

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

June 2017

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

You must report information about all donations and loans that you accept to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. The Commissioner 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 or 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 and the guidance on our [website](#).

Introduction

The Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) provides that Members of Parliament can only accept donations and loans 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?

Under PERA, a donation is a gift of money, goods, property or services that:

- is given with the intention that it is used or benefits you in connection with your political activities as an MP
- is given without charge or on non-commercial terms

and has a value of more than £500.

A loan includes loans of money, credit facilities, such as credit cards or overdrafts, securities or guarantees and that has a value of more than £500.

The rules cover donations and loans that are offered to, and used by you in connection with your political activities as an MP.

Your political activities as an MP include both party political activities, and activities that you carry out in connection with the office that you hold.

If an item falls under Categories 2(a), 2(b), 3 or 4 of the House Rules, and its value is over £500, it is likely to be a donation under PERA.

Loans taken out for your political activities are reportable under

Categories 2(a), 2(b), 3 and 4 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

There are additional permissible sources for MPs representing constituencies in Northern Ireland.

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 or loan?

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

Donations:

You should complete form [RD1B](#) if you are an MP in Great Britain and Form [RD1G](#) if you are an MP in Northern Ireland.

Loans:

You should complete form [RD1D](#) if you are an MP in Great Britain and Form [RD1DNI](#) if you are an MP in Northern Ireland.

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 from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, 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 Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, please contact the Commissioner on 020 7219 3277.

If you have any questions about permissibility, or reporting impermissible donations or loans, please contact us on:

0333 103 1928
or pef@electoralcommission.org.uk