

Non-party campaigners: UK Parliamentary general election, the third party campaigning review and receiving updates for the EU referendum

July 2015: final update (No. 16)

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 as a candidate. These are called “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 came into force on **19 September 2014**.

The regulated period for the UK Parliamentary general election ended on 7 May.

This is a general update about submitting your spending return, the government third party campaigning review and how to receive updates about guidance for the EU referendum.

This is our final non-party campaigner update. For more information about the application of the rules to elections in 2016, please see our website.

Final update

This is our final update on the rules introduced by the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014. We started publishing these updates in February 2014 to help campaigners understand the new rules and have continued with them throughout the run up to the UK Parliamentary general election. The regulatory period for the election ended on 7 May 2015.

Thank you for taking the time to read the updates and to offer feedback. We have over 1000 subscribers to the update and we hope you have found it a useful additional source of information.

Campaigners will continue to have access to our guidance, FAQs, factsheets, webcasts and our advice service if they have any further questions. We will be publishing our guidance in advance of the May 2016 polls in the autumn.

The Electoral Commission has published its report on the UKPGE. The May 2015 polls were well-run overall with high levels of voter satisfaction. The Commission's view at present is that there were high levels of compliance with the rules by parties, candidates and non-party campaigners. Later this year, we will publish spending returns which will give voters transparency in how the election campaigns were financed and we will report on the spending returns and any regulatory issues in spring [2016](#).

Deadlines for submitting your spending return

If you are a registered non-party campaigners you **must** submit a spending return to us if you have spent over the registration threshold in **any** part of the UK (£20,000 in England or £10,000 in any of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland).

You must also submit a return if you have spent over £9,750 in any one constituency.

If you have spent £250,000 or **under** the deadline for submitting your spending return is **7 August 2015**.

If you have spent **over** £250,000 the deadline for submitting your spending return is **7 November 2015**.

You should let us know if you do not need to submit a spending return by emailing us at: pef@electoralcommission.org.uk

For more information about how to submit your spending return, please see our guidance on [Managing non-party Campaign Spending](#).

Webcasts

We have produced a webcast for non-party campaigners about completing your spending return. The webcast includes an overview of what you must include in your return. It also covers how to fill in and submit the spending return.

The webcast can be found on our website [here](#), under the 'Webinars' section for non-party campaigners.

In this section you can also find a link to the [PDF slides](#) for the webcast, web-links to the forms and other resources.

Template auditor's report

If you are a registered non-party campaigners and you have spent more than £250,000 campaigning at the election you must also submit a report prepared by an independent qualified auditor along with your spending return.

We have produced a template auditor's report which can be found [here](#).

Government review of third party campaigning: calls for views and evidence

The government has appointed Lord Hodgson to undertake a review of non-party campaigning at the 2015 UK Parliamentary general election, as required by section 39 of the Transparency of Lobbying, Non Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014.

The government has now published a document which calls for views and evidence from the public and interested stakeholders to have their say on the third party campaigning rules.

The document examines the current elements and underlying issues associated with the third party campaigning rules and has a variety of questions in relation to these.

If you would like to take part in this consultation, you can find more information on the government's

website [here](#). The deadline for taking part is 31 July 2015.

May 2016

Next May there will be the following elections:

- Scottish Parliamentary elections
- National Assembly for Wales elections
- Northern Ireland Assembly elections
- Local elections in England
- Greater London Authority elections
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections

In the run up to these elections, there will be a set time when the rules on spending and donations will apply to non-party campaigners. We call this time the 'regulated period'. The regulated period will start in January 2016.

We will publish guidance for these elections which sets out the spending limits, regulated period and reporting deadlines in the autumn.

If you are planning to spend more than £10,000 in any of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland you must register with us.

Your registration lasts for 15 months from the date on which you are registered, but if it is due to expire during a regulated period it will be automatically extended until the end of that regulated period.

Referendum on the UK's membership of the EU

You can read [our introductory guidance on referendums here](#).

Once the legislation is passed, we will publish a full suite of guidance for campaigners for the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. We will be publishing a series of updates to keep you informed before we publish our guidance.

These updates will be separate to the ones you have received during the May 2015 election period. You can sign up for the updates for the EU referendum on our website [here](#).

Contact us

If you have a query, you can contact us on 0333 103 1928. When you call this number you will be given a number of options that will direct you through to the guidance team or your national office.

Alternatively you can contact us by email:

- England:
pef@electoralcommission.org.uk
- Scotland:
infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk
- Wales:
infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk
- Northern Ireland:
infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk