

Introduction to the Transparency of Lobbying, Non Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014: Non-party campaigner update

February 2014 update No. 1

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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”.

These rules are being changed by the Transparency of Lobbying, Non Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act (“the Act”) 2014.

The changes to the rules will apply to non-party campaigners from **19 September 2014**.

We regulate the rules on non-party campaigning. We help campaigners to understand and comply with the rules by providing advice and guidance. This update is the first in a series of regular updates that will explain how the new rules will work and how they may affect campaigners.

We will publish full guidance on the new rules by early July 2014.

About this update

This update covers:

- a summary of our role
- a summary of the changes to the rules
- where you can find more information

Our role as regulator

There are rules about:

- where political parties and non-party campaigners can receive funds from
- how much they can spend on campaigning at certain elections
- transparency in our political system

We work to ensure that people comply with these rules by:

- providing advice and guidance to help people understand the rules
- receiving, analysing and publishing information about party donations and campaign spending and non-party campaigners
- monitoring how well the rules are being followed
- dealing with possible breaches of the rules

You can find out more about our role at www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

What changes does the Act make to the current rules?

The Act makes a number of changes to the current rules. It changes:

- when the rules apply
- what spending is covered
- what campaigners need to report to us

The rules apply in the run up to certain elections. We call this the “regulated period”. Under the new rules, the regulated period for the UK Parliamentary General Election will start on 19 September 2014 and will end on polling day, 7 May 2015.

If a non-party campaigner wants to spend more than £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland during the regulated period, they must register with us.

There are rules on what non-party campaigners can spend on certain campaigning activities during the regulated period.

A wider range of activities will be subject to the new rules on spending by non-party campaigners. Activities will be regulated if they can reasonably be regarded as intended to influence voters at the election. Spending on election material distributed to the public is already regulated. The new rules will also cover spending on:

- certain public rallies and events
- press conferences and media events
- canvassing and market research
- transport in connection with publicising a campaign

The amount non-party campaigners can spend at UK Parliamentary General Elections during the regulated period is:

- £319,800 in England
- £55,400 in Scotland
- £44,000 in Wales
- £30,800 in Northern Ireland

There are limits on spending focused in particular constituencies, and on spending that is aimed at promoting one political party during the regulated period for a UK Parliamentary general election. There are new pre-poll and post-poll reporting obligations.

The Current Rules

The current rules will continue to apply to non-party campaigners who are campaigning in the run up to the elections being held on 22 May 2014. The regulated period began on 23 January and will end on 22 May 2014.

These rules apply only to election material.

If a non-party campaigner wants to spend more than £10,000 in England or £5,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland on election material, they need to register with us and comply with the rules on spending and donations.

You can find out more about the current rules in our guidance at <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/party-or-campaigner/non-party-campaigners>

When will the new rules start?

The new rules will start on **19 September 2014**.

We will publish guidance to help campaigners comply with the new rules on spending, donations and reporting.

We will also be publishing guidance with the Charity Commission, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland to help charities who campaign in the run up to elections.

Where you can find more information

We will be providing 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. We will be seeking input into the guidance and more information on how to get involved will be published in our second update in February. You can sign up to receive the updates [here](#)

Our guidance is available on our website. 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
- Scotland: 0131 225 0200
infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk
- Wales: 029 2034 6800
infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk
- Northern Ireland: 028 9089 4020
infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk

For other information about the Act

On our website, you can read our briefings on the Act, including further information on the changes made:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/our-work/our-views/parliamentary-briefings/transparency-of-lobbying,-non-party-campaigning-and-trade-union-administration-bill>

You can sign up to receive our updates on the new rules here:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/political-parties-campaigning-and-donations/non-party-campaign-spending-and-donations-at-elections/sign-up-for-updates>