



CAPABILITY SCOTLAND

TURNING DISABILITY INTO ABILITY



POLLS APART 5

Disabled voters' experiences in the 2007 Scottish election

CAPABILITY SCOTLAND

June 2007

CONTENTS

Overview	1
Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction	5
1.1 Background	
1.2 Methodology and Sample	
1.3 Profile of Respondents	
2. Voting Methods	6
2.1 Parliamentary Constituency	
2.2 Method of Voting	
3. Views on Polling Stations	7
3.1 Travelling to the Polling Station	
3.2 Disabled Parking	
3.3 Access to the Polling Station	
3.4 Design of Ramp to Improve Access	
3.5 Separate Entrance for Disabled People	
3.6 Polling Station Doors	
3.7 Inside the Polling Station	
3.8 Comments about Polling Station	
3.9 Assistance in the Polling Station	
4. Views on Polling Booths	11
4.1 Low Level Polling Booths	
4.2 Large Print Notice of Ballot Paper	
4.3 Tactile Voting Devices	
4.4 Low Level Ballot Boxes	
5. Voting by Post	13
5.1 Assistance Available	
5.2 Comments about Voting by Post	
6. Overall Views on Voting	14
6.1 Availability of Help	
6.2 Comparisons with Voting at Previous Elections	
6.3 Views on Single Transferable Voting System	
6.4 Unprompted Comments on Voting in 2007 Elections	
7. Voters with learning disabilities	18
7.1 Introduction	
7.2 Information about the election	
7.3 Ease of voting	
7.4 Helpfulness of polling station staff	
Appendix One: Questionnaire	
Appendix Two: List of Constituencies	

OVERVIEW

Introduction

Capability Scotland is one of Scotland's leading disability organisations working for a just Scotland. We work with children, adults and families living with disability to support them in their everyday lives. We also work with disabled people, family members and carers to influence legislation, policy, practice and attitudes.

Capability Scotland has been campaigning on the issue of accessible elections since 1997. As well as working with local authorities and disabled people to improve access, we have also conducted surveys of disabled voters after each election. What follows are the results of our accessibility survey for the 2007 Scottish elections.

'It was helpful to have seen the Capability Scotland voting website before I had to vote.' (respondent)

Conclusions

The survey results show a general improvement in the accessibility of the voting process for disabled people, although the trend is not consistent in all areas. The improvement is particularly welcome as the results of our 2005 survey showed a worrying dip in accessibility indicators. It is worth noting that local authority election planners were contending with complicating factors such as a new system of voting and re-structured council wards which will have impacted on their ability to deliver improved accessibility.

Key areas of improvement include:

- **Level access to polling station** – 67% of respondents reported that there was level access to their polling station, in comparison to 57% in 2005.
- **Doors to polling stations propped open to enable access for disabled people** – Two thirds of respondents reported that doors were propped open in 2007, as compared to just under a half in 2005. Propping open doors is a simple and cost free way of improving physical access to polling stations.
- **Separate entrances for disabled people** – 17% of polling stations had separate entrances for disabled people, another improvement on the 26% of polling stations recorded in the 2005 elections.

'I was asked on entry if I needed any assistance which was good.'
(respondent)

Nevertheless, areas of concern remain, including:

- **Designated parking for disabled people** – Less than half of respondents reported that there was a designated parking space at their polling station.
- **Low level polling booths** – Two thirds of respondents reported that the polling station had a low level booth to enable voting in private for people with mobility impairments. However, this was less than in 2005. All polling stations should provide low level booths.

- **Large print notices of ballot papers** – Approximately half of respondents reported that a large print version of the ballot papers was on display, again a drop on 2005 figures. All polling stations should provide large print notices.

‘Had to vote at a table not a booth, with other people around me.’
(respondent)

Changes to the voting system

One quarter of respondents reported that they had found voting to be more difficult than in previous elections. This is a significantly larger percentage than has been recorded in our previous polls. The likely explanation is that a new voting system, coupled with well publicised problems with the Scottish election ballot paper, have contributed to this figure. We specifically asked survey participants about their experiences of the single transferable voting system, with 36% reporting that this made it more difficult to vote, compared with 16% who felt it made it easier to vote.

Comments from survey participants indicate some of the areas of concern:

- ‘Separate sheets for each vote would’ve allowed bigger print and made instructions easier to follow.’
- ‘Number system for council elections was very complicated for disabled people unable to use their hands properly.’
- ‘Don’t think all three should’ve been done on the same day.’
- ‘Had to read the instructions twice, more difficult than putting cross in a box.’

People with learning disabilities

The survey included an ‘easyread’ questionnaire for people with learning disabilities. Although more people with learning disabilities (65%) rated polling station staff as friendly and helpful than in 2005, the figure still falls far short of the percentage for disabled people generally (90% +). This suggests that people with learning disabilities are still not being treated equally when they exercise their right to vote.

Capability Scotland recommendations:

- Local authorities are responsible for election planning. We recommend that they receive sufficient resources to allow them to improve disabled access, both to polling stations and to the voting process as a whole.
- The attitudes of polling station staff play a key part in the voting experience for disabled voters. We recommend that polling staff receive disability equality training as part of their induction to the job.
- The complexity of the voting process clearly caused problems for some voters. We recommend that the views of disabled people are considered during the design of future Scottish election ballot papers. We also recommend that more accessible information about the single transferable vote system is made available.

‘There’s still a considerable lack of knowledge about access needs of disabled people.’ (respondent)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is the 1 in 4 poll?

The '1 in 4' poll is a panel of disabled people, their family members and carers across Scotland. Capability Scotland surveys 1 in 4 poll members up to four times a year on a wide range of issues. The aim is to give disabled people a voice and to ensure that voice is heard by decision makers and influencers. 1 in 4 refers to the number of households in Scotland with a disabled member.

Methodology and Sample

A self-complete questionnaire was sent to 358 Poll members. A total of 138 questionnaires were returned: a 39% response rate. 84% of respondents had a disability or medical condition, with 18% categorising themselves as carers or family members. Note that a small proportion of respondents are both disabled and carers.

Voting in person

62% of the sample voted in person. 3% were not able to vote, either because they chose not to vote or because their health prevented them from doing so.

General trends

Although the general trend is towards improved accessibility in comparison to 2005 figures, the picture is not consistent in all areas. This year's survey included a 'did not notice' option for respondents, as well as 'Yes' and 'No' responses, which has affected the ability to directly compare responses with previous years.

Accessibility of polling stations

- 41% of respondents stated that there was designated parking for disabled people at their polling station, which is a slight decrease on 2005. However, only one third of respondents noted that there **was no** designated parking, which is an improvement on 2005 results.
- 67% of respondents said that there was level access to the polling station. This is an improvement on 2005 results, where 57% reported level access.
- 17% of polling stations had separate entrances for disabled people, another improvement on the 26% of polling stations recorded in the 2005 elections.
- Two thirds of polling station doors were propped open, aiding access for disabled people. This compares to less than half in 2005.
- 92% of respondents found it easy to move around inside the polling station.
- 94% of respondents stated that polling station staff were friendly and helpful.

Availability of support for disabled voters

Certain adaptations, such as low level booths and tactile voting devices, should be available at all polling stations. Our survey results show that this is not yet the case: indeed, support may have been less available than in previous elections.

- Only 63% of respondents reported that a low level booth was available in their polling station, compared with 72% in 2005.

- Only half of respondents reported that large print versions of the ballot papers were displayed, in comparison to two thirds in 2005. However, this picture is contradicted by the fact that only one tenth stated that large print ballot papers **were not** displayed, compared with one quarter in 2005.
- A similar picture is presented in relation to tactile voting devices (which enable visually impaired people to vote independently). While fewer respondents stated that tactile voting devices were available (19% in 2007 versus 32% in 2005), fewer people also reported that tactile voting devices **were not** available.

Postal voting

33% of respondents voted by post, compared with 26% in the 2005 elections – showing an increase of a quarter. Most postal voters had a positive experience, with 91% of respondents stating that voting by post was easy. Note that some disabled voters use a postal vote, but would prefer to vote in person.

‘Found no difficulty voting by post but would’ve preferred voting in person had I been able to get to the village hall in a wheelchair.’ (respondent)

Comparison of voting experience

Almost one quarter of respondents stated that they found voting to be harder than it had been in the previous election, suggesting that problems with the design of the ballot paper coupled with the introduction of the single transferable vote system did create barriers for disabled voters. In all, 24% of voters found voting harder than last time, 21% found it easier and 47% found it to be the same. This compares to 2% of voters who found voting harder in 2005.

‘Colour blind problems; pastels not good, neither are secondary colours, blue and yellow are easier to see.’ (respondent)

Single transferable vote system

Respondents were specifically asked to comment on their experiences of voting under the single transferable vote (STV) system for local elections. 36% stated that STV made it more difficult to vote, in comparison to 16% who stated that it made it easier to vote. 46% felt that the new system made no difference to the difficulty of voting.

‘Couldn’t manage it on my own, my mum helped, I have reading and learning difficulties’. (respondent)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This report describes the results of a self completion survey that was commissioned by Capability Scotland and conducted by Scotinform. The survey was carried out to monitor the experiences of disabled voters in the Scottish Parliamentary and local Government elections on the 3rd of May 2007.

1.2 Methodology and Sample

The questionnaire was sent to 358 Poll members. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and send back to Scotinform using the Freepost envelope provided. A total of 138 questionnaires were returned: a 39% response rate.

A copy of the questionnaire and covering letter can be found in the appendices of this report.

A similar survey was conducted after the 2005 election and the results of the surveys are compared where relevant.

1.3 Profile of Respondents

Respondents to the survey were most likely to be female and aged over 45 years old. 84% of respondents were either disabled or had a medical condition/illness. Please note that the respondents with a disability or medical condition/illness and the respondents who are carers or live with a disabled person adds up to more than 100%. This is due to a small number of respondents who are classified in more than one category.

Table 1.1 Profile of respondents

Base: all respondents

	%
Male	42
Female	58
18-24 years old	4
25-34 years old	9
35-44 years old	17
45-54 years old	25
55-64 years old	31
65 plus	13
A disabled person	75
A person with a medical condition/illness	10
Someone who cares for a disabled person	13
Someone who lives with a disabled person	6

2. VOTING METHODS

2.1 Parliamentary Constituency

Responses were received from people voting in 54 or the 59 Scottish constituencies. A list of constituencies and numbers of respondents can be found in appendix two of this report.

2.2 Method of Voting

Just over 60% of respondents said they had voted in person and a third had voted by post. The results suggest that the proportion of people voting by post has increased by a third, rising from 26% in 2005 to 33% in 2007.

Four disabled respondents were not able to vote, either because they chose not to vote or because their health prevented them from voting.

Table 2.1 Method of voting

Base: all respondents

	2005 %	2007 %
In person	73	62
By post	26	33
By proxy	1	1
Was not able to vote	3	n/a

3. VIEWS ON POLLING STATIONS

3.1 Travelling to the Polling Station

16% of respondents required assistance in travelling to their polling station, with one in five disabled people requiring assistance.

Table 3.1 Travelling to the polling station

Base: all those who voted in person

	%
Yes	83
Yes, but only with assistance	16
Not stated	1

3.2 Disabled Parking

One third of respondents said that there was no designated disabled parking at their polling station, suggesting that parking for disabled people was not provided at a significant proportion of polling stations.

Table 3.2 Disabled parking

Base: all those who voted in person

	2005 %	2007 %
Yes	45	41
No	51	34
Didn't notice	n/a	20
Not stated	4	6

3.3 Access to Polling Stations

Just under a third of respondents said that there was no level access to the polling station. Although this is a significant percentage, it is an improvement on the 2005 election survey in which over 40% of those who voted said there was no level access to their polling stations.

Table 3.3 Level access

Base: all those who voted in person

	2005 %	2007 %
Yes	57	67
No	41	30
Not stated	1	2

3.4 Design of Ramp to Improve Access

Just under one in ten said that the ramp to the polling station was not appropriately designed

Table 3.4: Appropriateness of design of ramp to improve access
Base: all those who voted in person

	2005 %	2007 %
Yes	65	57
No	12	9
No ramp at polling station	15	14
Didn't notice	n/a	7
Not stated	7	13

3.5 Separate Entrances for Disabled People

17% of polling stations had separate entrances for disabled people. In the 2005 survey 26% of polling stations had a separate entrance, suggesting that the number of polling stations with separate entrances has decreased.

Table 3.5 Separate entrance
Base: all those who voted in person

	2005 %	2007 %
Yes	26	17
No	70	76
Didn't notice	n/a	5
Not stated	5	2

3.6 Polling Station Doors

Two thirds of polling station doors were propped open, but 15% of respondents said that the doors were heavy to open suggesting that there were difficulties with access to the polling station. Carers were most likely to have problems with the doors to polling stations, presumably because they opened the doors to let disabled people enter the polling station. The proportion of people saying that the doors were heavy to open has declined since 2005, when 28% of respondents said that the doors were heavy.

Table 3.6 Polling station doors
Base: all those who voted in person

	2005 %	2007 %
Propped open	47	64
Heavy to open	28	15
Easy to open	18	10
Automatic doors	4	2
Did not notice	n/a	1
Not stated	9	7

3.7 Inside the Polling Station

Over 90% of respondents said it was easy to move around the polling station, suggesting that access within the polling stations was good.

Table 3.7 Mobility inside

Base: all those who voted in person

	2005 %	2007 %
Yes	90	92
No	7	3
Did not notice	n/a	1
Not stated	2	3

3.8 Comments about Polling Station

Respondents were asked to add comments regarding their experience at the polling station. Below is a list of 16 unprompted comments that were made. The main point raised was about problems with the doors.

- Doors were tricky to open and had no sign saying 'pull' or 'push' (1)
- Doors are heavy; propped open, hot day (1)
- Second set of doors inside propped open (1)
- I asked staff to leave the doors open but they shut them again (1)
- Box too high (1)
- Very pleasant (1)
- Improved entrance after complaint at last two elections (1)
- Very crowded inside – little room to manoeuvre (1)
- Embarrassing, as people were watching (1)
- Corridors were tight for a person in a wheelchair (1)
- Floor polished – people with sticks had to be careful (1)
- No seats were available, if you needed to wait a while for a booth to become available (1)
- Provided you weren't visually impaired; lots of chairs separating different wards (1)
- There were steps to the booths, so I had to vote at a table (1)
- It was a pub and very busy (1)
- I am a wheelchair user and found no problems (1)
- Very cramped (1)

3.9 Assistance in the Polling Station

87% of respondents said the instructions from staff and signs about where to go in the polling station were clear and easy to follow.

Table 3.8 Clarity of instructions and signs

Base: all those who voted in person

	%
Yes	87
No	8
Did not notice	1
Not stated	3

Views on the helpfulness of polling station staff were very positive: 94% said that staff were friendly and helpful and only one respondent said that they were not.

Table 3.9 Helpfulness of polling station staff

Base: all those who voted in person

	2005 %	2007 %
Yes	93	94
No	4	1
Did not notice	n/a	1
Not stated	3	3

4. VIEWS ON POLLING BOOTHS

4.1 Low Level Polling Booths

15% of respondents said that there was no low level polling booth.

Table 4.1 Low level polling booth
Base: all those who voted in person

	2005 %	2007 %
Yes	72	63
No	21	15
Did not notice	n/a	20
Not stated	7	2

4.2 Large Print Notice of Ballot Paper

One in ten respondents said that there was no large print notice of the ballot paper in the polling booth. This suggests a considerable improvement on the 2005 elections when 24% of respondents said there was no large print notice.

Table 4.2 Large print notice of ballot paper
Base: all those who voted in person

	2005 %	2007 %
Yes	63	52
No	24	9
Did not notice	n/a	36
Not stated	13	2

4.3 Tactile Voting Devices

14% of respondents said that there was no tactile voting device, a significant improvement since 2005 when 38% of respondents said there was no device.

Table 4.3 Tactile voting device
Base: all those who voted in person

	2005 %	2007 %
Yes	32	19
No	38	14
Did not notice	n/a	64
Not stated	30	3

Seven of the eight respondents who used the tactile voting device said that they were able to vote independently using the device.

4.4 Low Level Ballot Boxes

A fifth of respondents said that there was no low level ballot box in the polling station, approximately the same proportion as in 2005.

Table 4.4 Low level ballot box

Base: all those who voted in person

	2005 %	2007 %
Yes	70	56
No	24	21
Did not notice	n/a	15
Not stated	7	8

5. VOTING BY POST

5.1 Assistance Available

7% (3 respondents) of those who voted by post said that there was no guide to help them complete the declaration of identity and the ballot paper.

The same respondents also said that the information sent with the ballot pack did not tell them that they could get help to vote by post in their own home.

Overall, the experience of voting by post appears to have been positive, with 91% of the 46 respondents who voted by post saying that they found the process easy.

5.2 Comments about Voting by Post

Sixteen respondents made unprompted comments regarding their experience of voting by post.

- You needed a degree and a cold towel round your head to understand it! (1)
- The whole thing was confusing – too many choices (1)
- Easier than last election; no witnessing required, simple statement (1)
- As there were so many candidates, it was easier to sit at home and read them (1)
- Registered blind – needed help to read instructions and ballot paper (1)
- Found the voting system hard (1)
- My husband assisted (1)
- Still had to travel some distance to post the papers back (1)
- No problem voting by post and my polling station is disabled friendly (1)
- As a wheelchair user, voting by post was much easier than attending the polling station (1)
- Found no difficulty voting by post but would've preferred voting in person had I been able to get to the village hall in a wheelchair (1)
- Fine for me, but someone with learning difficulty would find the information too complicated (1)
- Opted for postal vote as profoundly deaf and polling stations are too noisy to hear person speaking to me (1)
- How is a visually impaired person meant to read all the campaign literature? Why no alternative formats?
- Voting by post was a lot easier; chose this as I am a student living away from home (1)

6. OVERALL VIEWS ON VOTING

6.1 Availability of Help

Only 5 respondents (4%) felt that they did not get the help they needed to vote. These were all disabled people over the age of 35 years old. 7% of respondents said that they were not able to vote in secret: all except one of these were disabled people. These results are very similar to the 2005 survey, indicating that the proportions of those who felt they could not vote in secret has remained very low.

6.2 Comparisons with Voting at Previous Elections

A quarter of respondents felt that it was harder to vote in the 2007 election than in previous elections, indicating that people found voting more complex. In the 2005 survey only 2% of respondents said that voting was harder than last time, confirming the problems faced by voters in 2007.

Table 6.1 Comparison with voting in previous election
Base: all respondents

	2005 %	2007 %
It was easier than last time	17	21
It was the same as last time	63	47
It was harder than last time	2	24
This was the first time I had voted	3	2
Not stated	15	6

6.3 Views on Single Transferable Voting System

One of the key issues for voters appears to have been the introduction of the single transferable voting system for local authorities. 36% of respondents said that this had made voting more difficult.

Table 6.2 Single transferable voting system
Base: all respondents

	%
Made it easier to vote	16
Made no difference	46
Made it more difficult to vote	36
Not stated	3

13 respondents made unprompted comments criticising the single transferable voting system.

- Confusing (4)
- Separate sheets for each vote would've allowed bigger print and made instructions easier to follow (1)
- Number system for council elections was very complicated for disabled people unable to use their hands properly (1)
- Don't think all three should've been done on the same day (1)

- More laborious; had to think, but that's a good thing for such an important decision (1)
- Having the technology helped me to read the papers, although I couldn't see if there was a section for a witness side (1)
- Very difficult form to understand (1)
- Wasn't told I was only needed to number as many as I wished and could leave some blank (1)
- Took a few times reading it through before you could understand what to do (1)
- More difficult as you had to know about the candidates – couldn't access as much info online (1)
- Had to read the instructions twice, more difficult than putting a cross in a box (1)

Only three respondents made positive comments on the new voting system:

- Much preferable (1)
- Well managed, pleasant and took me no time at all (1)
- Instructions for STV were straightforward and easily understood (1)

6.4 Unprompted Comments on Voting in 2007 Elections

25% of respondents made unprompted comments at the end of the questionnaires, highlighting a number of key issues:

- all comments about staff were positive
- access to the polling station was one of the key issues to be raised unprompted, particularly the lack of wheelchair access
- in polling stations where there were no low level booths, tables were used instead
- the instruction not to fold the ballot paper caused concerns about privacy of voting

The full list of comments is shown on the next page: all were made by one person only. Where relevant, the constituency is shown in brackets after the comment.

Staff

Staff were friendly and helpful and embarrassed that the facilities were inadequate (Aberdeen North)

Everyone was most helpful – the door was held open for me on arrival and departure

The staff designated to explain the systems of voting seemed unsure of the systems themselves, their explanations were vague (Ochil)

This time it was ok, the people were nice but it was hard to choose (Argyle and Bute)

I was asked on entry if I needed any assistance which was good (Ross, Skye)

Councillor was a good helper (Banff and Buchan)

Access

Heavy doors help open by wedge but only on one side, difficult to get a wheelchair in (Dundee East)

Entrance was up steepish hill, difficult to negotiate on crutches or in wheelchair (Glasgow Anniesland)

Back door was fire exit with steps to enter and no ramp – officer was very helpful and I did my postal vote outside (Perth)

Problems for people with sensory impairments – poor signage, obstacles etc (Hamilton South)

Unbelievable that in 2007 it is still not possible to get into the local public hall, recently refurbished, because you are in a wheelchair (North Tayside)

There's still a considerable lack of knowledge about access needs of disabled people (Hamilton South)

Although the entrance had been improved there was still a small metal ridge at the door- could have been dangerous to a visually impaired person (Clydesdale)

Directions from bus stop to polling station would've been useful (Glasgow Anniesland)

Parking

Able to use disabled parking, left feeling relaxed having had a good experience (Argyle and Bute)

Signs at main gate indicating disabled parking would've been useful (Glasgow Anniesland)

Directions from bus stop to polling station would've been useful (Glasgow Anniesland)

No disabled parking, but luckily there was an empty bay (Perth)

Long walk (on crutches) from car park to disabled area (Aberdeen North)

Polling Station

Hall was very warm, not so good if you have a chest/heart condition (Rutherglen)

No low level private booths but there was an areas where forms could be completed in relative privacy (Ross, Skye)

Had to vote at a table not a booth, with other people around me (Aberdeen North)

Postal Voting

Told you not to fold postal ballot paper, but it won't fit in the envelope if not folded

I was worried that it wouldn't arrive in time for me to return it on time

Voting by post is much easier and will continue to use this method

I always get a postal vote as I know from past experience that polling station wont be wheelchair accessible
Postal voting papers should be sent out sooner – didn't leave much time

Ballot Paper

Colour blind problems; pastels not good, neither are secondary colours, blue and yellow are easier to see

had put x against first choice before I remembered it should have been 1, so then I added this

I was asked not to fold my paper but wanted to ensure privacy and they agreed to this
Couldn't fold ballot paper – made it difficult for wheelchair user to conceal the paper
Pencils were too small to write with

Mixing crosses and numbers at the same ballot is confusing; I had to think twice before I filled in the council election paper

No-one can truly vote in secret because every ballot paper has a number and barcode on it; someone should take up this issue

Slightly confusing, x on one paper, 123 on the other

Couldn't manage it on my own, my mum helped, I have reading and learning difficulties

General Comments

Having the Holyrood and Council votes on the same day was madness; those responsible should be held to account

It was helpful to have seen the Capability Scotland voting website before I had to vote
Tactile voting devices (though available) weren't on show and no notice drawing attention to them (Dunfermline East)

7. VOTERS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

7.1 Introduction

As part of the Polls Apart 5 survey, Capability Scotland distributed 'easyread' questionnaires to enable people with learning disabilities to make their experiences known. 26 questionnaires were returned. At least 92% came from a person with a disability and/or a medical condition.

Table 7.1 Profile of respondents

Base: all respondents

	%
A person with a disability	38
A person with a disability and a medical condition	54
Not stated	8

7.2 Information about the election

Most people with learning disabilities did not get information from their local authority in a format that was easy to understand. This compares unfavourably to the results in 2005, when half of respondents were able to access easy to understand information.

Table 7.2 Easy to understand information

Base: all respondents

	2005	2007
Yes	50%	42%
No	50%	58%

7.3 Ease of voting

Respondents to the 'easyread' questionnaire were asked whether they found it easy to vote. Almost two thirds stated that they did.

Table 7.3 Ease of voting

Base: all respondents

	2007
Yes	62%
No	10

7.4 Helpfulness of polling station staff

Two thirds of respondents to the 'easyread' questionnaire reported that staff in polling stations were helpful. This is a significant improvement on 2005, where half of respondents found staff helpful. However, it is still much lower than for disabled respondents generally – where helpfulness is consistently rated at above 90%. This

suggests that people with learning disabilities are not treated equally when exercising their right to vote.

Table 7.4 Helpfulness of polling station staff
Base: all respondents

	2005	2007
Yes	50%	65%
No	50%	4%
Postal Vote	n/a	4%
Not stated	n/a	27%

APPENDIX ONE: QUESTIONNAIRE

'POLLS APART' QUESTIONNAIRE

Capability Scotland has been involved in campaigning on access to voting for disabled people since 1997. We have monitored the experiences of disabled voters in 1997, 2001, 2003 and 2005. The purpose of this survey is to find out how you found voting in the 2007 Scottish Parliamentary and local government elections.

This questionnaire asks you about your experience of voting. Please take this questionnaire with you when you go to vote on Thursday 3rd May, and fill it in either at the polling station or when you get back home. If you vote by post/proxy, fill in the relevant sections after you have organised your vote. Please post the form back to Scotinform in the freepost envelope provided by 11th May 2007.

If you would like further information please contact Faye Gatenby at Capability Scotland on 0131 347 1025 or faye.gatenby@capability-scotland.org.uk, or by writing to 11 Ellersly Road, Edinburgh, EH12 6HY.

For more information about voting at this election, go to www.vote.org.uk, Capability Scotland's website on accessible voting.

Section one: about you

Q1 Are you? Please tick the box which applies to you

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q2 How old are you? Please tick the box which applies to you

18-24 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
25-34 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
35-44 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
45-54 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
55-64 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 65 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q3 Which of the following best describes you? Please tick one box only

A disabled person	<input type="checkbox"/>
A person with a medical condition or illness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone who cares for a disabled person	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section two: polling station information

Q4 Please write in your Scottish parliamentary constituency. This is on your polling card or ballot paper

.....

Q5 What is the name of your polling station? This is also on your polling card.

.....

Q6 Please tick one box to indicate how you voted.

In person

By post

By proxy

Was not able to vote

Please answer the next question

Please go to Section five: voting by post (Page 4)

Please go to Section six: voting by proxy (Page 5)

Please go to question 35 at the end of this questionnaire

Section three: at the polling station

Q7 Were you able to travel to your polling station to vote?

Yes

Yes, but only with assistance

No

Q8 Was there designated parking for disabled people?

Yes

No

Did not notice

Q9 Was there level access to the polling station?

Yes

No

Did not notice

Q10 If there was a ramp to improve access, was it appropriately designed (ie. secure and not too steep to use)?

Yes

No

No ramp at polling station

Did not notice

Q11 Was there a separate entrance for disabled people?

Yes

No

Did not notice

Q12 Thinking about the doors to the polling station, were they ... ?

Please tick all the relevant answers.

- Propped open
- Automatic doors
- Easy to open
- Heavy to open
- Did not notice

Q13 Could a disabled person move around easily and safely inside (eg. without barriers such as steps)?

- Yes
- No
- Did not notice

Please add any comments about your experience

.....
.....

Q14 Were instructions from staff and signs about where to go inside the polling station clear and easy to follow?

- Yes
- No
- Did not notice

Q15 Were polling station staff friendly and helpful?

- Yes
- No
- Did not notice

Section four: at the polling booth

Q16 Was there a low level polling booth?

- Yes
- No
- Did not notice

Q17 Was there a large print notice of the ballot paper on display?

- Yes
- No
- Did not notice

Q18 Was there a tactile voting device to help visually impaired and other disabled voters to vote independently?

- Yes
- No
- Did not notice

**If you used the tactile voting device, please answer the next question
If you did not use the tactile voting, please go to question 21**

Q19 Were instructions available telling you how to use the tactile voting device?
Yes
Yes – but not in a format I could read
No
Did not notice

Q20 Were you able to use the tactile voting device to vote independently?
Yes
No

Please add any comments about your experience

.....

.....

Q21 Was there a low level ballot box?
Yes
No
Did not notice

-----Thank you - now go to section seven-----

Section five: voting by post

Q22 Was there a simple guide to help you complete the declaration of identity and ballot paper?
Yes
No
Did not notice

Q23 Did the information sent with the ballot pack tell you that you could get help to vote by post in your home?
Yes
No
Did not notice

Q24 Did you find the process of voting by post easy?
Yes
No

Please add any comments about your experience

.....

.....

-----Thank you - now go to section seven-----

Section six: voting by proxy

Q25 Did you find it easy to complete the form to register to vote by proxy?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not notice	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q26 If you needed to get someone to support your application, did you find this easy?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not notice	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q27 Did you find it easy to get someone to agree to vote for you by proxy?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not notice	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q28 Did you find the process of voting by proxy easy?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please add any comments about your experience

.....

.....

Section seven: general information on voting

Q29 If you needed help to vote, did you get it?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not need help	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q32 Were you able to vote in secret?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q33 Please tick one box to indicate your experience of voting at these elections.

It was easier than last time	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was the same as last time	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was harder than last time	<input type="checkbox"/>
This was the first time I had voted	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q34 Did the introduction of the single transferable voting system for local council elections – which requires you to number your choices for councillors – affect your experience of voting?

Made it easier to vote
Made no difference
Made it more difficult to vote

Please add any comments about your experience

.....

.....

Q35 Please give any other comments in the box below.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire
Please return the questionnaire by **11th May 2007** in the
freepost envelope provided. NO STAMP IS REQUIRED

FREEPOST RLZG-UCTA-RRTT

SCOTINFORM LTD

12B TIMBER BUSH

EDINBURGH

EH6 6QH

APPENDIX TWO: LIST OF CONSTITUENCIES

List of constituencies and number of respondents.

Aberdeen Central (2)
Aberdeen North (2)
Aberdeen South (2)
Angus (3)
Argyll and Bute (4)
Banff and Buchan (5)
Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross (1)
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (1)
Clydesdale (2)
Cunninghame North (2)
Coatbridge and Chryston (2)
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (1)
Dundee East (1)
Dundee West (2)
Dunfermline East (3)
Dunfermline West (2)
Dumfries (6)
Eastwood (1)
Edinburgh Central (8)
Edinburgh East and Musselburgh (8)
Edinburgh Lothian (2)
Edinburgh North and Leith (1)
Edinburgh Pentlands (1)
Edinburgh South (3)
Edinburgh West (1)
Falkirk East (1)
Falkirk West (1)
Glasgow Anniesland (1)
Glasgow Cathcart (1)
Glasgow Pollock (1)
Greenock and Inverclyde (3)
Glasgow Shettleston (1)
Glasgow Springburn (6)
Hamilton South (3)
Kilmarnock and Loudoun (1)
Kirkcaldy (3)
Linlithgow (2)
Livingston (3)
Moray (2)
Motherwell and Wishaw (1)
North Tayside (4)
Ochil (3)
Orkney (1)
Perth (7)
Paisley North (1)
Paisley South (1)
Ross, Skye and Inverness West (2)
Roxburgh and Berwickshire (3)
Strathkelvin and Bearsden (3)
Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (1)

West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine (2)

West Renfrewshire (8)

Not stated (1)

