

Electoral Statistics for Scotland

as at 1 December 2019

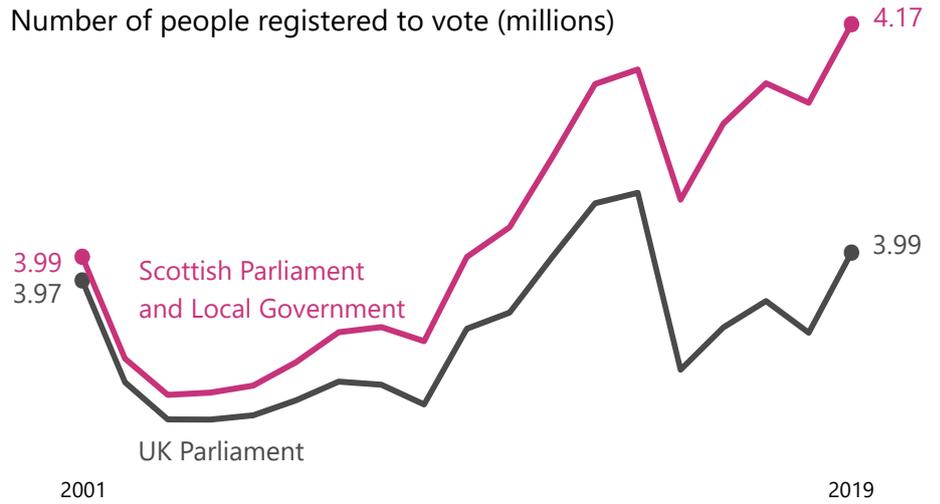
Published on 24 April 2020



This statistical report provides information on the number of people registered to vote in UK Parliament, Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections.

Electorates in Scotland have increased in 2019

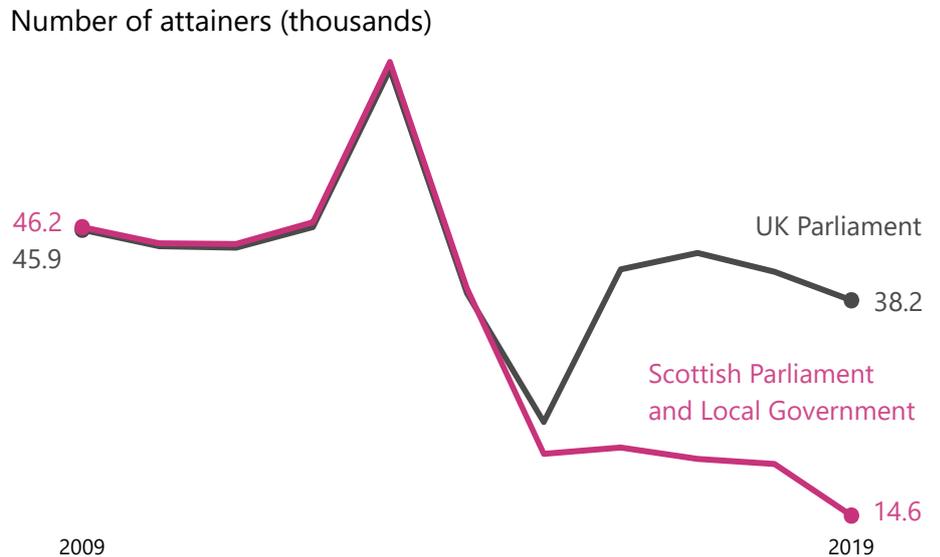
Compared to 2018 the electorate for UK Parliament elections increased by 1.6% and the electorate for Scottish Parliament and local government elections by 1.5%. The decrease in 2015 was caused by the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER).



In 2015 the voting age for Scottish Parliament and local government elections was lowered to 16.

Decrease in number of attainers compared to the previous year

The numbers of attainers recorded at December 2019 is believed to be an undercount due to delays in the registration process. Since the voting age was lowered in Scotland, there have been more attainers for UK Parliament elections than for Scottish Parliament and local government elections.



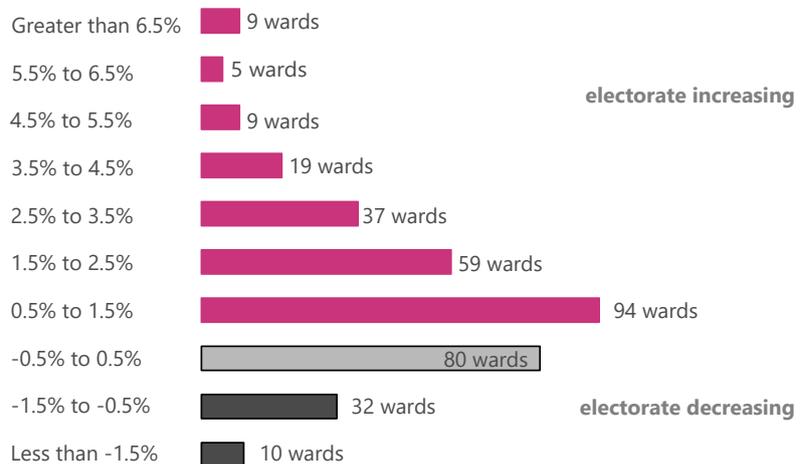
Attainers are persons who will become old enough to vote in the coming year - turning 18 before December 2020 for UK Parliament elections and turning 16 for Scottish Parliament and local government elections.

Most electoral wards see an increase compared to their electorate in 2018

Between December 2018 and December 2019, the electorate increased in 79% (278) of the 354 electoral wards in Scotland.

Electoral wards are the sub-council level areas that are used to elect councillors for local government elections.

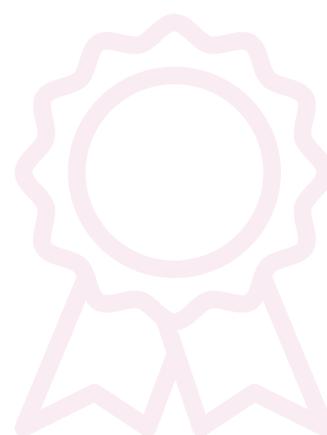
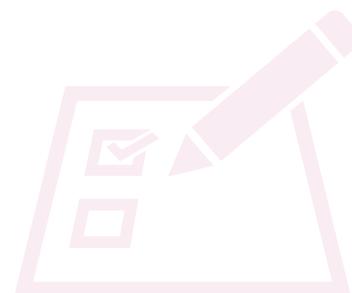
Change in electorate over previous year



Summary of main points

Between December 2018 and December 2019:

- The total number of **UK Parliament electors** in Scotland increased to **3,989,000**. This is an increase of 62,700 (1.6%), and followed a slight decrease over the previous year.
- The number of registered **Scottish Parliament and Local Government electors** also increased to **4,167,000**. This is an increase of 61,500 (1.5%) on the previous year.
- At 1 December 2019, there were **73,800 young people aged 16 or 17** registered to vote at Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections, accounting for 1.8% of the total electorate. This is a decrease of 4,600 (5.9%) on the previous year.
- 17% of the Scottish electorate was registered for **postal voting** at 1 December 2019. This proportion has been at, or just above, this level in the last five years but is higher than the 11% recorded in 2009.
- At 1 December 2019, there were **142,400 (non-UK) EU citizens** registered to vote in Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections, an increase of 9,600 (7.2%) on the previous year and nearly three times higher than the 50,300 recorded in 2009. This represents 3.4% of the total electorate and is the **highest number recorded**.



Contents

1.	Introduction	5
2.	Overview	8
3.	UK Parliament electors.....	11
4.	Scottish Parliament and Local Government electors.....	11
5.	16 and 17 year old electors	12
6.	Postal voters	12
7.	Overseas electors	12
8.	EU citizens on the electoral register	13
9.	Opted out voters.....	14
10.	Service voters	14
11.	Anonymous voters.....	15
12.	December 2019 General Election	15
13.	Links to related statistics	15
	Table 1: Total number of electoral registrations, by electorate, 2009 to 2019	16
	Background notes.....	17

1. Introduction

This publication provides statistics on the number of people included on the Electoral Register as at 1 December 2019¹, and therefore registered to vote at parliamentary and local elections.

This publication is about how many people have registered to vote. Statistics and analysis of the actual turnout at elections are published by the [Electoral Commission](#).

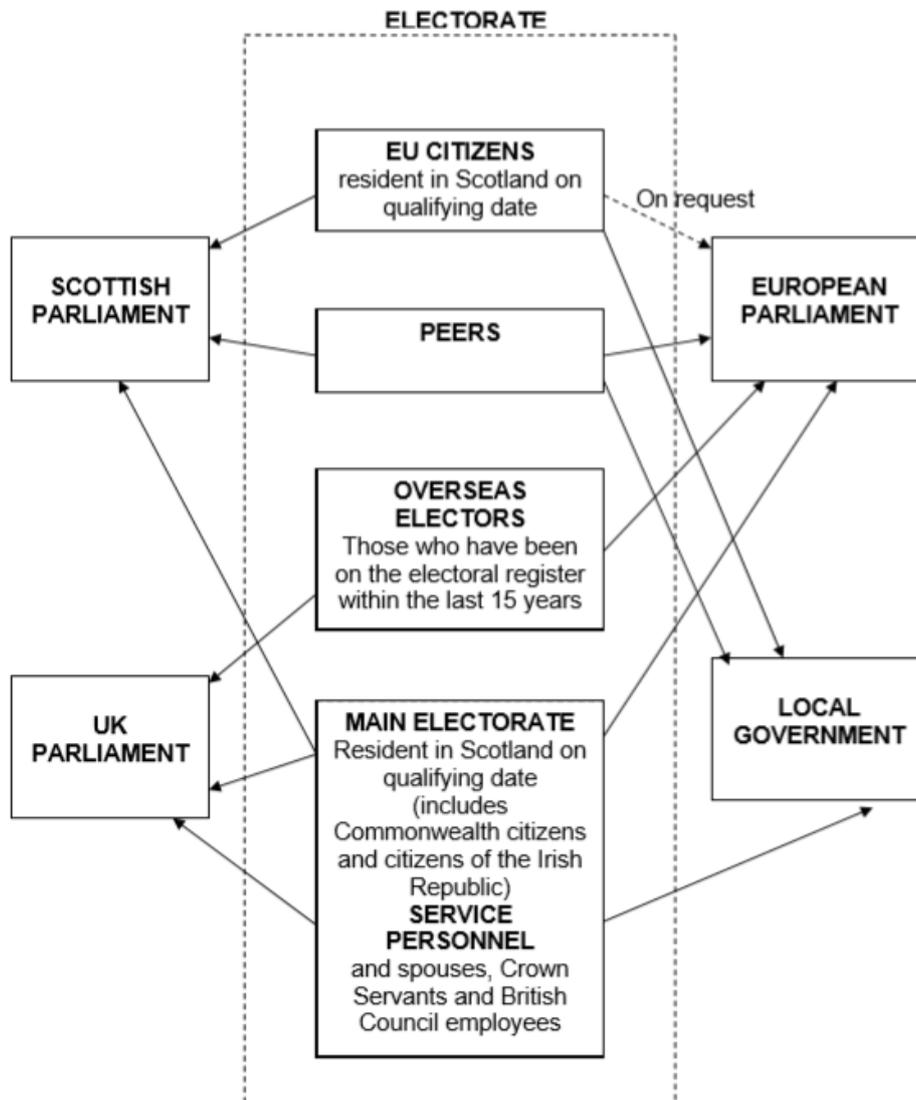
Key Terms

Electoral register	An official list of people in an area who are entitled to vote in an election
Electorate	All the people in a country or area who are registered to vote in an election
Elector	A person who has the right to vote in a parliamentary or local government election
Postal vote	A vote in an election sent in by post rather than cast in person
Overseas voter	A UK citizen living abroad who applied for a vote having been registered to vote as a resident in the UK in the last 15 years
Services voter	Members of HM Armed Forces and their spouses, plus Crown servants and British Council employees and their spouses residing abroad
Anonymous voter	An elector who thinks their name and address being on the electoral register could affect their personal safety
Constituency	An electoral area that elects one Member of (the UK) Parliament, or one Member of the Scottish Parliament. (There are 59 UK Parliamentary and 73 Scottish Parliamentary constituencies in Scotland, with different sets of boundaries.)
Ward	A local government electoral area. Council areas are divided into ward for electoral purposes, with 3 or 4 councillors elected for each ward

¹ Due to the priority given to administering the December 2019 General Election, ten Electoral Registration Offices published their electoral registers in the first few weeks of November and one in December, while the other four delayed doing so until the start of February 2020. The electoral statistics for 2019 included in this publication therefore only nominally relate to a reference date of 1 December 2019. See background note 2 for further details.

Who can vote?

This depends on your age, where you live, and your citizenship:



For example, British citizens resident overseas are entitled to vote at UK Parliament elections but not at Scottish Parliament or local government elections. The minimum voting age for UK Parliament and European Parliament elections is 18, while 16 and 17-year-olds are eligible to vote at Scottish Parliament and local government elections. Further background information about the Electoral Register, and the definitions and eligibility criteria that apply, is available in the [Background note to Electoral Register](#) on the NRS website.

Why does the electorate change in size?

There are three main reasons:

- **The population changes.** People move to or from an area. The number of people old enough to vote changes. People die in smaller or greater numbers.
- **More people get interested in politics.** This could be because of a significant vote, a specific political campaign or a current social issue.
- **The rules on who can vote change.** For example, in 2015 Scotland lowered the voting age to 16 for Scottish Parliament and local government elections.

Who uses these figures?

Electoral Commission	Administering elections Research and analysis on the electoral process
Central government	Informing policy on elections Quality assuring population estimates between censuses
Boundary Commission for Scotland	The design of constituencies and electoral areas
Political parties UK Parliament Scottish Parliament	Background information on the political and electoral process
Local government Academics Members of the public	Research and analysis of the political and electoral process

Where do the figures come from?

Each year National Records of Scotland (NRS) compiles summary electoral statistics from data supplied by the 15 Electoral Registration Offices (EROs) in Scotland. The EROs are responsible for creating and maintaining the Electoral Register in their area and publish two versions of it – the full register and the ‘open register’ – as at 1 December each year. NRS carries out quality checks on the data provided and then publishes an analytical summary of the information.

2. Overview

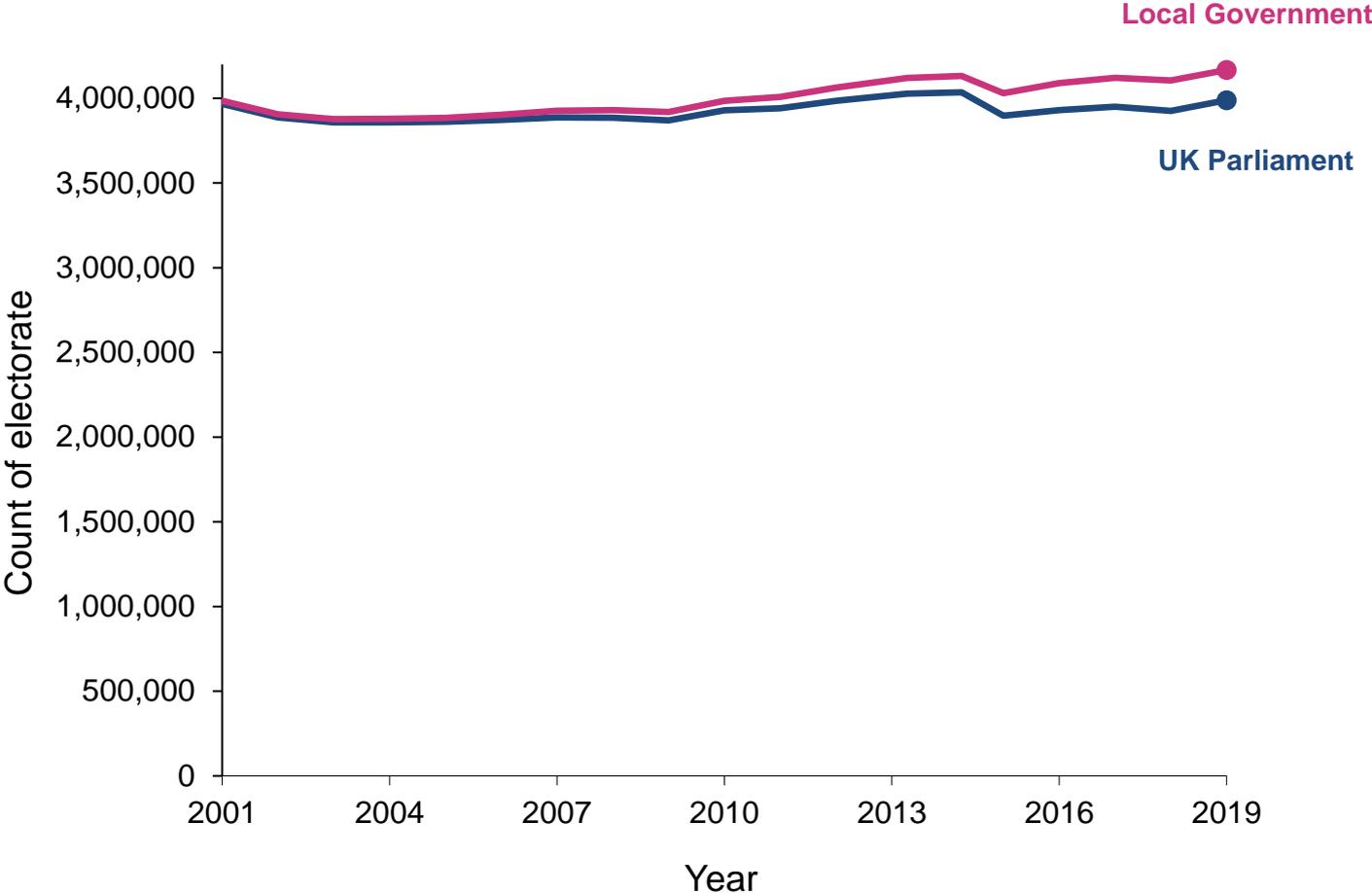
[Figure 1](#) shows the a slight overall upward trend between 2001 and 2019 in the number of people registered to vote in parliamentary and local elections in Scotland. This is broadly consistent with the increase in the size of the population aged 18 and over, which rose by around 11% over this period.

[Figure 2](#) looks at the trend in the size of the electorate over the last ten years, correlating this to key election and other votes held in this period. A drop in the number of registered electors is evident in 2015. This was mainly due to the introduction of [Individual Electoral Registration](#) (IER) in 2014, which affected the registration of students. Prior to the introduction of IER, block registration was permitted, particularly for students in halls of residence, but this practice has now been discontinued with individuals now responsible for their own registration. The lowering of the voting age to 16 for Scottish Parliamentary elections can also be seen in the data for that year.

Since the drop in 2015, electorates in Scotland increased in both 2016 and 2017. This can be attributed to the heightened period of electoral activity seen in those years with voters going to the polls on four occasions: [Scottish Parliament election](#) in May 2016, the [EU Referendum](#) in June 2016, the [Local Government elections](#) in May 2017 and the [UK General Election](#) in June 2017.

Following a slight decrease between 2017 and 2018, increases between 2018 and 2019 were recorded for both the UK Parliament electorate (up 1.6% to 3,989,000) and in the Scottish Parliament and local government electorate (up by 1.5% to 4,167,000). This is thought in part to reflect an increase in the number of people aged 18 and over in the population and also some of the uplift in registrations following the calling of the General Election for December 2019.

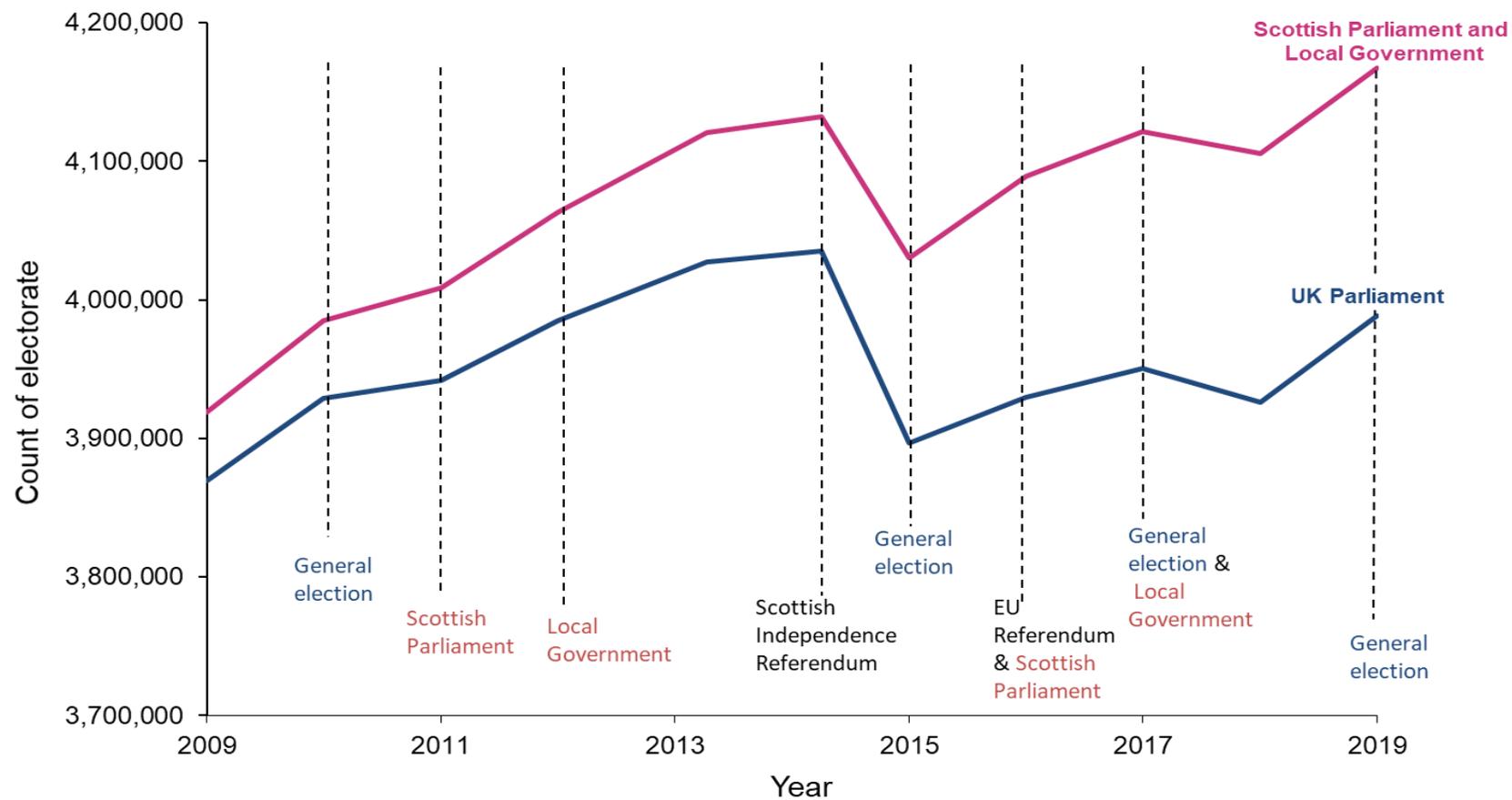
Figure 1: Scottish electorates, 2001 to 2019



Footnotes

1) From December 2012 to December 2015, the data reference point was 1 March. All other reference points are 1 December.

Figure 2: Scottish electorate changes correlated to key votes, 2009 to 2019



Footnotes

- 1) From December 2012 to December 2015, the data reference point was 1 March. All other reference points are 1 December.
- 2) Events point to the last data point before the event as this is when its impact will be seen.
- 3) Y-axis does not start at zero.

3. UK Parliament electors

The total number of UK parliamentary electors in Scotland increased to 3,989,000 in 2019, an increase of 62,700 (1.6%) on the previous year. Of the 59 UK parliamentary constituencies in Scotland, 52 saw increases in their electorate between 2018 and 2019. The largest percentage increases were in Aberdeen North (up by 6.8%), Edinburgh East (up by 6.6%) and North East Fife (6.5%). The largest percentage decrease in the electorate was in Glasgow North West (down by 1.4%). For the other six constituencies which recorded a decrease, the percentage decrease was under 1%.

At December 2019, the average number of electors per UK Parliamentary constituency was 67,600. The constituency with the most people registered to vote was Linlithgow and East Falkirk (86,200), followed by the neighbouring constituencies of Falkirk (83,600) and Livingston (81,600). The constituencies with the smallest electorate were Na h-Eileanan an Iar (21,200) and Orkney and Shetland (34,400); the mainland constituency with the smallest electorate was Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross with 47,000.

Between December 2009 and December 2019, the constituencies with the largest percentage increase in their electorate were Edinburgh North and Leith (up by 13.6%), and Midlothian (up by 13.1%). The constituency with the largest percentage decrease in its electorate over the same period was North East Fife (down by 4.5%) – largely reflecting the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration in 2014 and its impact on the registration of the student population in the area.

4. Scottish Parliament and Local Government electors

Of the 73 Scottish Parliamentary constituencies, 61 saw an increase in their electorate between 2018 and 2019. The largest percentage increase was in Aberdeen Central (up by 10.3%) and the largest percentage decrease in Perthshire North (down by 4.4%). At December 2019, the average number of electors per Scottish Parliamentary constituency was 57,100. The constituency with the most people registered to vote was Linlithgow, with 73,500. The smallest Scottish Parliamentary constituency electorate was the Orkney Islands (17,500), with the smallest on the mainland being Argyll and Bute (48,400)².

Between 2018 and 2019, the local government electorate increased in all but three of the 32 council areas. The largest percentage increase was in Aberdeen City (up by 5.6%) and the largest percentage decrease in Renfrewshire (down by 0.7%). For the purpose of local government elections, council areas are split into electoral wards, with each ward having either three or four elected councillors. At December 2019, there was a total of 354 electoral wards, with an average of 11,800 electors per ward. However, this varied depending on the number of elected members and other

² Although it does have areas that are not on the Scottish mainland, the Argyll and Bute constituency is not protected by the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 (PVSaCA). As such, Argyll and Bute was held to the same standards as the rest of the mainland when constituency boundaries were re-drawn. More information on the PVSaCA is included in the [background notes](#).

local considerations. The 189 three-member wards each had 9,800 electors on average, ranging from 1,845 in North Isles (Orkney Islands) up to 19,462 in Corstorphine/ Murrayfield (City of Edinburgh). The 165 four-member wards each had an average of 14,100 electors, ranging from 2,505 in Barraigh, Bhatarsaigh, Eirisgeigh agus Uibhist a Deas (Barra, Vatersay, Eriskay and South Uist)(Na h-Eileanan Siar) to 26,841 in Almond (City of Edinburgh).

5. 16 and 17 year old electors

Since the voting age was lowered in 2015, the number of 16 and 17 year olds registered to vote increased until 2017 before falling back in the latest two years. At December 2019, a total of 73,800 people aged 16 or 17 were registered to vote in Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections, a decrease of 5.9% compared with the previous year. They accounted for 1.8% of the total electorate. The council area where 16 and 17 year olds made up the highest proportion of the electorate was West Lothian (2.5%). This proportion was lowest in Glasgow City (1.4%).

6. Postal voters

At December 2019, the proportion of the Scottish electorate registered for postal voting was 17.3% (688,700 people) for UK Parliament elections and 16.9% (706,100 people) for Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections. (This means that just over a sixth of voters in Scotland can cast their ballot earlier than polling day.) Both these proportions represent a slight decrease compared with the previous year, but were still well above the level around a decade ago (11.3% in 2009 for both the UK Parliament and Scottish Parliament and Local Government electorates).

The proportion of the electorate registered for postal voting was generally higher in more rural or remote constituencies and lower in more urban ones. For example, the highest proportion for Scottish Parliamentary constituencies was Orkney Islands (24.9%) while the lowest was Coatbridge and Chryston (12.1%).

7. Overseas electors

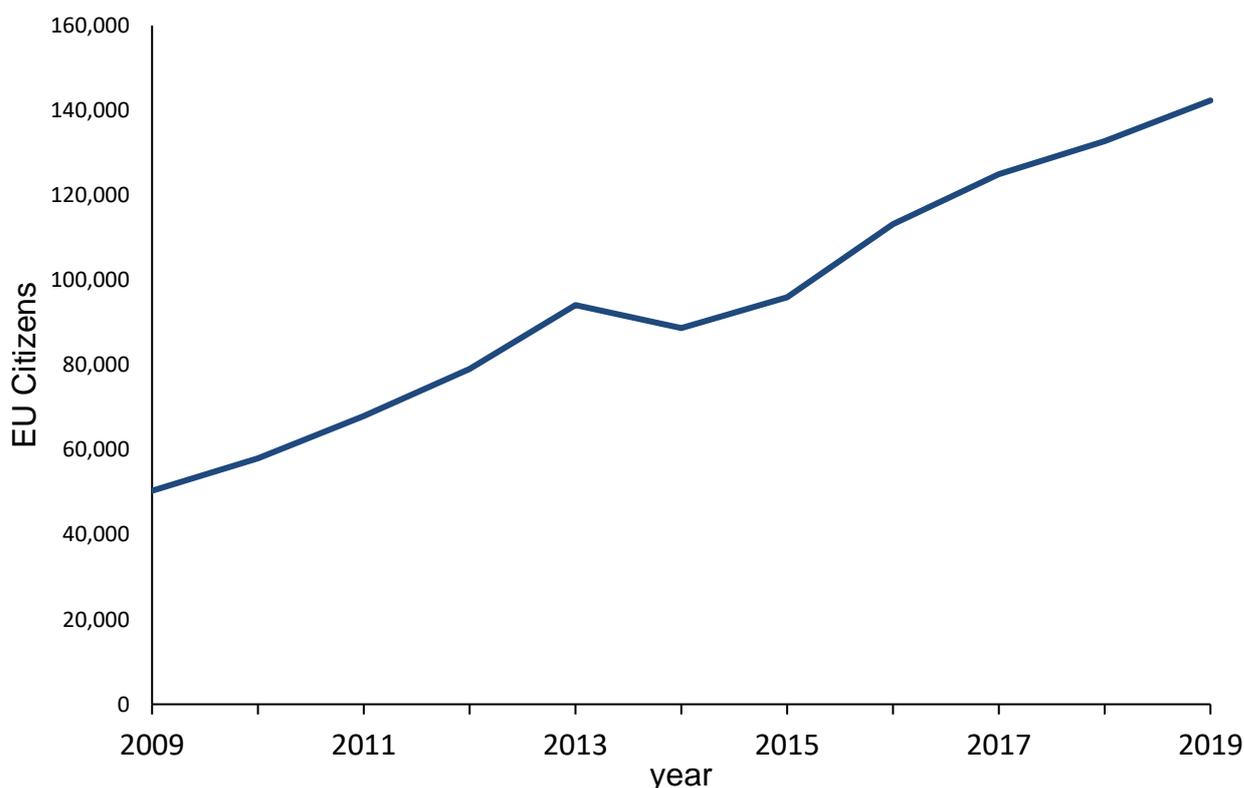
A total of 11,600 British citizens resident overseas were on the Electoral Register for UK Parliamentary elections as at 1 December 2019, 0.3% of the total electorate. This was an increase of 4,900 (73.5%) on the previous year, with much of this increase likely to have been triggered by the General Election in December 2019. The number of these overseas registered voters has only been higher in 2016 (15,200) and 2017 (12,800), reflecting the staging of the EU Referendum and the General Election respectively in those years.

8. EU citizens on the electoral register

At December 2019, there were 142,400 (non-UK) EU citizens registered to vote in Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections, an increase of 9,600 (7.2%) on the previous year and nearly three times higher than the 50,300 recorded in 2009. This represented 3.4% of the total electorate and is the highest number recorded. The latest year-on-year increase of 7.2% is slightly higher than the increase between 2017 and 2018 (6.2%), but lower than the increases recorded between 2015 and 2016 (18.0%) and between 2016 and 2017 (10.4%).

The council areas with the highest proportion of EU citizens in the electorate for Scottish Parliament and local government elections at December 2019 were Aberdeen City (9.0%), City of Edinburgh (8.5%) and Glasgow City (5.2%). This proportion was also relatively high in West Lothian (4.4%) and Dundee City (4.2%). In 24 council areas it was 3% or less.

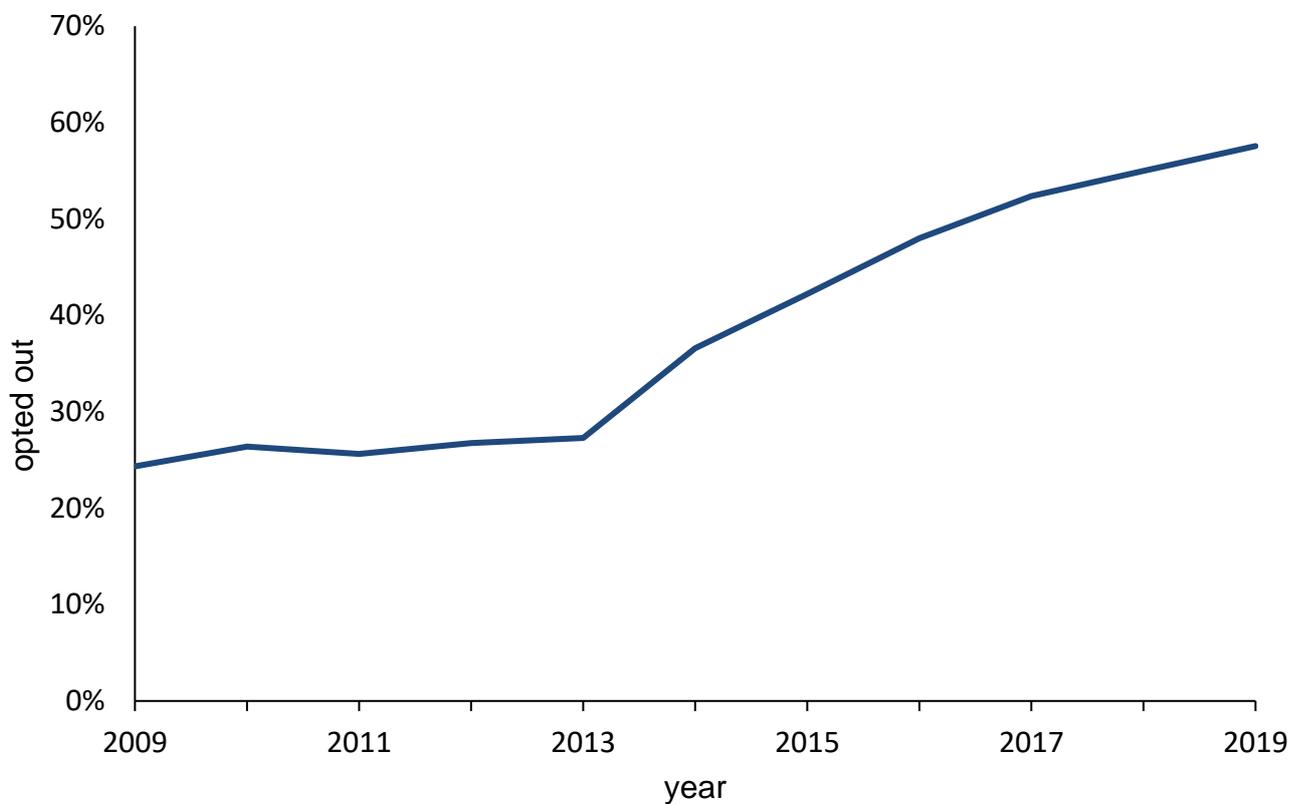
Figure 3: Number of (non-UK) EU citizens registered to vote in Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections, 2009 to 2019



9. Opted out voters

There are two versions of the electoral register – the full register and the ‘open register’. The full register is used only for elections and for certain other purposes which are specified in legislation, for example preventing and detecting crime. The open register is available to anyone who wants to buy a copy, for example marketing companies. Electors can opt out of the open register. The proportion of people opted out of the open register for Scottish Parliament and local government elections was fairly stable at around a quarter prior to 2015. However, since then it has risen markedly, and by December 2019 had reached a high of 58%.

Figure 4: Percentage of Scottish Parliament electors opted out of the open register, 2009 to 2019



10. Service voters

The number of service voters registered at December 2019 to vote in parliamentary and local elections in Scotland was 2,000, 0.05% of the total electorate. This is just over half the 3,900 service voters registered at December 2015.

11. Anonymous voters

Individuals can register anonymously if they can demonstrate a good reason for this, for example concerns about their personal safety, or the safety of someone in their household. Their name and address will not then appear on either the full or open versions of the electoral register, although they are still able to cast their vote. The number of such electors in Scotland is small - at 1 December 2019 a total of 194 people were included as anonymous electors on the electoral register for UK Parliament elections, and 207 were on the electoral register for Scottish Parliament and local government elections.

12. December 2019 General Election

As noted in the introduction, the electoral statistics for 2019 included in this publication nominally relate to the number of people on the Electoral Register as at a reference date of 1 December 2019. However, due to the priority given to administering the General Election held on 12 December, Electoral Registration Offices (EROs) published their registers at different times. Ten EROs published in November, one published in December and four delayed publishing until the start of February 2020. Further details on the range of publication dates is provided in the background notes.

In the absence of an election the range of publication dates by the EROs would have made little difference to the numbers reported, eg the number of people on the electoral register at the start of December would generally not have changed much from the number in the first half of November. However, the data for those EROs who published their registers in November 2019 will not include people who subsequently registered to vote in the General Election held on 12 December. (People had until 26 November to register for a vote in the General Election.) Including these later voter registrations provided an uplift to the total number of UK Parliament electors in Scotland, bringing the total on election day up to 4,053,100. This was 127,300 (3.2%) higher than the number of registered electors at the previous December.

The General Election also meant that there were some delays in the registration process for attainers, particularly for the Scottish Parliament and local government electorate, and so the 2019 statistics for this category will likely include an element of undercounting.

13. Links to related statistics

Electoral statistics for each of the constituent countries in the UK are published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and are available in the electoral registration section of the [ONS website](#). The next ONS publication, Electoral Statistics, UK: 2019, is scheduled for publication on 22 May 2020.

Table 1: Total number of electoral registrations, by electorate, 2009 to 2019

Electorate		2009	2010	2011	2012	2014	2015	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Reference date		December	December	December	December	March ¹	March ¹	December	December	December	December	December ⁶
UK Parliament	Total electorate	3,869,700	3,928,979	3,941,592	3,985,257	4,027,187	4,035,394	3,896,852	3,929,963	3,950,643	3,925,820	3,988,550
	Attainers ²	45,902	44,100	43,940	46,200	63,471	38,963	24,827	41,561	43,357	41,296	38,171
	Service voters	1,924	2,662	2,576	2,739	2,750	4,226	3,929	3,511	3,127	2,738	2,016
	Overseas electors	874	1,876	1,186	1,168	868	2,588	7,729	15,230	12,790	6,679	11,587
	Postal voters ⁴	436,565	492,514	525,793	566,262	557,927	660,472	668,118	699,186	714,060	690,207	688,710
	Anonymous registrants	26	22	27	42	73	97	111	117	116	130	194
Scottish Parliament and Local Government	Total electorate	3,919,219	3,985,161	4,008,411	4,063,206	4,120,494	4,131,926	4,029,958	4,089,477	4,121,140	4,105,824	4,167,361
	Attainers ³	46,186	44,415	44,341	46,726	64,299	39,513	21,343	22,035	20,788	20,232	14,577
	Service voters	1,924	2,662	2,576	2,739	2,750	4,226	3,929	3,511	3,133	2,746	2,019
	Peers	53	54	56	54	53	45	46	48	47	43	43
	Citizens of the European Union	50,340	58,004	67,949	79,063	94,122	88,688	95,946	113,185	124,973	132,767	142,353
	Postal voters ⁴	442,694	492,255	525,772	566,264	569,583	661,844	660,809	713,734	729,690	705,705	706,099
	16 and 17 year olds ³	-	-	-	-	-	-	48,962	79,621	83,536	78,383	73,777
	Anonymous registrants	-	-	-	-	-	-	108	126	127	137	207
European Parliament	Total electorate	3,872,375	3,929,584	3,941,991	3,985,480	4,044,217	4,045,826	3,896,805	3,930,041	3,950,690	3,925,863	3,990,011
	Attainers ²	45,916	44,100	43,941	46,200	63,572	38,982	24,827	41,561	43,357	41,296	38,175
	Service voters	1,924	2,662	2,576	2,739	2,750	4,226	3,929	3,511	3,127	2,738	2,016
	Peers	53	54	56	54	53	45	46	48	47	43	43
	Overseas electors	874	1,876	1,186	1,168	868	2,588	7,729	15,230	12,790	6,679	11,587
	Citizens of the European Union ⁵	2,621	551	343	169	16,976	10,390	43	30	0	0	-

Footnotes

- 1) To accommodate major changes to the system of electoral registration, the reference dates for 2014 and 2015 were changed to 10 March and 2 March respectively. The reference date has now reverted to 1 December.
- 2) Attainers in the UK Parliament and European Parliament electorates are those who will reach the age of 18 during the currency of the Register. The 'Total electorate' figures in this table include attainers.
- 3) As a result of the 'Scottish Elections (Reduction of Voting Age) Act 2015' enacted on 24 July 2015, 16 and 17 year olds became eligible to vote in both Scottish Parliament and local government elections. Therefore, attainers in the Scottish Parliament and local government electorates are those who will reach the age of 16 during the currency of the Register. The 'Total electorate' figures in this table include these attainers.
- 4) Data on postal voters collected from 2007 for UK Parliament electorate and from 2009 for Scottish Parliament and Local Government electorate.
- 5) For 2019 a complete count of EU citizens registered for European Parliament elections was not obtained. (Please note that this category only reflected European Citizens choosing to vote in the UK in elections to the European Parliament rather than in their country of origin. A count of all EU citizens registered to vote in Scottish Parliament and local government elections is shown in the table above, and in more detail in Table 7 and Figure 4.)
- 6) Due to the priority given to running the general election called for 12 December 2019, Electoral Registration Offices published their data either later or earlier than the nominal 1 December date. See background note 2 in the publication for further details.

Background notes

1. Electoral statistics usually relate to registers published on 1 December each year. However, in 2014 and 2015 the reference date was changed to 10 March 2014 and 2 March 2015 respectively, to facilitate the change to a system of Individual Electoral Registration. The reference date has since changed back to 1 December. The different reference date in 2014 and 2015 should be considered when looking at time series of the electoral statistics.
2. Due to the priority given to administering the December 2019 General Election, ten Electoral Registration Offices published their electoral registers in the first few weeks of November and one in December, while the other four delayed doing so until the start of February 2020. The electoral statistics for 2019 included in this publication therefore only nominally relate to a reference date of 1 December 2019. The publication date for each ERO is shown below:

Electoral Registration Office	Publication date of electoral register
Ayrshire	5 November 2019
Central Scotland	8 November 2019
Dumfries and Galloway	5 December 2019
Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute	11 November 2019
Dundee	5 November 2019
Fife	1 February 2020
Glasgow	1 November 2019
Grampian	1 February 2020
Highland and Western Isles	1 February 2020
Lanarkshire	12 November 2019
Lothian	14 November 2019
Orkney and Shetland	1 February 2020
Renfrewshire	4 November 2019
Scottish Borders	6 November 2019
Tayside	7 November 2019

3. Following the completion of the [Fifth Electoral Review](#) of council ward boundaries by the [Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland](#), ward boundaries have changed for most of Scotland's local council areas. There are now 354 electoral wards with effect from 4 May 2017. For the 2016 publication, the Electoral Registration Offices (EROs), who supply the electoral data to the National Record of Scotland (NRS), were still in the process of adopting the required changes to ward boundaries. Hence, a number of EROs were able to submit the data using the new 2017 ward boundaries, while a number of EROs submitted the data using the previous 2007 ward boundaries. To allow for a continuous time series to be created for the new wards, estimates from the full Electoral Register were calculated for the new wards using postcode information. Due to attainers not being available in the full Electoral Register, the distribution of 16 and 17 year old electors was used to distribute attainers to the new wards. For the December 2017 statistics and later publications, all EROs submitted data on the basis of the new (2017) electoral ward boundaries.
4. Definitions of the various groups of electorate shown in the tables are as follows:
 - **Attainers:** For UK Parliament or European Parliament elections, eligibility to vote is conditional on the voter being aged 18 or over on the date of the relevant election or referendum. For Scottish Parliament or Local Government elections eligibility to vote is conditional on the voter being aged 16 or over on the date of the relevant election or referendum. The Electoral Register includes people who will attain the age of 16 or 18 (dependent on the type of election) during the currency of the register (between 2 December 2019 and 30 November 2020). They are called attainers. Note that in the published tables, whilst attainers are identified separately, they are also included as part of the total electorate figures. The calling of the December 2019 General Election resulted in some delays in the registration process for attainers which means that the 2019 figures shown for attainers in this publication will be underestimates.
 - **Residents:** In order to be classed as 'resident' in a constituency the elector must be normally living at an address within the constituency area on the qualifying date. If the elector is temporarily absent (for example on holiday or away at university) this will not disqualify them from being classed as resident.
 - **Overseas electors:** Those who are not resident in the UK, but have been resident here and included in the Electoral Register within a period of 15 years of the qualifying date for the current register (or resident here and too young to be registered at the time of residence). They are registered in the same parliamentary constituency as before they went abroad or, if they were too young to register, in the constituency where their parent or guardian was registered. Overseas electors cannot vote at Scottish Parliament or Local Government elections, but are entitled to vote at UK Parliament and European Parliament elections.
 - **Service electors:** Service electors are members of HM Armed Forces and their spouses, plus Crown servants and British Council employees and their spouses residing abroad. They do not register in the same way as residents and may not necessarily reside in the area of registration. Spouses of members of the Armed Forces have the option of registering as residents while in the UK. New rules for Service electors were introduced in January 2007, whereby Service elector

applications are required to be completed every three years (later extended to five years in March 2010) rather than indefinitely as previously. This means that many service electors may not have renewed their application because they have now left the Services, or have opted to register as civilian electors, as they are entitled to do. Further background on armed forces voting is available [here](#).

- **Prisoners:** Remand prisoners, unconvicted prisoners and civil prisoners can vote if they are on the Electoral Register. Convicted persons detained in pursuance of their sentences were not eligible to vote in the period covered by these statistics. However, the [Scottish Elections \(Franchise and Representation\) Act 2020](#) has subsequently extended the right to vote in Scottish Parliament and local government elections to convicted prisoners sentenced to prison terms of 12 months or less. (The same Act has also extended the franchise to all qualifying foreign nationals.)
 - **Peers:** A Peer is a member of the House of Lords. Peers can vote in Scottish Parliament, Local Government and European Parliament elections, At 1 December 2019, there were 43 Peers on the Electoral Register for these elections. Peers do not have the right to vote at UK Parliamentary elections.
5. Information on previous elections held and a list of upcoming elections and referendums is available from the [Electoral Commission](#).
6. The boundaries and electorates of some constituencies in Scotland are protected. The [Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011\(PVSA\)](#) stated that the electorate of almost all constituencies must be within 5% of the national average. This requirement would override considerations of local geographical and political boundaries, with a few exceptions:
- The island constituencies of Orkney and Shetland and Na h-Eileanan Siar are explicitly protected.
 - Constituencies covering more than 12,000 km² do not have to comply with the above requirement (this applies to Ross, Skye and Lochaber).

Notes on statistical publications

National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in line with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (available on the [UKSA](#) website).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is National Records of Scotland's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in May 2011.

Information on background and source data

Further details on data source(s), timeframe of data and timeliness, continuity of data, accuracy, etc can be found in the [Metadata](#) document that is published alongside this publication on the NRS website.

National Records of Scotland

We, the National Records of Scotland, are a non-ministerial department of the devolved Scottish Administration. Our aim is to provide relevant and reliable information, analysis and advice that meets the needs of government, business and the people of Scotland. We do this as follows:

Preserving the past – We look after Scotland's national archives so that they are available for current and future generations, and we make available important information for family history.

Recording the present – At our network of local offices, we register births, marriages, civil partnerships, deaths, divorces and adoptions in Scotland.

Informing the future – We are responsible for the Census of Population in Scotland which we use, with other sources of information, to produce statistics on the population and households.

You can get other detailed statistics that we have produced from the [Statistics](#) section of our website. Scottish Census statistics are available on the [Scotland's Census](#) website.

We also provide information about [future publications](#) on our website. If you would like us to tell you about future statistical publications, you can register your interest on the Scottish Government [ScotStat website](#).

You can also follow us on twitter [@NatRecordsScot](#)

Enquiries and suggestions

Please contact our Statistics Customer Services if you need any further information.
Email: statisticscustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk

If you have comments or suggestions that would help us improve our standards of service, please contact:

Alan Ferrier
Senior Statistician
National Records of Scotland
Room 1/2/12
Ladywell House
Ladywell Road
Edinburgh
EH12 7TF

Phone: 0131 314 4530
Email: alan.ferrier@nrscotland.gov.uk

© Crown Copyright

You may use or re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. Further information is available within the [Copyright and Disclaimer section](#) of the National Records of Scotland website.