

electoral administration bulletin

The
Electoral
Commission



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Consultation on the Electoral Commission's Codes of Practice for election spending for political parties and candidates

On 10 September we launched [a consultation](#) on Codes of Practice for election spending for political parties and candidates.

The Codes will apply to elections which the UK Parliament has legislative responsibility for, including UK Parliamentary elections.

Responsibility for the law on Scottish Parliament and Scottish local government elections rests with the Scottish Parliament. Where there is no combined regulatory period, separate Codes would be needed for those elections. We are currently discussing this with the Scottish Government to understand how this could work alongside their developing plans for electoral reforms. We would carry out separate consultations on those Codes.

Background

Elections legislation enables us to prepare Codes of Practice about election spending for political parties and candidates. A Code of Practice is a statutory document that provides detailed practical guidance on how to comply with legal obligations.

The two Codes proposed in this consultation, one for candidate spending and the other for political party spending, will increase transparency in spending and reporting of expenses at elections. The Codes will help increase voter confidence in the system of political and election finance.

In writing these Codes we have drawn on our experience of regulating elections and reviewing spending returns. We have asked parties about their experiences and incorporated their views. We also want to gather more feedback through this consultation.

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Consultation on the Electoral Commission's Codes of Practice for election spending for political parties and candidates

Information on and a link to the Commission's consultation, which closes on Tuesday 4 December.

EA Bulletins are issued on a regular basis. They are one of our key channels for communicating with Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their staff. Past issues of Bulletins for England, Scotland and Wales are available [here](#). You can also [subscribe to the EA Bulletins](#).

Please **keep us informed** of any staff changes within your team. This will help us to keep our mailing lists up-to-date.

We are sending you this newsletter as it contains important information about the Electoral Commission's work which is relevant to you. The newsletter forms part of the Electoral Commission's public task which has its basis in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. We will manage your personal information and contact details in line with the General Data Protection Regulation and UK data protection legislation as outlined in our privacy notice (<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/privacy-notice>)

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What are we aiming to do?

Our aims in preparing the Codes are:

- To provide guidance for candidates, their agents and political parties about what items of spending count towards the spending limits and are to be reported
- To provide enhanced clarity to political parties and candidates about when spending (including notional spending) should be in a candidate return and when it should be in a political party return
- To ensure that there is clarity and consistency in the reporting of spending, including digital campaigning by political parties and candidates.

What do the Codes look like?

The Codes set out what should be included in each category of spending, as well as listing what isn't included. The Codes are designed to give illustrative examples rather than an exhaustive list. We do not have the power to add extra categories of spending, only to outline what is covered by the current categories.

How can I contribute?

The consultation paper seeks views on our Codes of Practice for parties and candidates and is available on our [website](#).

We want to hear from as many people as possible. Please send your response to: Codes@electoralcommission.org.uk. The consultation closes on **Tuesday 4 December**.

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