2022 Local Government Candidate Diversity Survey
Q&A for Returning Officers

All candidates standing at the 2022 council elections are being invited to fill out a survey asking about demographic characteristics; previous experience and any caring responsibilities they have.

Information about the background to the survey and links to all survey materials are available at: [Diversity in political representation in Scotland](). This document is provided in case ROs receive questions about the survey directly from candidates, however, all queries can also be directed to the Scottish Government (contact details at end).

Why are we doing this survey?
A. Data on who stands for election to Scotland's councils is currently very patchy. Gaining a better understanding of who stands, and who is elected, is important for a range of reasons including:
- ensuring initiatives to widen access to elected office are informed by accurate data; and
- helping organisations to have more information on the characteristics and range of experiences and responsibilities of councillors, so they can better support them

Is the survey for all candidates or just new candidates?
A. All candidates. The usefulness of the survey really depends on as many candidates as possible responding, whether they are new/returning candidates or existing councillors; and whether they are independent candidates or representing a political party.

The survey should take **no more than 5 minutes to complete**.

How can candidates respond?
A. Candidates can respond online or on paper (returning by post)
- [Online survey link]()
- Paper versions of the questionnaire are in the survey packs available for ROs to hand out to candidates or their agents, along with an information leaflet and pre-paid reply envelope. Returning Officers do not need to collect and send the responses

- If needed the [paper questionnaire]() is also available online for printing and return. ROs have been given a small number of spare prepaid envelopes in case needed. Alternatively candidates/agents can request these from us (contact details at end) or use their own envelope and post to: 2022 SG DDP, APS Group, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh, EH6 5NA.

Can candidates get help accessing and completing the survey?
A. Yes, candidates can call us on 07973 949 256 if they would like:
- to request the questionnaire in large print, Easyread or any other format; and/or
- assistance to complete the form over the telephone.

The online survey is run through Questback which is WCAG 2.0 AA compatible, meaning that candidates should be able to respond to the online survey when using a variety of accessibility tools/software, for example screen readers.

How has the questionnaire been developed?
A. The questionnaire has been developed with input from stakeholders and academics, and most of the questions mirror questions in the 2022 Census and/or the Scottish Household Survey so that we can compare outputs from the survey to the national picture.

The Sex and Gender question in the survey aligns with the 2022 Scotland's Census question and guidance from the Scottish Government's Chief Statistician. A recent legal petition in respect of the Census sex question guidance was refused, so the question in this survey continues to reflect what is in the 2022 Census.

Why are we asking candidates for their names?

A. We ask for the name candidates are standing under, only for the purpose of being able to record which candidates have been elected following the election. This means we can understand the diversity both of all candidates at the elections, and of those who are ultimately elected.

Once the Scottish Government receives the data, **the dataset will be pseudonymised.** Names will then be deleted within 30 days of the local government elections, and only aggregated data will be published with the survey findings. For more information on how the Scottish Government will use this information please see the Privacy Notice published on the Scottish Government Website.

Do candidates need to provide their email addresses?

A. No. At the end of the survey candidates are asked if they would like to be sent a copy of the report and/or if they would be willing to participate in possible follow up research. Candidates only need to provide their email address if they respond 'yes' to either of these questions, to enable us to send the report and/or to contact them about possible future research. Respondents have the right to withdraw from the re-contact database at any time by contacting the Scottish Government.

What is the deadline for the survey?

A. We are seeking responses online or on paper by **Friday 15th April**.

How will candidates personal information be treated?

A. All personal information that candidates provide to us is treated in confidence. For more details please see the Privacy Notice published on the Scottish Government Website.

How can Returning Officers request more packs?

A. We have based the number of packs each council receives on the number of candidates they had at the 2017 election plus a few extras.

We understand some / all council areas will organise briefing session after the nomination period. If you need to request additional packs during this time or before, please do not hesitate to contact us at the details below.

Have political parties been made aware of the survey?

A. Yes – Scottish Government analysts have presented the project to the Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel (SPPPP) on a couple of occasions. It has received a positive response, and the Electoral Commission is intending to write to the SPPPP mailing list to ask them to encourage all agents to encourage candidates to respond.

Who should you contact for further information?

A. If you (or candidates) have any queries please do not hesitate to:

- Email: diverserepresentationdata@gov.scot or,
- Call: 07973 949 256.

Thank you very much indeed for your support with this project