

## Introduction to the new rules on campaigning for non-party campaigners: Joint Campaigns

### May 2014 update No. 6

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There are rules that govern people and organisations who campaign in the run up to elections but are not standing as a political party or candidate. We call these people “non-party campaigners”.

The rules for non-party campaigners have been changed by the Transparency of Lobbying, Non Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014.

The rules will change from **19 September 2014**.

This update looks at the rules in relation to joint campaigns.

We have already published updates on:

- [introduction to the rules](#),
- [regulated activities](#)
- [registering as a non-party campaigner](#)
- [information gathered on non-party campaigner guidance](#)
- [donations, permissibility and managing spending](#)

We will publish further updates to explain the new rules and we will publish full guidance on the new rules by early July 2014.

## About this update

This update covers joint campaigns.

### Introduction

Campaigners sometimes choose to work together, such as in coalitions, with other campaigners on a common issue or policy. We call this joint campaigning.

There are special rules that apply when you work with another non-party campaigner as part of a joint campaign during a regulated period. When you spend money as part of a joint campaign, that spending counts towards the spending limit for each campaigner involved. This is to stop people getting around the spending limits by coordinating several campaigns at the same time that are in reality the same campaign.

This update provides an overview of the rules that apply to joint campaigns.

### Joint campaigns

To be part of a joint campaign, you must be 'working together' with one or more other non-party campaigners.

'Working together' means spending money on regulated campaign activities during the regulated period as a result of a common plan or arrangement between one or more non-party campaigners.

The joint campaign rules apply where:

- you spend money on regulated campaign activity
- the spending is incurred as part of working together on a common plan or other arrangement with one or more other non-party campaigner or campaigners; and
- that spending can reasonably be regarded as intended to achieve a common purpose

We recognise that campaigners may come together to campaign in a variety of ways, both formal and informal, and that the ways in which campaigners interact with other campaigners may change during the course of a campaign. You will need to make an honest assessment whether you and another non-party campaigner are spending money as part of a common plan or arrangement.

In our view, you are not working together if:

- you have informal discussions with other campaigners that do not involve decision making or coordinating your plans
- you speak at an event organised by another campaigner, but do not participate in any other way
- you do not consult with other campaigners about what you should say in your campaign or how you should organise it.

In our view, you are very likely to be working together if:

- you have joint advertising campaigns, leaflets or events
- you coordinate your regulated campaign activity with another

campaigner – for example, if you agree that you should each cover particular areas, arguments or voters

- another campaigner can approve or has significant influence over your leaflets, websites, or other campaign activity.

## Joint campaigns: registering with us

The new rules recognise two alternative ways of working together that will have an impact on whether you need to register and what reporting requirements you will be subject to:

- you can be part of a joint campaign that has a 'lead campaigner' or
- you can be part of a joint campaign that does not have a lead campaigner

A lead campaigner is an organisation that has agreed with other members of the joint campaign that it will report all of the spending on regulated campaign activities as part of the joint campaign for itself and all other members of the joint campaign (known as 'minor campaigners').

To be a lead campaigner you will need to be registered with us and notify us:

- that you will be the lead campaigner and
- who are the minor campaigners in the joint campaign

As a lead campaigner, your spending and any spending incurred by minor campaigners as part of the joint campaign will count towards your spending limit.

If you are a minor campaigner, you do not need to register with or report to us if:

- the lead campaigner has notified us before the end of the regulated period that you will be a minor campaigner
- you do not incur any spending on the joint campaign until after such notice has been given and
- your total spending on regulated campaign activities during the regulated period (including your spending on the joint campaign and any other spending on regulated campaign activities) is no more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

If you are part of a joint campaign that does not have a lead campaigner, different rules apply. In such cases, the combined spending on regulated campaign activities undertaken as part of the joint campaign will count towards the spending limits for each non-party campaigner involved.

This means that if the combined spending of all non-party campaigners involved in the joint campaign is more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, you, and the other non-party campaigners will need to register with us. Further details will be provided in our guidance.

## Donating to another campaign

You may support another organisation's campaign and decide to donate to their campaign. If you only donate money, goods or services to

the other organisation, the rules on joint campaigns will not apply. However, the other organisation will only be able to accept a donation from you if you are a permissible source. You can see our [previous update](#) for further information about donations and permissibility.

## Where you can find more information

We will continue to provide regular updates on the new rules. If you think you may be affected by the new rules, we recommend that you join our mailing list so that we can help keep you informed on how they may affect your campaigning. You can sign up to receive the updates [here](#)

We also offer an advice service and you can contact us on one of the phone numbers or email addresses below. We are here to help, so please get in touch.

- England: 020 7271 0616  
[pef@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:pef@electoralcommission.org.uk)
- Scotland: 0131 225 0200  
[infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk)
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