

# The Electoral Commission

April 2016

## Briefing note

### Campaign monitoring for the EU referendum

As the independent regulator of party and election finance, we:

- make sure people understand the rules and monitor compliance with the rules
- investigate and impose sanctions when people do break the rules
- publish data on political funding and spending

This briefing note sets out our approach to campaign monitoring in the lead up to the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union that will take place on 23 June 2016.

#### **Why does the Electoral Commission carry out campaign monitoring?**

Voters deserve a fair and transparent referendum. This is vital in ensuring voters have trust and confidence in the outcome of the poll. Monitoring compliance with the rules on campaign spending and political donations is part of our statutory remit. The primary purpose of our monitoring is to ensure that the rules are followed, specifically, by:

- identifying emerging issues so we can take appropriate regulatory action, such as offering advice and guidance or opening an investigation (for example we may contact an unregistered campaigner to ensure they know the maximum they can spend without registering)
- raising campaigners' awareness of the rules and our role in applying them where we identify potential misunderstandings of the rules (for example by proactive contact with campaigners; by speaking at public events; and by using other communications such as campaigner updates)
- obtaining information on activity which we may refer to when looking at the

financial disclosures submitted by campaigners (for example we may identify specific spending during the campaign and then check the campaigner's spending report when this is delivered to ensure it is included).

### **How will the Electoral Commission undertake campaign monitoring?**

We will monitor campaigning in advance of the referendum, focusing on those we anticipate will undertake significant levels of activity.

Our monitoring will use various sources, including press, broadcast, social media and online media, as well as information brought to our attention by campaigners.

### **How will the Electoral Commission use campaign monitoring to report on the conduct of the EU Referendum?**

Monitoring helps us to understand the effectiveness of the rules on campaign spending and donations, and how they have affected trust and participation in the democratic process, and forms part of our evidence base for post-referendum analysis.

We will report after the poll on any issues or concerns arising from our campaign monitoring work.

Guidance for those campaigning in advance of the referendum is available on our website [here](#).