

The Electoral Commission

Local government elections (including combined authority mayors) in England: Non-party campaigners

This factsheet is for non-party campaigners who are campaigning at local government elections in England.

This includes campaigners campaigning for or against a candidate at the combined authority mayoral elections.

Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, non-party campaigners must follow rules about how much they can spend on campaign activities in the run up to certain elections.

This document explains how the rules apply.

What are non-party campaigners?

Non-party campaigners are individuals or organisations that campaign in elections, but are not

standing as political parties or candidates.

Non-party campaigners have to follow certain rules in the run-up to elections.

This document explains which rules apply for the local elections in England. This includes the combined authority mayoral elections.

The types of non-party campaigns

There are two types of non-party campaigns:

- **Local campaigns** – non-party campaigns for or against one or more candidates in a particular constituency, ward or other electoral area
- **General campaigns** - non-party campaigns for or against a political party, or particular categories of candidates, including campaigns on policies or issues closely associated with a particular party or category of candidates (for example, candidates in a certain age group).

You can find more information about the different types of campaign in our [Overview of non-party campaigns](#).

The general rules do not apply to local elections in England unless they take place in a regulated period for a UK Parliamentary general election or a European Parliamentary election.

For more information, please see our guidance for non-party campaigners [here](#).

Local campaigns at local elections

If you are campaigning for or against a candidate at local or combined authority mayoral elections, you are covered by the rules for local campaigns.

The Electoral Commission does not regulate local campaigning. Breaches of the rules that apply to local campaigns may be a criminal offence. If you are a non-party campaigner you must ensure you follow the rules.

Complaints about possible breaches should be made to the police. We ask for complaints to be copied to us for our information.

Under the local campaign rules, there are limits on how much you can spend on campaigning for or against particular candidates in a constituency or local electoral area. These limits are different, depending on the size of the electorate in the relevant area.

These spending limits cover spending on most campaign activities, including leaflets, meetings and digital campaigning.

The regulated period

We call the time when the spending limits and rules apply the regulated period.

The regulated period starts on the day after the person you are campaigning for or against officially becomes a candidate, and finishes on polling day.

You can find more information about polling dates and when people become candidates on our [guidance page for candidates and agents](#).

Spending limits

During a regulated period, non-party campaigners are subject to limits on their spending on campaign activity.

Spending limits in local elections

The spending limit for local elections is:

- **£50 plus 0.5p** per local government elector in the ward who is registered to vote on the last day for publication of the notice of election in the ward

For example

If there are 1,000 people on the ward electoral register, your spending limit for campaigning for or against a candidate would be:

$$£50 + (1000 \times 0.5p)$$

$$£50 + (£5) = £55$$

Your local elections office will be able to give you the number of electors in the ward.

You can find the contact details for your local elections office at <https://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/>

You should keep a record of your spending, to make sure that you do not exceed the spending limit.

Any spending over these limits must be authorised by the agent of the relevant candidate. The authorised spending will count as candidate spending and towards the candidate's spending limit.

Spending limit at combined authority mayoral elections

If you are campaigning for or against a candidate for a combined authority mayoral election you have a limit of:

- £50 plus 0.5p for each elector who is registered to vote on the last day for publication of the notice of election in the combined authority area.

For example

If there are 500,000 registered electors in the combined authority area, your spending limit for campaigning for or against a candidate for Mayor would be:

$$£50 + (500,000 \times 0.5p)$$

$$£50 + (£2,500) = £2550$$

You should keep a record of your spending, to make sure that you do not exceed the spending limit.

Any spending over these limits must be authorised by the agent of the relevant candidate. The authorised spending will count as candidate spending and towards the candidate's spending limit.

Reporting

If authorisation is given, the agent will need to include your spending in the candidate spending return. You will need to give the agent the necessary details for that spending to be included.

If you spend more than the limit you must also complete a return and forward it to the Returning Officer within 21 days of the result being declared. The return for non-party campaigners can be found [here](#).

Imprints

An imprint is added to election material to show who is responsible for its production. It helps to ensure that there is transparency about who is campaigning, and must therefore be clear and visible.

What must you include?

On printed material such as leaflets and posters, you must include the name and address of:

- the printer, and
- the promoter

The promoter is the person who has authorised the material to be printed.

If the promoter is acting on behalf of a group or organisation, you must also include the group or organisation's name and address.

You can use either home or office addresses.

If you are putting an advert in a newspaper, your advert does not need to include the printer's name and address.

It is an offence not to include an imprint on printed election material.

Example of an imprint

A standard imprint should look like this:

Printed by Armadillo Printing Ltd, 20 Barry Avenue, Leeds. Promoted by J Smith on behalf of the Campaign Group, both of 110 High Street, Stafford.

Where do you put the imprint?

If your material is a single-sided document – such as a window poster – or where most of the information is on one side, you must put the imprint on the face of the document.

If it is a multi-sided document, you must put it on the first or last page.

Websites and other electronic material

As good practice, we expect you to put an imprint on electronic material, such as websites and emails. The imprint should include the name and address of the promoter and the organisation on whose behalf it has been produced.

You should include an imprint unless the size or format of the election material would mean that the imprint is not legible.

Where it is impractical to place the full imprint on the election material you should consider how to provide some other means for the material to be associated with you.

How we can help

You can view our full range of guidance and up-to-date resources on our website.

You can contact us on the phone number below or via email on the address below. We are here to help, so please get in touch.

Call us on 0333 103 1928

Or email:

pef@electoralcommission.org.uk

Visit us at

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk>

We welcome feedback on our guidance – just email us at:

pef@electoralcommission.org.uk

Translations and other formats

For information on obtaining this publication in another language or in a large-print or Braille version please contact the Electoral Commission:

Tel: 020 7271 0500

Email us at:

publications@electoralcommission.org.uk