

Donations and loans to Members of Parliament: a brief guide to permissible sources and reporting

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Members must only accept donations and loans worth over £500 for their political or parliamentary activities from certain mainly UK-based sources. We regulate compliance with these rules.

You must report all donations and loans that you accept to the Registrar of Members' Financial Interests. The Registrar will pass on the relevant information to us.

Members must report directly to us if they return a donation or end a loan because the donor/lender is not permissible.

This guide outlines the rules on permissibility, and how to report any impermissible donations or loans to us. It should be read together with the House Guide to the Rules relating to the conduct of Members.

What you need to know Introduction

The Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) permits Members of Parliament to accept donations and loans only from certain sources set out in the Act (known as permissible sources).

The rules on permissibility apply to all donations and loans over £500.

What counts as a donation or loan?

If an item falls under Categories 4(b), 5, 6 or 7 of the House Rules, and its value is over £500, it is likely to be a donation under PPERA.

Loans taken out for your political or parliamentary activities are reportable under Category 10 of the House Rules. This includes credit facilities, and security or guarantees given on your behalf.

Which donations and loans can I accept?

You can accept the reasonable costs of overseas visits from any source.

You can only accept other donations and loans over £500 if they come from:

- An individual who is on a UK electoral register
- A UK registered company which is incorporated in an EU state and carries on business in the UK
- A UK registered limited liability partnership which carries on business in the UK
- A registered political party
- A UK registered trade union, building society, friendly society or industrial and provident society
- A UK based unincorporated association that carries on business or other activities in the UK

You can also accept donations from certain types of trust. Please contact us for advice if you are offered a donation from a trust.

What do I need to do when I receive a donation or am offered a loan?

You have 30 days from receipt of a donation to check that the donor is permissible and decide whether or not to accept the donation.

If you cannot confirm permissibility, or cannot identify the source, you must return the donation within those 30 days. If you have no means of returning it to an anonymous source, you must send it to us, and it will be paid to the Consolidated Fund.

If you do not do this, you may have to forfeit the donation. You may also have committed a criminal offence.

You must check permissibility **before** you enter into a loan. If you find you have a loan from an impermissible source, please contact us for advice immediately.

How do I report an impermissible donation?

You need to report to us within 30 days of either returning the donation, or sending it to us.

You should complete Form RD1B, which is available on our website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/candidates-agents/regulated-donors

The Commission's registers

We publish details of donations and loans which add up to more than £1,500 from the same source in the same year.

We also publish details of all impermissible donations and loans.

We do not publish the home addresses of individuals who are donors or lenders.

We update our registers monthly, based on the information received the Registrar of Members' Financial Interests, and on reports of impermissible donations and loans received by us.

Where can I get further advice?

If you have any questions about reporting to the Register of Members' Financial Interests, please contact the Registrar on 020 7219 3277.

If you have any questions about permissibility, or reporting impermissible donations or loans, please contact us on 020 7271 0616 or pef@electoralcommission.org.uk