convener**  
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Scottish Labour



**Deputy Convener**  
**Ruth Maguire**  
Scottish National Party



**Emma Roddick**  
Scottish National Party



**Annie Wells**  
Scottish Conservative  
and Unionist Party



**Sue Webber**  
Scottish Conservative  
and Unionist Party

# Draft statutory guidance on imprints for non-party campaigners at Scottish Parliamentary elections and council elections in Scotland (SG/2025/215)

1. At its 19th meeting on 30 October 2025 and 20th meeting on 6 November 2025 the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee considered Draft statutory guidance on imprints for non-party campaigners at Scottish Parliamentary elections and council elections in Scotland (SG/2025/215), a document subject to parliamentary control. The document was laid under the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Act 2025 on 16 September 2025.
2. The draft statutory guidance is subject to the negative procedure. Under section 58 of the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Act 2025, Scottish Ministers are required to lay the guidance before the Parliament for a period of 40 days within which the Parliament can resolve not to approve the guidance.
3. The purpose of this guidance is to explain the operation of Part 8 of the Act, concerned with information that is to be included with digital material and how to comply with its requirements, and explain how the Electoral Commission will undertake its enforcement functions where there is a breach or suspected breach of Part 8 of the Act.
4. [The guidance was considered by the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee on 23 September 2025.](#) The DPLR Committee made no recommendations in relation to the document.
5. On 30 October, Emma Roddick MSP indicated that she intended to lodge a motion seeking the Committee's agreement to recommend to the Parliament that the Draft statutory guidance on imprints for non-party campaigners at Scottish Parliamentary elections and council elections in Scotland (SG/2025/215) should not be approved.
6. At the Committee's meeting on 6 November, Emma Roddick moved motion S6M-19488. Graeme Dey, Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans, attended for the debate. Following debate, the motion was disagreed to by division (For 0, Against 3, Abstentions 2).
7. Accordingly, the Committee agreed not to recommend to the Parliament that the Draft statutory guidance on imprints for non-party campaigners at Scottish Parliamentary elections and council elections in Scotland (SG/2025/215) not be approved.

# Subordinate legislation relating to absent voting requirements

8. At its 20th meeting on 6 November, the Committee considered:
  - the Absent Voting at Scottish Parliament and Local Government Elections (Signature Refresh) (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Order 2025 [draft], which is subject to the affirmative procedure,. It was laid on 22 September 2025 under The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 and the Scotland Act 1998.
  - the Representation of the People (Absent Voting at Local Government Elections) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2025 (SSI 2025/263), which is subject to the negative procedure. It was laid on 22 September 2025 under the Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services (Scotland) Act 2006.
9. The instruments relate to arrangements for the signature refresh requirements for proxy and postal votes for the forthcoming Scottish elections.
10. The Committee has previously considered an LCM in relation to the Absent Voting (Elections in Scotland and Wales) Act 2025 which would enable access to the Online Absent Voting Application in relation to Scottish Parliament elections and local authority elections in Scotland.
11. In evidence to the Committee on 18 September 2025, the then Minister for Parliamentary Business:
  - ” “highlighted that serious concerns had been raised about a go-live for the system occurring before May next year. I am happy to discuss that point further today, if you are inclined to do so, convener, and I made that point in my letter. However, I want to let the committee know that I have already set in motion a mitigation measure, which is set out in statutory instruments that will be laid on Monday, to delay until the end of 2026 any signature refresh for absent votes that are required before the election in May. That measure should reduce any scope for confusion between the online absent vote application system for UK Parliament elections and the separate process for Scottish Parliament elections.”
12. The Policy Notes accompanying the instruments explain that the statutory instruments:
  - ” “seek to alleviate this issue by disapplying the requirement in law for Electoral Registration Officers to send a notice requesting a fresh signature from persons entitled to vote by post or by proxy at whose signature on record is more than 5 years old. This requirement is temporarily disappplied where the notice would otherwise require to be sent by 31 January 2026. The registration officer will instead be required to send the notice by 31 January 2027. It is hoped that this will reduce scope for voter confusion and the potential for people having to suddenly seek an absent vote in spring 2026. It will also save voters from providing a new signature sample before the election.”

13. The instruments considered by the Committee therefore constitute the mitigation measure referred in the Scottish Government's evidence to the Committee on 18 September.
  14. The Committee agreed that it did not wish to make any recommendation on the Representation of the People (Absent Voting at Local Government Elections) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2025 (SSI 2025/263).
  15. Graeme Dey, Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans, moved motion S6M-19176 seeking the Committee's agreement to recommend to the Parliament that the Absent Voting at Scottish Parliament and Local Government Elections (Signature Refresh) (Miscellaneous Amendment) (Scotland) Order 2025 be approved.
16. The motion was agreed to without division. Accordingly, the Committee recommends to the Parliament that the Order be approved.

