

Referendum on the UK Parliamentary Voting System

Fees and Charges Bulletin No. 5

In this bulletin we provide a progress update on the receipt and processing of claims, a response to questions that have been raised with us relating to UK Parliamentary General Election claims that have not yet been settled, and give a further update on superannuation contributions for Counting Officers. If there is a particular area that you would like us to cover in the next update, then please get in touch with us via the contacts given below.

Claim submissions progress to date

As at 18 November we had received 139 claims out of the 451 due (31%).

Of the 139 claims received:

- 44 have been settled and paid, or had debtors invoices raised
- 62 have been checked and have queries raised with Counting Officers
- 33 are being processed.

A further 151 Counting Officers have previously indicated that they will have submitted claims by the end of November. If all those claims are received as planned, 64% of all claims due will have been received.

ECU have continued to meet the target we set them of acknowledging all claims within 3 days of receipt. We set ourselves a target of responding to queries raised by ECU with us within 3 days of receipt; 54 such queries have been raised, and we have answered 52 within the 3-day target.

There are now less than 6 weeks to the statutory claims submission deadline of 5 January 2012. Where you have not yet submitted your claim, Counting Officers should make every effort to ensure that they are on track to meet the deadline and that claims are submitted as soon as possible.

UK Parliamentary General Election 2010 claims

Some Counting Officers in England and Wales have indicated to us that they were delaying submission of claims because they had not yet had a response from ECU to their (Acting) Returning Officer claim in respect of the 2010 UK Parliamentary General Election.

Claims for the 2011 referendum are of course entirely separate from claims for the 2010 general election. We have provided guidance and resources to enable Counting Officers to complete their referendum claims with confidence, and there is no reason to wait for the completion of the general election claims process before submitting your referendum claim. If there is a particular question that you would like advice on before submitting your claim that is not covered in our guidance and resources, then please contact your local Commission office and we will do our best to assist you.

If you have a query on the progress of your General Election claim, then please contact ECU at ecu@communities.gsi.gov.uk or on 030 344 43912.

How to avoid queries on your claim

In the last bulletin we listed the top 3 issues that were causing ECU to raise queries with Counting Officers. We are still receiving a large proportion of claims that result in queries being raised on these issues, leading to a delay in our being able to make a final settlement. The main areas still causing queries are:

- Missing vouchers
- Non-provision of original receipted invoices or vouchers, or consequent failure to endorse copies or explain why originals are unavailable. Photocopied vouchers should be accompanied by a [declaration to support unendorsed documents](#)
- Lack of explanation for high spending under a particular head
- Vouchers that do not give sufficient description of expenditure incurred to be able to identify whether the claim under a particular head is acceptable
- Claims for election management software not properly identified and broken down. . Further information on this cost can be found in chapter 14 of our [guidance notes on Counting Officers' expenses](#)

Please make every effort to ensure that your claims are as complete, clear and accurate as possible before submission as this will ultimately save you and the ECU valuable time and money. Also, please make sure that you submit both an electronic version of the claim forms and hard copies of all supporting documentation. Your claim will not be considered as received until both have been submitted.

Counting Officers' superannuation

CLG has not yet issued its consultation document on the necessary amendment of Regulation 11 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2008 to allow superannuation payment for Counting Officers in respect of the UK Parliamentary Voting System Referendum. We understand, however, that it will appear shortly; and that CLG intend that the legislation will be in place in Spring 2012.

As reported in the last bulletin, we have made our concerns about this delay known to CLG and others with an interest.

Fees and charges resources

We have updated the FAQ document to reflect recent issues raised with us and this can be found on our website alongside other fees and charges resources. These can all be accessed via the following [link](#) and found under the heading of 'Fees and Charges'. New or updated questions are in blue text.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the preparation or presentation of your claim, ECU is happy to provide help and assistance. They can be contacted at ecu@communities.gsi.gov.uk or on 030 344 43912.

If you have any queries about the content of this bulletin or comments or suggestions to make about future content or format, please contact your local regional or devolved office (details [here](#)).