

The Electoral Commission

Local government elections and mayoral elections in England in May 2021: Non-party campaigners

This factsheet is for non-party campaigners who are campaigning at local government or mayoral elections in England in May 2021.

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 and mayoral elections in England in May 2021.

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 guidance [Non-party campaigners: Where to start](#).

The general campaign rules do not apply at elections in England in May 2021. You therefore do not have to

register with us or report donations to us, and spending on activities directed only at your members will still count towards your spending total.

Local campaigns at local elections

If you are campaigning for or against a candidate at a local election or mayoral election in England, you are covered by the rules for local campaigns.

The Electoral Commission does not regulate local campaigning. Complaints about possible breaches should be made to the police.

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, 6 May 2021.

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.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information>

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 limits at local authority and combined authority mayoral elections

If you are campaigning for or against a candidate for a local or 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 local or combined authority area.

For example

If there are 500,000 registered electors in the local or 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 declaration and forward these to the Returning Officer within 21 days of the result being declared. The return

and declaration for non-party campaigners can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Imprints

Whenever printed election material is published, it must contain certain details (which we refer to as an 'imprint') to show who is responsible for the material. This helps to ensure there is transparency about who is campaigning.

Please see our [imprint factsheet for non-party campaigners](#) for guidance on using imprints on election material.

Where you can find more information

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

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

Email:

pef@electoralcommission.org.uk

Call us on 0333 103 1928

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:

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Email us at:

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