SCOTTISH STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2025 No. 394

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE

The Scottish Parliament Elections (Returning Officer Fees and Charges) Regulations 2025

Made - - - -	*10th December 2025*
Laid before the Scottish Parliament	*12th December 2025*
Coming into force - -	*7th April 2026*

The Scottish Ministers make the following Regulations in exercise of the power conferred by article 18(2) of the Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Order 2015(**a**) and all other powers enabling them to do so.

PART 1

Introduction and General

Citation and commencement

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Scottish Parliament Elections (Returning Officer Fees and Charges) Regulations 2025 and come into force on 7 April 2026.

Interpretation

2. In these Regulations—

"the 2015 Order" means the Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Order 2015,

"account" means the account submitted to the Scottish Ministers under article 18(5) of the 2015 Order for the purposes of payment of a returning officer's charges,

"constituency" means a constituency provided for by paragraph 1(2) of schedule 1 of the Scotland Act 1998(**b**),

(**a**) S.S.I. 2015/425, to which there are amendments which are not relevant to these Regulations.

(**b**) 1998 c. 46. Schedule 1 was substituted by section 1 and schedule 1 of the Scottish Parliament (Constituencies) Act 2004 (c. 13), and amended by S.I. 2010/2691, paragraph 8 of schedule 1 of the Scotland Act 2012 (c. 11) and section 18 of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 (asp 12). The constituencies are the constituencies specified by name in paragraph 1(2) of schedule 1 of the Scotland Act 1998 and those specified by an order under the same paragraph. The relevant order specifying the constituencies is S.S.I. 2025/285.

"constituency returning officer" means the officer who, in accordance with article 14 of the 2015 Order, is the constituency returning officer for a Scottish parliamentary election in a constituency(**a**),

"local authority" means a council constituted under section 2 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994(**b**),

"regional returning officer" means a regional returning officer for the purposes of the Scotland Act 1998(**c**), and

"Scottish parliamentary election" means an election for membership of the Scottish Parliament.

PART 2

Constituency Returning Officers

Maximum total recoverable amount

3.—(1) For the purposes of article 18(2)(a) of the 2015 Order, a constituency returning officer may not recover an amount which exceeds the total amount specified in paragraph (2).

(2) In relation to a constituency returning officer appointed by a local authority listed in column 1 (local authority) of the table in the schedule (maximum recoverable amounts), the total amount is—

(a) where the poll at a Scottish parliamentary election is contested, the amount listed opposite that local authority in column 4 (maximum total recoverable amount) of the table,

(b) where a Scottish parliamentary election is uncontested, £3,500.

Maximum recoverable amount for specific services

4.—(1) For the purposes of article 18(2)(c) of the 2015 Order, the maximum amount that a constituency returning officer may recover for the services specified in paragraph (3) is the amount specified in paragraph (2).

(2) In relation to a constituency returning officer appointed by a local authority listed in column 1 (local authority) of the table in the schedule (maximum recoverable amounts), the maximum amount is—

(a) where the poll at a Scottish parliamentary election is contested, the amount listed opposite that local authority in column 2 (maximum recoverable amount for specified services) of table, or

(b) where a Scottish parliamentary election is uncontested, £1,000.

(3) The specified services are—

(a) conducting the election,

(b) discharging the constituency returning officer's duties at the election,

(c) making arrangements for the election.

(**a**) For the purposes of any election the polling day for which is on or before 6 May 2026, the order under article 14(b) specifying the constituency returning officers for constituencies situated in more than one local authority area is S.S.I. 2016/9. For the purposes of any election the polling day for which is on or after 7 May 2026, the relevant order is S.S.I. 2025/287.

(**b**) 1994 c. 39. Section 2 was amended by section 120 and paragraph 232(1) of schedule 22 of the Environment Act 1995 (c. 25).

(**c**) See S.S.I. 2025/287, article 2 and schedule 1.

Maximum recoverable amount for specified expenses

5.—(1) For the purposes of article 18(2)(c) of the 2015 Order, the maximum amount that a constituency returning officer may recover for the expenses specified in paragraph (3) is the amount specified in paragraph (2).

(2) In relation to a constituency returning officer appointed by a local authority listed in column 1 (local authority) of the table in the schedule (maximum recoverable amounts), the maximum amount is—

(a) where the poll at a Scottish parliamentary election is contested, the amount listed opposite that local authority in column 3 (maximum recoverable amount for specified expenses) of the table, or

(b) where a Scottish parliamentary election is uncontested, £2,500.

(3) The specified expenses are—

(a) the appointment and payment of persons to assist the constituency returning officer,

(b) travel and overnight subsistence for the constituency returning officer and any person appointed to assist the constituency returning officer,

(c) the cost of the nomination process,

(d) printing, or otherwise producing, the ballot papers,

(e) printing, otherwise producing, or purchasing postal vote stationery,

(f) printing, or otherwise producing, and arranging for the delivery of, poll cards,

(g) printing or otherwise producing, and where appropriate, publishing notices and any other documents required by any enactment for or in connection with the election,

(h) renting, heating, lighting, cleaning, adapting, or restoring any building or room,

(i) providing and transporting equipment,

(j) providing information and communications technology equipment and software and associated costs,

(k) providing security, including any necessary secure storage of ballot boxes, ballot papers and verification documents,

(l) conducting the verification and the count,

(m) providing and receiving training,

(n) providing stationery and meeting postage, telephone, printing, translation and banking costs and the costs of other miscellaneous items for or in connection with the election.

PART 3

Regional Returning Officers

Maximum total recoverable amount

6. For the purposes of article 18(2)(a) of the 2015 Order, a regional returning officer may not recover an amount which exceeds—

(a) where the poll at a Scottish parliamentary election is contested, £7,500,

(b) where a Scottish parliamentary election is uncontested, £625.

Maximum recoverable amount for specified services

7.—(1) For the purposes of article 18(2)(c) of the 2015 Order, the maximum amount that a regional returning officer may recover for the services specified in paragraph (2) is—

(a) where the poll at a Scottish parliamentary election is contested, £1,050,

(b) where a Scottish parliamentary election is uncontested, £255.

(2) The specified services are—

(a) discharging the regional returning officer's duties at a Scottish parliamentary election,

(b) making arrangements for a Scottish parliamentary election.

Maximum recoverable amount for specified expenses

8.—(1) For the purposes of article 18(2)(c) of the 2015 Order, the maximum amount that a regional returning officer may recover for the expenses specified in paragraph (2) is—

(a) where the poll at a Scottish parliamentary election is contested, £6,450,

(b) where a Scottish parliamentary election is uncontested, £370.

(2) The specified expenses are—

(a) the appointment and payment of persons to assist the regional returning officer,

(b) travel and overnight subsistence for the regional returning officer and any person appointed to assist the regional returning officer,

(c) printing or otherwise producing and, where appropriate, publishing notices and any other documents required by any enactment for or in connection with the election,

(d) renting, heating, lighting, cleaning, adapting or restoring any building or room,

(e) providing and transporting equipment,

(f) providing training,

(g) providing stationery and meeting postage, telephone, printing, translation and banking costs and the costs of other miscellaneous items for or in connection with the election, including those incurred in collating the results of the election.

PART 4

Submission of Accounts

Accounts

9.—(1) An account must be submitted in a form acceptable to the Scottish Ministers and, unless otherwise agreed with the Scottish Ministers, must be fully submitted within 6 months of—

(a) in the case of a constituency returning officer, the day of the declaration of the result of the Scottish parliamentary election to which the charges in the account relate,

(b) in the case of a regional returning officer, the day on which the regional members' seats are allocated for the Scottish parliamentary election to which the charges in the account relate.

(2) If requested by the Scottish Ministers, a constituency returning officer or regional returning officer must provide them with full financial records and receipts relating to any charge contained in an account.

PART 5

Revocations

Revocations

10. The following regulations are revoked—

(a) the Scottish Parliament Elections (Returning Officer Fees and Charges) Regulations 2021(**a**),

(b) the Scottish Parliament Elections (Returning Officer Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulations 2021(**b**).

GRAEME DEY
Authorised to sign by the Scottish Ministers

St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
10th December 2025

(**a**) S.S.I. 2021/155.
(**b**) S.S.I. 2021/165.

SCHEDULE

Regulation 3

Maximum recoverable amounts

Column 1	*Column 2*	*Column 3*	*Column 4*
Local Authority	Maximum recoverable amount for specified services	Maximum recoverable amount for specified expenses	Maximum total recoverable amount
Aberdeen City Council	£7,250	£892,583	£899,833
Aberdeenshire Council	£7,250	£912,367	£919,617
Angus Council	£6,500	£480,455	£486,955
Argyll and Bute Council	£5,000	£367,298	£372,298
City of Edinburgh Council	£8,250	£1,895,093	£1,903,343
Clackmannanshire Council	£5,000	£247,619	£252,619
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	£5,000	£133,227	£138,227
Dumfries and Galloway Council	£6,500	£564,302	£570,802
Dundee City Council	£6,500	£399,306	£405,806
East Ayrshire Council	£6,500	£553,952	£560,452
East Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000	£225,801	£230,801
East Lothian Council	£6,500	£566,518	£573,018
East Renfrewshire Council	£5,000	£262,058	£267,058
Falkirk Council	£6,500	£512,116	£518,616
Fife Council	£8,000	£1,442,859	£1,450,859
Glasgow City Council	£8,500	£1,587,803	£1,596,303
Highland Council	£7,250	£896,589	£903,839
Inverclyde Council	£5,000	£238,589	£243,589
Midlothian Council	£5,000	£277,021	£282,021
Moray Council	£5,000	£281,644	£286,644
North Ayrshire Council	£6,500	£512,070	£518,570
North Lanarkshire Council	£8,000	£1,519,202	£1,527,202
Orkney Islands Council	£5,000	£74,433	£79,433

Column 1	*Column 2*	*Column 3*	*Column 4*
Local Authority	Maximum recoverable amount for specified services	Maximum recoverable amount for specified expenses	Maximum total recoverable amount
Perth and Kinross Council	£6,500	£499,076	£505,576
Renfrewshire Council	£7,250	£851,222	£858,472
Scottish Borders Council	£6,500	£568,897	£575,397
Shetland Islands Council	£5,000	£86,474	£91,474
South Ayrshire Council	£5,000	£325,468	£330,468
South Lanarkshire Council	£7,750	£1,089,858	£1,097,608
Stirling Council	£5,000	£266,460	£271,460
West Dunbartonshire Council	£6,500	£461,131	£467,631
West Lothian Council	£6,500	£588,426	£594,926

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations provide for the total amounts that are recoverable by returning officers for their services and expenses in connection with the conduct of elections for membership of the Scottish Parliament.

Under article 18 of the Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Order 2015 constituency returning officers and regional returning officers are entitled to recover their charges for services rendered, and expenses incurred, provided they were necessarily rendered or incurred for the efficient and effective conduct of the election. The Scottish Ministers may by regulations specify maximum amounts which may be recovered under article 18, including specifying total amounts which may be recovered for particular services or expenses. The Scottish Ministers may also make provision to require the submission of accounts.

Regulations 3, 4 and 5 specify for constituency returning officers the maximum total amount that may be recovered for both charges and expenses, the maximum which may be recovered in respect of specified services and the maximum which may be recovered in respect of specified expenses. Different maximum amounts apply in relation to a contested election and an uncontested election.

Regulations 6, 7 and 8 make equivalent for regional returning officers. Again, different maximum amounts apply in relation to a contested election and an uncontested election.

Regulation 9 makes provision for the timescales within which accounts are to be submitted and provides that supporting material, such as receipts, must be provided if the Scottish Ministers request it.

Regulation 10 revokes the Scottish Parliament Elections (Returning Officer Fees and Charges) Regulations 2021 and the Scottish Parliament Elections (Returning Officer Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulations 2021 which previously made similar provision.

In total across Scotland the maximum recoverable amount for specified expenses at a contested elections increases by 12.3% as a result of these Regulations. In total across Scotland the maximum recoverable amount for specified services at a contested elections decreases by 39.3% as a result of these Regulations.

The maximum recoverable amounts for specified expenses and specified services in respect of each local authority area are determined individually. The Policy Note for this instrument provides an explanation of the methodology used.

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Printed and published in the UK by The Stationery Office Limited under the authority and superintendence of Saul Nassé, the King's Printer for Scotland.

ISBN 978-0-11-106461-0

£8.90

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/id/ssi/2025/394

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