

Overview

# Regulated Periods for political parties: 2014-15

---

This document is for political parties  
contesting elections in 2014-15

UPDATED JANUARY 2014

Contents:

---

Elections taking place in 2014-15

---

Defining the Regulated Period

---

Regulated Period dates

---



## Translations and other formats

For information on obtaining this publication in another language or in a large-print or Braille version, please contact us:

Tel: 020 7271 0500

Email: [publications@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:publications@electoralcommission.org.uk)

## Terms and expressions we use

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

You do not have to follow this guidance, but if you do, it will assist you in complying with the law.

## 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. If you are unsure of how any of the rules apply to you, please call us for advice. We are happy to help, so please get in touch.

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](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/party-finance/enforcement)



# Regulated periods for political parties: 2014-15

## Who this document is for:

Political parties contesting elections taking place in 2014-15 who want to know when the spending limits and rules apply. This document covers both Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

### Important

Please note that this document has been updated to reflect the changes made by The Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014.

## The document covers:

- definition of the regulated period
- elections taking place in 2014-15
- regulated period dates
- where to find more information

## Related documents:

- [UK Parliamentary General Election 2015 \(GB & NI\)](#)
- [European Parliamentary Elections 2014 \(GB\)](#)
- [European Parliamentary Elections 2014 \(NI\)](#)
- [Overview of party campaign spending](#)
- [Expert paper: Splitting Spending](#)

# 2

## Summary

Under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) there are rules on spending and fundraising that political parties have to follow in the run-up to elections.

Different elections have different spending limits, and these limits can apply for different periods of time. These rules were changed at the end of January 2014.

This document provides an overview for political parties of the regulated periods and when they apply for elections taking place in 2014-15.

# About our guidance

Each year, we publish specific guidance for political parties for the elections taking place in that year. These documents cover:

- The spending limits that apply for each election
- The periods that these limits apply for
- The reporting deadlines for each election

When preparing to contest an election, you should read both the specific guidance for the election you are contesting, as well as the general guidance documents on topics that apply to all elections.

You can find our election specific guidance documents on our [website](#).

## Important

This guidance applies to political parties only. We issue separate guidance for candidates and their agents and non-party campaigners, which you can find here:

[Guidance for candidates and agents](#)

# What is the regulated period?

In the run up to some elections, there is a set time where campaign spending limits and rules apply. We call this time the regulated period.

Regulated periods apply at elections to:

- The European Parliament
- The UK Parliament
- The Scottish Parliament
- The National Assembly for Wales
- The Northern Ireland Assembly

Spending at local authority elections is only covered by party campaign spending rules if it falls within the regulated period of one of the elections in the list.

UK Parliamentary General Elections usually have a regulated period of 365 days ending on the day of the election but there will be a slightly shorter period for the UK Parliamentary General Election in 2015 (see page 6 for details).

All of the other elections usually have a regulated period of 4 months.



# Elections in 2014-15

## European Parliamentary Elections

The European Parliamentary Elections are taking place on 22 May 2014. The regulated period begins on 23 January 2014 and ends on 22 May 2014.

Our guidance for the European Parliamentary Elections is available here:

[Guidance on campaign spending for political parties](#)

## Local government elections in England

Local government elections are also taking place on 22 May 2014 in some parts of England.

These elections are being held on the last day of the regulated period for the European Parliamentary elections. The rules mean that all party spending on local government elections during the regulated period will be counted against the campaign expenditure spending limit for the European Parliamentary elections.

Any spending which can be attributed to promoting the electoral success of a specific candidate rather than the party does not count as party campaign spending.

We issue separate guidance for candidates and their agents.

Our candidates' guidance for the 2014 Local government elections is available here:

[Guidance for candidates and agents: 2014 Local government elections](#)

# 6

## Referendum on independence for Scotland

The referendum on independence for Scotland will be held on 18 September 2014. The regulated period begins on 30 May 2014, and ends on 18 September 2014.

Spending on campaigning at referendums is regulated separately from campaigning at elections.

If your party intends to spend more than £10,000 on campaigning at the referendum, you will need to register with us as a referendum campaigner.

The rules on referendum spending are different from those for elections, and you should read our guidance carefully to decide whether or not you need to register with us.

Our referendum guidance is available here:

[Referendum on independence for Scotland guidance page](#)

## UK Parliamentary General Election

The UK Parliamentary General Election takes place on 7 May 2015. The regulated period begins on 23 May 2014, and ends on 7 May 2015.

Guidance on the UK Parliamentary General Election is available here:

[Guidance on campaign spending for political parties](#)

# Changes to the combined regulated period

The 'regulated period' is the time during which spending limits and rules apply in the run up to an election.

The Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 changed the combined regulated period for registered political parties contesting the European Parliamentary Elections being held on 22 May 2014 and the UK Parliamentary General election due to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

## The position now

The Act means that the regulated periods and the spending limits are **not** combined for these two elections.

The regulated period for the European Parliamentary Elections started on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2014 and will end on 22 May 2014.

The regulated period for the UK Parliamentary general election starts on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2014 and will end on 7 May 2015.

## The position before the Act came into force

The regulated period for the European Parliamentary elections in 2014 began on 23 January 2014. If your party is planning on contesting both the European Parliamentary elections and the UK Parliamentary general election on 7 May 2015, there would have been a combined regulated period. This would have begun on 23 January 2014 and would have ended on 7 May 2015, and different rules and spending limits would have applied.

# The spending limit

## The position **now**

There is no combined spending limit. Each election has its own spending limit. If you spend less than the limit for the European Parliamentary elections, you cannot carry forward the balance on the UK Parliamentary election.

## The position **before** the Act came into force

There was a combined spending limit for the European Parliamentary election and the UK Parliamentary General Election. This meant that the spending limit for the European Parliament elections applied to that election. If you spent less than the limit for the European Parliamentary elections, you could have spent the balance on the UK Parliamentary election in the corresponding part of Great Britain or Northern Ireland. The total spending by or on behalf of your party on both campaigns could not exceed the combined limit.

You can find more information about the spending limit in our specific guidance for the European Parliamentary Elections.



Important

## Where to find more information:

If you are contesting both elections, you may find the following resources useful:

### [Election specific documents:](#)

Our election specific guidance provides information on the regulated periods, spending limits and reporting requirements for each election.

[UK Parliamentary General Election 2015 \(GB & NI\)](#)

[European Parliamentary Election 2014 \(GB\)](#)

[European Parliamentary Election 2014 \(NI\)](#)

### [Managing your campaign spending:](#)

It is important to manage your campaign spending effectively as you must not exceed the spending limit and because you must report the details of your spending to us after the election. Our guidance on managing campaign spending is available here:

[Overview of party campaign spending](#)

Once you have a good understanding of the principles of campaign spending, our guidance on splitting campaign spending provides more detailed information about how to split spending between elections:

[Expert paper: Splitting 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.

If it's easier, you can also 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](mailto:pef@electoralcommission.org.uk)
- **Scotland:** 0131 225 0200  
[infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk)
- **Wales:** 029 2034 6800  
[infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk)
- **Northern Ireland:** 028 9089 4020  
[infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk)

Visit us at [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)

We welcome feedback on our guidance – just email us at:  
[pef@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:pef@electoralcommission.org.uk)