Preparing for SPE 2026 – RO / ERO checklist

Key actions to prioritise and cascade by the end of the year as you develop your plans.

Electoral Registration Officers

Legal changes	☐ Review and understand new legal responsibilities ☐ Assess impact on established processes / procedures ☐ Cascade to relevant staff ☐ Consider if and how changes need to be communicated to local stakeholders.

Project planning	☐ Engage with CRO / multiple CROs to collaborate and plan approach
	☐ Discussions should include:
	  ☐ Legislative and process changes
	  ☐ Risks
	  ☐ Contingency plans
	  ☐ Boundary changes
	  ☐ Cross boundary factors
	  ☐ Processes and data flow
	  ☐ Protocols / procedures / records
	  ☐ Communication between teams
	  ☐ Accessibility
	  ☐ Engagement and awareness

Boundary changes	☐ Implement any boundary changes and subsequent polling district and place reviews changes ☐ Ensure changes are robustly checked and accurately reflected in registers and data ☐ Test for quality assurance
Cyber-security	☐ Prioritise Cybersecurity as a key risk in all your plans and delivery ☐ Engaging with the latest guidance, information and developments. ☐ Ensure staff are alert to risks and are familiar with the plans for incident response
Reserved postal vote reapplication	☐ Continue to manage and review the reserved postal reapplication process ☐ Report concerns and responses to the SAA ERC, recording and monitoring progress.
OAVA	☐ Maintain sight of progress with convergence ☐ Identify the preparatory work your teams need to undertake ☐ Consider how this impacts SPE 2026 preparation & delivery ☐ Review risks in the timing and challenges of communication when engaging with voters

Returning Officers

Legal changes	☐ Review and understand new legal responsibilities ☐ Cascade to relevant staff ☐ Assess impact on established processes/ procedures ☐ Consider how these changes may require to be communicated to local stakeholders.

Lessons learned	☐ Review lessons learned and challenges from UKPGE 2025 and SPE 2021, for example
	   ☐ Staffing /overall resilience
	   ☐ Postal vote delivery challenges
	   ☐ Engagement and communication with stakeholders across multiple channels and audiences

Project board	☐ Establish a Project Board including the ERO and Police Scotland SPOC, and those with expertise in communication, engagement, accessibility, and (cyber)security
	☐ Agree schedule of meetings, standing agenda includes:
	   ☐ review of project plan, risk register & contingency plans
	   ☐ boundary changes
	   ☐ cross boundary factors
	   ☐ protocols / procedures / records
	   ☐ communication between teams
	   ☐ engagement and awareness, communication plans
	   ☐ accessibility provisions
	   ☐ security and cyber concerns

Boundary changes	☐ Ensure the constituency boundary changes are actioned ☐ Implement any changes from resulting polling district / place reviews ☐ Checked all changes to ensure they accurately reflect new boundaries and reflected in registers ☐ Ensure plans are in place to test data and files well in advance of key printer deadlines

Regional planning	☐ Schedule regular meetings with the RRO
	☐ Agenda includes:
	   ☐ project and contingency plans
	   ☐ communication across the region / contact and enquiry handling
	   ☐ local approaches to delivery that need to be highlighted to staff and stakeholders
	   ☐ communication of regional totals and test of processes

Accessibility	☐ Review revised statutory guidance and your planned approach ☐ Review plans for engagement and communication with voters and those that support them ☐ Consider how you del with requests for support and adjustments for voters ☐ Ensure that training plans are in place so staff are confident in supporting voters and using available equipment
Safety and Security	☐ Assess level of threat, risk and challenges at your election ☐ Take note of contentious campaigns, local previous and current issues ☐ Consider how you will manage any issues and incidents ☐ Embed into project, risk and contingency planning
Cyber-security	☐ Prioritise cybersecurity as a key risk in all your planning and delivery ☐ Engage with the latest guidance, information and developments. ☐ Ensure staff are alert to risks and are familiar the plans for response in the event of an incident

----

Useful links

EMB Convener's directions

Directions for the Scottish Parliament elections 2026 will be published on the EMB website in the coming weeks, alongside other processes and templates for communicating regional results in due course. Electoral Management Board for Scotland

Electoral Commission guidance and resources

Candidate and Agent guidance for the Scottish Parliament election, published 19 September 2025. Guidance for Candidates and Agents at Scottish Parliament elections | Electoral Commission

RO and ERO guidance for the Scottish Parliament election will be republished in November 2025.

- Electoral Registration Officer | Electoral Commission

- Returning Officer | Electoral Commission

Updates

Electoral Administration bulletin – Scotland gives key updates to Electoral Commission guidance and resource updates, requests for data and returns and key changes to processes. Subscribe at EA Bulletins | Electoral Commission

Help, advice and support

Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB)	**The Electoral Commission**
07568 102648 / 0131 469 3126 chris.highcock@edinburgh.gov.uk	0131 225 0200 infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk

---

This will document also be circulated by email to allow you to use the links provided.

October 2025.