

Overview

UK Parliamentary general election 2015: Targeted spending in support of a political party

This document is for registered non-party campaigners who, during the UK Parliamentary general election regulated period, are campaigning in support of one particular political party or its candidates.

Forms you might need:

TP5

Contents:

[What is targeted spending](#)

[Authorised and unauthorised targeted spending](#)

[Obtaining authorisation for targeted spending](#)

[Reporting targeted spending](#)

Translations and other formats

For information on obtaining this publication in another language or in a large-print or Braille version please contact the Electoral Commission:

Tel: 020 7271 0500

Email: publications@electoralcommission.org.uk

Terms and expressions we use

You will normally be doing enough to comply with the law if you follow this guidance.

We use '**must**' when we refer to a specific requirement. We use '**should**' for items we consider to be minimum good practice, but which are not legal or regulatory requirements.

Our approach to enforcement

The Commission regulates political funding and spending. We are committed to providing those we regulate with a clear understanding of their regulatory obligations through our guidance documents and advice service.

Wherever possible, we use advice and guidance proactively in order to secure compliance. And we regulate in a way that is effective, proportionate and fair.

If you do not comply with legal or regulatory requirements you or your organisation may be subject to civil or criminal sanctions. You can find more information about the Commission's approach to enforcement at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/party-finance/enforcement

UK Parliamentary general election: Targeted spending in support of a political party

Who this document is for:

Registered non-party campaigners who wish to campaign in support of one particular political party or its candidates.

The document covers:

- What is targeted spending
- Authorised and unauthorised targeted spending
- Targeted spending limits
- Obtaining authorisation to incur targeted spending
- Reporting targeted spending

Related documents:

- [Overview of non-party campaigns](#)
 - [Overview of non-party regulated campaign activity](#)
 - [Managing non-party campaign spending](#)
 - [Factsheet – targeted spending in support of a political party](#)
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2

Summary

If you are a registered non-party campaigner who wants to campaign in support of one particular political party or its candidates during the UK Parliamentary general election regulated period, there are special rules about how much money you can spend on regulated campaign activity that promotes only one party and when spending must be authorised.

Introduction

Non-party campaigners are individuals or organisations that campaign in the run-up to elections, but are not standing as political parties or candidates.

In electoral law, these individuals or organisations are called 'third parties'. Where non-party campaigners have registered with the Electoral Commission they are called 'recognised third parties'. In our guidance, we call recognised third parties 'registered non-party campaigners'.

There are rules about how much non-party campaigners can spend on 'regulated campaign activity' in the run-up to certain elections. If you want to spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in any of Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland on regulated campaign activity, you must register with the Electoral Commission.

This document explains the rules on 'targeted spending' that apply to registered non-party campaigners in the run up to the UK Parliamentary general election.

If you are undertaking targeted spending, it counts towards your spending limit and there are also general rules on campaign spending that will apply to you. You can find more information on the general rules on campaign spending at our [Overview of non-party campaigns](#).

Important

The rules on targeted spending only apply in the run up to a UK Parliamentary general election

What is ‘targeted spending’?

Targeted spending is spending, in the run-up to a UK Parliamentary general election, on regulated campaign activity that can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence voters to vote for one particular registered political party or any of its candidates.

To count as targeted spending, your spending must reasonably be regarded as intending to influence voters to vote for only one political party or any of its candidates (and not intended to influence voters to vote for any other party or any of its candidates).

In almost all cases, your spending on regulated campaign activity will only count as targeted spending if you name a political party or its candidates in a way that can be regarded as intended to influence voters to vote for only that political party.

There are special rules that apply to targeted spending which are explained in this guidance. However, if you incur targeted spending you should remember that it will count towards your spending limit and the general rules on spending on regulated campaign activity will also apply to you. You can read more about the general rules at our guidance [Overview of non-party campaigns](#).

Donating to a political party

The targeted spending rules only apply to money, goods, property, and services that you as a registered non-party campaigner use as part of your campaign.

The targeted spending rules do not apply in respect of any donations you may choose to make to a political party.

However, the targeted spending rules may still apply, regardless of whether any such donations are made, if you as a registered non-party campaigner use money, goods, property, or services as part of a campaign that can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence voters to vote for one particular registered political party or any of its candidates.

For information on what counts as regulated campaign activity see:

- [Overview of non-party regulated campaign activity](#)

You can check our [Register](#) to see which parties are registered political parties



A donation is money, goods, property or services which is given:

- to a political party, and
- without charge or on non-commercial terms, and
- has a value of over £500

Under PPERA, anything with a value of £500 or less is not a donation.

When do the rules on targeted spending apply?

The rules on targeted spending only apply:

- to registered non-party campaigners, and
- during regulated periods that involve a UK Parliamentary general election.

In the run-up to certain elections, there is a set time when the rules on spending and donations apply. We call this time the 'regulated period'.

UK Parliamentary general elections usually have a regulated period of 365 days, ending on the day of the election.

However, the regulated period for the 2015 UK Parliamentary general election will be slightly shorter than normal and starts on **19 September 2014** and ends on polling day, **7 May 2015**.

We publish specific guidance for each election which sets out the spending limits, regulated period and reporting deadlines which you can find in our [UK Parliamentary general election 2015 guidance](#).

For information on when you should register as a registered non-party campaigner see:

- [Registering as a non-party campaigner](#)

6

What are the limits on targeted spending?

There are limits on how much you can spend on targeted spending. The limits depend on whether or not a political party has authorised you to incur the targeted spending.

Limits when a registered political party authorises targeted spending

If the political party which you want to support authorises you to incur an amount of targeted campaign spending, you may spend up to that authorised limit.

However, you must not exceed the national and constituency spending limits even if a party authorises you to spend more than these limits.

You can find the national spending limits for non-party campaigners in our [UK Parliamentary general election 2015 guidance](#).

Limits when a registered political party does not authorise targeted spending

If the political party which you want to support does not authorise you to incur an amount of targeted campaign spending, you may only spend up to the following amounts ('targeted spending limits') on regulated campaign activity targeting a particular party during a UK Parliamentary general election regulated period:

England	£31,980
Scotland	£3,540
Wales	£2,400
Northern Ireland	£1,080

Important

Where a UK general election is held close to an election to the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, Northern Ireland Assembly or European Parliament, different limits will apply. We will publish further guidance in these cases.

Targeted spending incurred in a particular part of the UK will count towards the overall spending limit for regulated campaign activity during the regulated period in that particular part of the UK.

Limit on spending in each constituency

During the regulated period for the UK Parliamentary general election, there are rules on how much you can spend in a particular parliamentary constituency. The maximum amount a registered or unregistered non-party campaigner can spend on regulated campaign activity in a particular parliamentary constituency is £9,750. For more information please see the [Overview of focused constituency campaigning](#).

We call regulated campaign activity that influences the voting choice of the people in a particular constituency or constituencies 'focused constituency campaigning'. This includes campaigning in support of a particular political party or its candidates in a particular constituency or constituencies.

Registered non-party campaigners

If you are a registered non-party campaigner, you must attribute spending on a UK-wide campaign in support of a particular political party equally to each of the UK's 650 parliamentary constituencies. If you are campaigning in support of a particular political party in only one part of the UK (either England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland), you must attribute spending equally to each constituency in that part. The spending attributed to each constituency counts towards the £9,750 limit for each constituency, together with any spending on focused constituency campaigning in those constituencies.

If you are a registered non-party campaigner and you spend the whole £9,750 on focused constituency campaigning in a particular constituency you will breach the constituency spending limit in that constituency if you then spend anything on any other regulated campaign activity that must be

There are 533 constituencies in England, 59 in Scotland, 40 in Wales and 18 in Northern Ireland.

attributed to that constituency. For more information please see [Managing non-party campaign spending](#).

If you think you may carry out a combination of focused constituency spending and any other regulated campaign spending you should read the guidance below for more information:

- [Overview of non-party campaigns](#)
- [Overview of focused constituency campaigning](#)
- [Managing non-party campaign spending](#)
- [UK Parliamentary general election 2015: Non-party campaigners](#)

Authorisation from the political party

If a political party wishes to authorise you to incur targeted spending above the targeted spending limit in the table above, it must provide an authorisation to us.

This authorisation:

- must be in writing
- must be signed by the treasurer or deputy treasurer of the party
- must specify the parts of the UK in which you may incur targeted spending
- may place a limit on the amount of targeted spending you are authorised to incur in each part of the UK

An authorisation by a political party can be made using form [TP5](#).

The political party should also give a copy of the authorisation to you confirming that you can incur targeted spending.

If a political party gives you a copy of an authorisation to incur targeted spending, you should ask for confirmation that they have sent the original authorisation to us. You can check this by looking at our [register of notifications](#).

Can an authorisation be withdrawn?

A political party can withdraw an authorisation at any time by giving us notice in writing.

If the party withdraws its authorisation, you must not incur any further targeted spending above the targeted spending limit. You should make sure that the political party keeps you informed of any changes to the authorisation.

If you have already spent more than the targeted spending limit when the authorisation is withdrawn, you must stop all further targeted spending.

Important

If a political party withdraws its authorisation, it is an offence to incur further targeted spending over the targeted spending limit.

10

How to record and report targeted spending

If you are authorised to incur targeted spending

If a political party authorises you to incur targeted spending:

- you should keep a record of the total of the targeted spending
- all targeted spending incurred by you will count towards your total campaign spending and must be reported in your spending return, and
- any amount of targeted spending over the targeted spending limit and up to the amount specified in the political party's authorisation will also count towards the party's campaign expenditure and must be reported in the political party's spending return and
- the political party must declare how much you have spent on targeted spending and how much they have authorised you to incur

If you are not authorised to incur targeted spending

If you are not authorised to incur targeted spending, all of your targeted spending will count towards your total campaign spending and must be reported in your spending return.

For information on accounting for your campaign spending, see:

- [Managing non-party campaign spending](#)

How we can help

You can find more information in the guidance documents we have suggested in this document, or you can view our full range of guidance and up-to-date resources on our website.

You can contact us on one of the phone numbers or email addresses below. We are here to help, so please get in touch.

Call us on:

- **England:** 020 7271 0616
pef@electoralcommission.org.uk
- **Scotland:** 0131 225 0200
infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk
- **Wales:** 029 2034 6800
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- **Northern Ireland:** 0289 089 4020
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Visit us at www.electoralcommission.org.uk

We welcome feedback on our guidance – just email us at: pef@electoralcommission.org.uk
