

Article

Holyrood election 2021

On 6 May people in Scotland elect a new Scottish government.

On this page you can find and download resources to help you engage with local candidates and tell them about your experience of living with inflammatory arthritis.

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Our Policy & Communications Manager, Samuel Lawes has put together three big questions to ask local candidates.

Three questions for candidates

1. Supporting rheumatology

Rheumatology teams supported the front line fight against COVID, meaning many have backlogs and many staff are exhausted.

Will candidates campaign for their rheumatology services to get their fair share of funding to address pre-COVID shortages in consultants & other rheumatology healthcare practitioners?

2. Waiting times

To achieve good outcomes and avoid long-term physical damage, it is important to diagnose RA and start treatment within 12 weeks of symptoms appearing. In Scotland, rheumatology waiting times have risen in recent years.

What will candidates do to support greater urgency in first rheumatology appointments & commencement of treatment?

3. Telemedicine and new technologies

Rural services users in particular benefit from digital resources to help manage their condition and, when appropriate, to speak to their healthcare practitioners without needing to make long journeys.

Where access to broadband is poor, will candidates campaign for improvements, so that all Scottish citizens have equity of access to online health care and wellbeing services?

Election candidates spend their time taking in and giving out facts and figures, statistics and policies. Your personal story can cut through the noise.

Sample social media messages

Tips for engaging your local candidates on social media:

- You can find your constituency details [here](#)
- You can find an estimate of the number of people living with RA in your constituency in the PDF table [here](#).
- Tag one or more candidates in a message
- Include a selfie or record your message as a video
- Tag @NRAS_UK on Twitter or Facebook –so we can share your message
- Please remember to:
 - Be respectful & polite
 - Avoid being party-political
 - Share a personal angle

Example tweets:

- Hi@candidatename – will you support @NRAS_UK's call for rheumatology services to get their fair share of NHS funding to address pre-COVID shortages in consultants & other rheumatology healthcare practitioners
- @candidatename I am a constituent living with rheumatoid arthritis. Online healthcare resources can make a big difference in rural areas. Will you support calls from @NRAS_UK to ensure rural health service users have decent access to the internet?
- @candidatename there are almost 800 people living with rheumatoid arthritis in Aberdeen Donside. Many of us have spent most of 2020 shielding. If elected, will you visit your local rheumatology team and support their recovery from the pandemic so they can continue to support us?

We have also put together a template letter to make it easy to email your local candidates, who you can find details for [here](#).

[Download template letter](#)

[Download table of 'Living with RA' figures](#)