



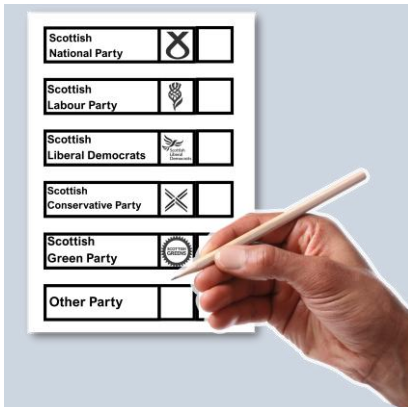
## **What it was like to vote as a disabled person in Scotland in the 2026 election**



## **Easy Read**



## What this document is about



There was an election in Scotland on 7 May 2026.



People who live in Scotland got to choose who they wanted to represent them as Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs).



Being able to vote is important.

Voting makes sure that everyone gets a say about who makes big decisions about the country.



Voting can be difficult for disabled people.



Disability Equality Scotland asked disabled people in Scotland:

- what it was like to vote in 2026
- how **accessible** the voting was to them

**Accessible** means it is easy for everyone to take part.

## How we found our information



We asked people about this in 3 surveys.

We:



- emailed the surveys to our members
- emailed other disabled people's organisations
- shared the surveys on social media



The first survey was for people who voted by post.



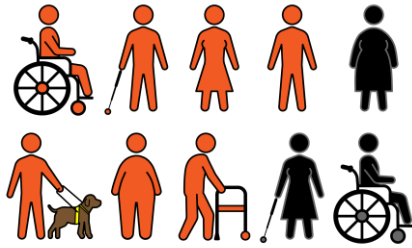
The second survey was for people who voted at a **polling station**.

A **polling station** is a place where people go to vote on the day of the election.

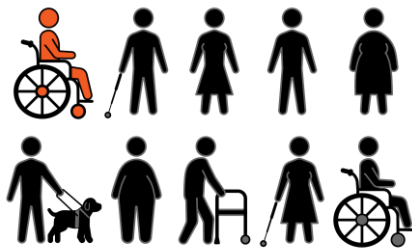


The third survey was for people who did not vote.

## The results



7 out of every 10 people said the experience of voting was good.



1 out of every 10 people said they had a bad experience.



Everyone who votes has the right to keep their vote secret.

A few people were not able to keep their vote a secret because of their disability.



We think the experience of voting should be good for everyone.

We ask the people who organise the election to make voting accessible to everyone.

## Getting to the polling station



Half of the people we asked got to the polling station by car or taxi.

Most of them were able to park or get dropped off in a suitable space close to the entrance.



Most of the people who

- walked
- used a wheelchair
- cycled

did not have any problems on their journey.

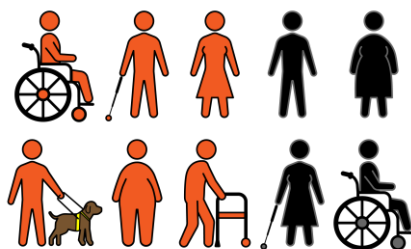


4 out of every 10 people who travelled this way had to go over bumpy or uneven road surfaces.



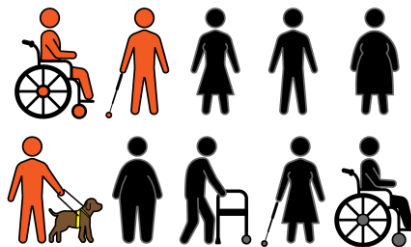


1 out of every 10 of them had to cross a busy road without a crossing.



6 out of every 10 people who voted by post did so because of their disability or injury.

This made it too difficult to get to their polling station.



3 out of every 10 people who did not vote said this was because they could not get to their polling station



This shows that there is still important work to be done.

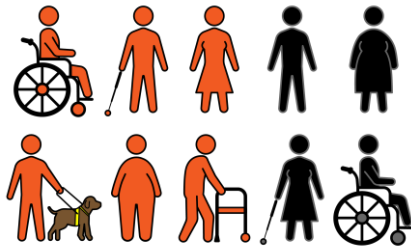
Disabled people's needs has to be thought of when choosing polling places.



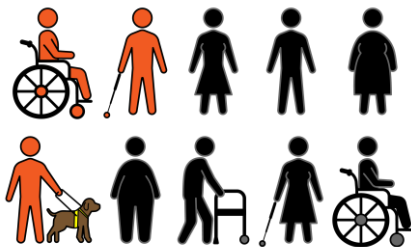
It could help if disabled people had options for where they vote.

Then they could choose a polling station that is accessible to them.

## How accessible the polling stations were



6 out of every 10 people said it was very easy to get into the building to vote.



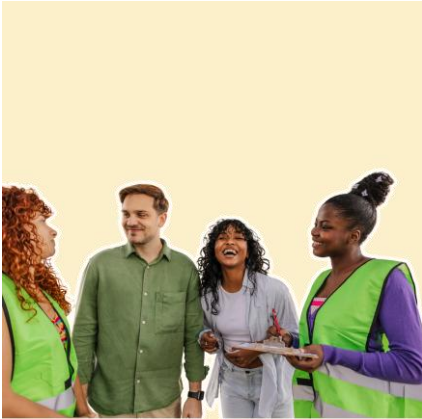
3 out of every 10 people said it was quite easy.



Almost 8 out of every 10 people said it was very easy to find where they needed to go inside the polling station.

Only a few people said it was confusing.





9 out of every 10 people said the staff at the polling station were helpful.



These results look good but we must remember that not everyone was able to vote in their polling station.

1 out of every 10 people said they voted by post because they could not access the polling station.

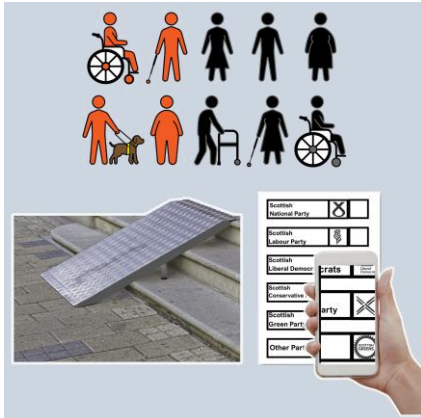


It is disappointing to hear that some polling stations did not have things like seating or doorbells.

These are things that polling stations are told they should offer.

## Equipment at polling stations

4 out of every 10 people who voted at a polling station told us they need **adjustments and equipment** like:



- a ramp
- a booth accessible to wheelchairs
- a pencil grip
- technology on their mobile phone
- a **tactile voting device**

A **tactile voting device** is a sheet of plastic placed over a ballot paper to help blind and partially sighted people vote.



More than 8 out of every 10 people who needed these things told us they got the support they needed.



This is good but not good enough.

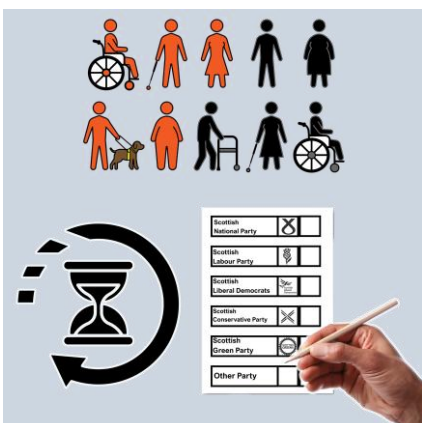
We ask that all polling station have these things in the future.

## Voting by post



6 out of every 10 people who voted by post preferred this way of voting.

This was because their disability or injury made it difficult to get to a polling station.



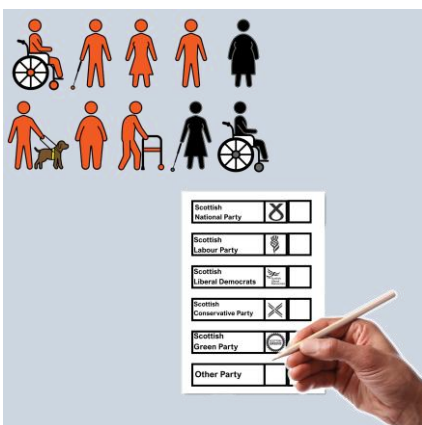
Almost half said they voted by post because it lets them to take their time when voting.



About 1 out of every 10 people said they voted by post because their polling station is not accessible.



8 out of every 10 people said it was easy to apply for a postal vote.



More than 7 out of every 10 people said it was easy to fill in their **voting pack**.

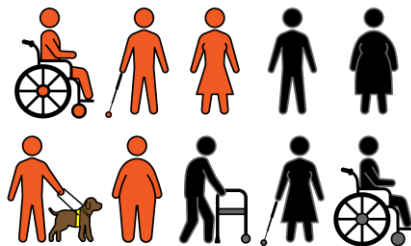
A **voting pack** is where you select your chosen candidates when voting by post.



We think the **Electoral Commission** should work with disabled people to make voting by post as inclusive and accessible as possible.

The **Electoral Commission** is the organisation that makes sure elections work well.

## What people knew about equipment and adjustments



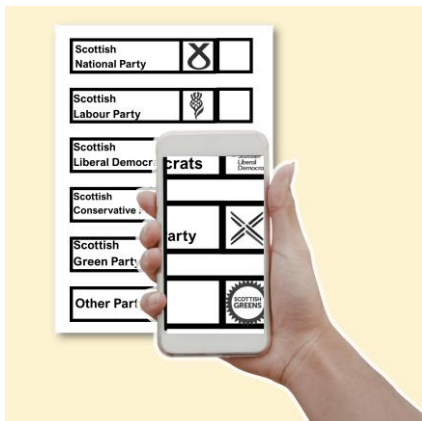
Half of the people we asked knew that:

- there must be a lowered voting booth
- voters can bring a service animal like a guide dog

Less than half of people knew that:



- polling stations must have ramps
- voters can bring somebody over 18 to help
- polling stations must have equipment ready to support disabled people

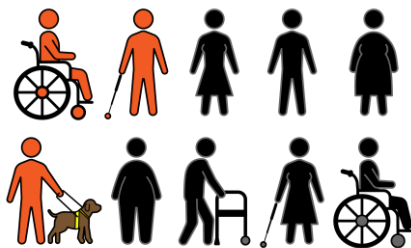


Not many people knew that they could:

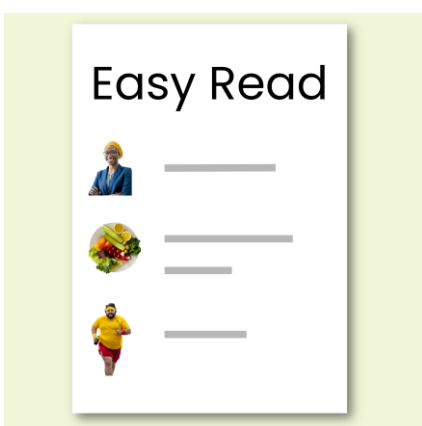
- ask the person in charge of the polling station to help fill in their vote
- use assistive technology on their mobile phone



1 person did not vote because they could not fill in the ballot papers.



Over 3 out of every 10 people did not know about the adjustments and equipment we asked about.

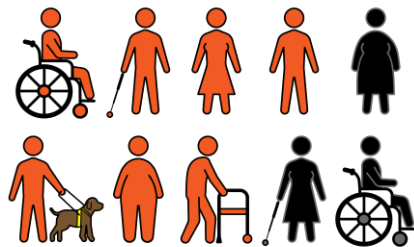


We want the Scottish Government and local authorities to make this information easier to find.

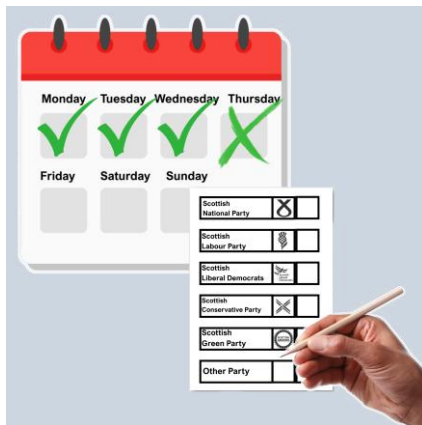
They should also make information in alternative formats like British Sign Language (BSL) and Easy Read.



## Making future elections more accessible

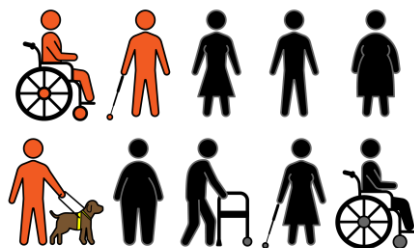


7 out of every 10 people who voted by post said they would still prefer to vote by post even if changes were made.



More than 1 out of 3 people liked the idea of being able to:

- vote before election day
- vote at any polling station they choose that is near them'



Around 3 out of every 10 people liked the idea of voting at:

- a place central to them
- a mobile polling station

# Thank you



We think it is important to keep trying new things that will help more people take part in future elections.



Thank you for reading this Easy Read.

Made with



In this Easy Read we got our pictures from BaseSix and Canva.