

These notes relate to the Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Act 2021 (asp 5) which received Royal Assent on 29 January 2021

SCOTTISH GENERAL ELECTION (CORONAVIRUS) ACT 2021

EXPLANATORY NOTES

OVERVIEW OF THE ACT

3. The Act's purpose is to make arrangements for the ordinary general election for the Scottish Parliament scheduled for 6 May 2021 which are considered necessary to mitigate the public health effects of the coronavirus pandemic.
4. In summary, the Act:
 - brings forward the deadline for postal vote applications and provides for a Ministerial report on uptake of postal voting;
 - gives a power to the Scottish Ministers to make regulations to provide for an all-postal election to be held;
 - makes the pre-election period of dissolution last only one day, in case the Parliament needs to meet to pass emergency legislation to delay the election;
 - allows the Scottish Ministers to make regulations to hold polling over multiple days;
 - makes provision about the first meeting of the new Parliament, the election of a new Presiding Officer and the appointment of a new First Minister;
 - gives a reserve power to the current Presiding Officer to postpone the 2021 election by up to 6 months in certain circumstances; and allows for the same measures as above to apply if the election is postponed.
5. The Act contains 16 sections under 8 italic headings. Commentary on the effect of individual sections follows below.