

## Publicly funded bodies and the referendum on independence for Scotland

### Factsheet



From 22 August 2014 there will be restrictions on the information that Scottish Ministers and certain publicly funded bodies can publish about the referendum.

The restrictions relate to publishing general information about the referendum as well as about the issues and arguments. The restrictions also apply to encouraging people to vote.

The UK Government is not covered by the referendum legislation but has agreed to abide by the same restrictions.

This factsheet explains the restrictions, and where you should go to find out more information.

The Electoral Commission has no powers to enforce the restrictions on what the Scottish or UK Governments publish about the referendum during this period.

For more information about the restrictions on what governments can publish or to make a complaint you should contact:

Scottish Government

[cabinet\\_secretariat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cabinet_secretariat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

UK Government

[Propriety&ethicsteam@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Propriety&ethicsteam@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk)

## What do the restrictions cover?

The restrictions cover published material which:

- Gives general information about the referendum – including material that doesn't support one outcome or the other
- Deals with the issues raised by the referendum question
- Gives arguments for or against a particular outcome
- Encourages people to vote at the referendum

The restrictions do not cover:

- Answers to specific requests for information
- Certain publications by the Scottish Parliament
- Certain publications reporting Parliamentary events by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body
- Anything done by or on behalf of:
  - a designated lead campaigner
  - the Electoral Commission
  - the Chief Counting Officer or any other counting officers
- Information about the holding of the poll, such as the date of the referendum or the location of polling stations.

## Who is covered by the restrictions?

- Scottish Ministers
- Any other part of the Scottish Administration, such as any of its Directorates or Executive Agencies
- The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body
- Any other Scottish public authority whose functions are wholly or partly concerned with devolved issues.

As noted above, the UK Government is not covered by the referendum legislation but has agreed to abide by the same restrictions.

## What about other organisations?

Anyone else can publish material about the referendum during this period.

Anyone publishing material that supports a referendum outcome will have to comply with the rules on campaigning at the referendum. You can find our guidance for campaigners here

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/party-or-campaigner/campaigners-in-referendums>