

## **Referendum on the UK Parliamentary Voting System**

### **Fees and Charges Bulletin No. 3**

In this third bulletin we provide a progress update on various issues including reimbursements for public awareness activities, superannuation contributions for Counting Officers, and an update on the receipt and processing of claims. If there are any particular areas 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 30 August ECU had received 32 claims out of the 451 due. Of these one has been settled, 14 have been checked and have queries raised with Counting Officers, and 17 are being processed. A further 89 Counting Officers have indicated that they will submit claims by the end of September.

As part of our service level agreement with ECU we have asked that all claims are acknowledged within 3 days of receipt. Records show that to date ECU has met this target.

Where claims have been checked and queries raised with Counting Officers, ECU has given Counting Officers a deadline of one month to respond to such queries. We would be extremely grateful if you could do your best to respond straight away to any such queries as this will enable your claim to be settled as quickly as possible. Where responses are not received within a month ECU will report this to us and we will contact Counting Officers directly to see why there is a delay.

#### **Reimbursement of public awareness activities within 28 days of the poll**

We have so far recommended payment for 5 of the 30 participation claims presented to us. We have requested further supporting information and evidence from the remainder and have received this from a further 17 Counting Officers, but are still awaiting evidence from 8 – the closing date for returning this evidence is 23 September 2011. Once the claim and supporting evidence has been checked

against our original guidance, we will make payments as soon as we can and hope to have this process completed by the end of September 2011.

## **Counting Officers' superannuation**

In our last bulletin we reported that Communities and Local Government (CLG) were about to consult on a number of proposed changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulations. A date for this consultation has not yet been fixed but is likely to be later in the autumn. The Scottish Pensions Agency have indicated that they will also consult at the same time as CLG. Given that the consultation period will last for 3 months it is now almost certain that any changes to regulations retrospectively to allow for superannuation contributions to be made in respect of Regional Counting Officer and Counting Officer duties will not be made prior to the deadline for submission of claims on 5 January 2012.

We are writing to CLG to stress that we are not happy with this situation, not only because it means that there will be an increasing delay on Counting Officers being able to make superannuation contributions, but also because it could well impact upon our accounting targets in respect of the referendum.

As we said in our last bulletin, there is no need to delay submitting claims while changes to the legislation are considered. Counting Officers know the level of superannuation contributions they need to make provision for and they can reflect that in their claims. However, ECU will not be able to reimburse any monies for superannuation until such time as the amended legislation comes into force.

## **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'.

## **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](mailto: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](#)).