

Return of candidate spending: UK Parliamentary general election Northern Ireland

Who this form is for:

This form is for candidates and their agents contesting the UK Parliamentary general election. It should be completed by the agent, or the candidate if they are acting as their own agent.

This form is for recording the details of campaign spending on items or services used during the period known as the short campaign, which begins on the day after the date you officially become a candidate and ends on polling day.

The earliest date you can officially become a candidate is the day that the UK Parliament is dissolved.

You will become a candidate on this date if you or others have already announced your intention to stand. If your intention to stand has not been announced by the day of the dissolution of Parliament, you will officially become a candidate on the earlier of:

- the date you or another person announce your intention to stand
- the date when you are nominated

It is **your** responsibility to fully and accurately report candidate spending. You should ensure you understand the rules and that all spending is properly authorised, recorded and reported.

Before completing the form, you should read our guidance for candidates and agents which is available on our website:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/uk-parliamentary-general-election-in-northern-ireland-2017>

More information about when you officially become a candidate is available in our [guidance for candidates and agents](#).

Explanatory notes

Candidate identification mark (all forms)

As there are a number of forms that must be completed, it is important that the full set of documents in your return can be identified as yours.

In order to do this, please add an identification mark to the long and short campaign forms, the candidate's declaration and the agent's declaration.

You can choose anything as your identification mark. Many candidates use their initials with a combination of numbers or letters that reference the election or electoral area.

It is important to remember to use the **same** identification mark on all of the forms in your return.

Main form: Section 1 – Details of candidate and election

Please provide the details required under this section. The spending limit is calculated by adding together a fixed base amount and a variable top up that takes into account the number of registered electors in the constituency you are contesting.

The table below sets out the fixed amounts for the short campaign, along with the variable amounts that apply to different types of parliamentary constituency:

Regulated period	Fixed amount	Variable amounts
Short campaign	£8,700	6p per registered parliamentary elector in a borough constituency (burgh constituency in Scotland), or 9p per registered parliamentary elector in a county constituency

The number of Parliamentary electors in a constituency is based on the electoral register on the last date for publication of the notice of election. Your local elections office, or the

For candidates in Northern Ireland, contact details for EONI are available [here](#).

Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI), will be able to tell you if your constituency is a borough/burgh or county constituency.

Main form: Section 2 – Details of election agent

If you have appointed an election agent, you must provide the details requested in this section. If you are a candidate acting as your own agent, please place a mark in the relevant box.

Main form: Section 3 – Summary of spending and the worksheets for spending categories

There are separate worksheets for each category of spending. More detailed information about the spending categories is available in our [guidance for candidates and agents](#).

You must provide a statement of each item of campaign spending you have used during the short campaign on the relevant worksheets for each spending category.

If you have no spending to report for a particular category, you do not need to complete the worksheet, but you must enter 0 (zero) for the relevant category of spending in the summary table in Section 3b of the main form.

If you are completing the Microsoft Excel version of this form, you can insert as many rows as you require on each worksheet to record each item of campaign spending.

The categories of spending are:

Spending category	Description
A - Advertising	This includes advertising of any nature, e.g. posters or advertisements in newspapers. It includes agency fees, design costs and any costs associated with preparing, producing and distributing advertising.
B – Unsolicited material to electors	This includes unsolicited material to electors, whether addressed by name or not. It includes design costs and all other costs in connection with preparing, producing and distributing such material. The cost of postage should be included except for election addresses sent using the candidate's free post entitlement.
C - Transport	This includes transport costs for you and your campaigners. For example, hire cars or public transport.
D -Public meetings	This includes costs in connection with people's attendance at meetings, the hire of premises for the purposes of meetings and the provision of goods, services or facilities at meetings.

E -Agent and other staff costs	This includes the agent's salary, or the costs of staff seconded to you by their employer. You do not need to include time spent on your campaign by volunteers
F – Accommodation and administration	This includes the general costs of campaign office rental and utilities such as telephone bills and stationery

Each item of spending should be allocated to one category only. Most items will be easy to categorise, but others may appear to fit more than one category. In these cases, you should make an honest and reasonable assessment as to which category fits best.

Generally, items should be placed under the purpose that they naturally fall into, e.g. the transport costs of the candidate should be included under transport even if the transport is in connection with participation at a public meeting.

How to complete the spending category worksheets

For every item of spending, please give details of:

- An item number for each payment. The first payment reported should be '1' and the items should be numbered consecutively. Item numbers should be unique because they are used to cross-reference with other sections of the form and supporting invoices/receipts.
- Confirmation of whether an invoice or receipt has been submitted. You must provide invoices or receipts for each item of spending with a value of more than £20 (except for notional spending). You should include the relevant item number on each invoice or receipt.
- Details of the item or service used, which should include the name and address of the supplier where this not on an invoice submitted with the return.
- The name of the person who made the payment, for example, the election agent.
- The dates on which the expense in relation to the item was incurred, the invoice or receipt received and the date on which the invoice was paid.

You can find out more about notional spending in our [guidance for candidates and agents](#).

- The value of the item of campaign spending, including notional spending with a value of more than £50.
- The amount paid for the item, if different from its value.
- Confirmation of whether the item is an unpaid or disputed claim. You will need to provide additional information about items that are unpaid or disputed

Other Authorised Spending Worksheet

Under Section 75 of the Representation of the People Act 1983, individuals and organisations may incur spending up to the limits in the table below to promote your candidacy (or criticise other candidates) during the regulated period:

The limit for spending that you have not authorised is £700. You must authorise any spending above this amount in writing and report the details in this section of the return.

If any person or organisation other than the election agent has been authorised to incur campaign spending on behalf of the candidate, you must complete this worksheet, providing the details requested.

Each item of campaign spending that you have authorised and reported in this section of the form must also be reported on the relevant spending category worksheet, and included in the summary of spending tables in Sections 3a and 3b.

Unpaid claims

Use the unpaid claims worksheet to tell us more about claims that were not received by the agent within 21 days of the result of the election. Please ensure that you use the same item number to cross-reference the two entries in the different worksheets. You should include the details of the court to which you have applied, or will apply to make a late payment, and the date on which you made the application.

Disputed claims

Use the disputed claims worksheet to tell us more about any claims that were not paid by the agent within 28 days of the election result. Please ensure you use the same item number to cross-reference the two entries in the different worksheets. You should provide information about the nature of the dispute and any action that you are taking.

When you have completed all the relevant worksheets, indicate which ones will be included with your return by marking the boxes in Section 3 of the main form. You should also complete the tables in Sections 3a and 3b on the main form.

Unpaid claims are invoices that are not received by the agent within 21 days of the declaration of the result.

Disputed claims are invoices that are not paid by the agent within 28 days of the result.

More information about dealing with unpaid claims is available in our [guidance for candidates and agents](#).

The totals for election spending in Sections 3a 'Types of payment' and 3b 'Categories of spending' should be the same. If your totals are not the same, you have made a mistake in your calculations. You should check the information you have entered and your calculations.

If you are granted a court order to pay an unpaid or disputed claim, you must report the details to the Acting Returning Officer within 7 days of the claim being paid. You must include a copy of the court order with your return.

Main form: Section 4 – Personal expenses

Personal expenses are the reasonable travel and living expenses of the candidate for the purpose of campaigning in the election. Personal expenses do not count against the candidate's limit and they should not duplicate anything already declared as election spending under Section 3.

Use the personal expenses worksheet to provide the requested details about the candidate's personal expenses. When you have completed the worksheet, enter the total amount of personal expenses in Section 4 of the main form.

Main form: Section 5 – Donations and the worksheets for permissible and impermissible donations

Completing the Permissible Donations worksheet:

Use the 'Permissible Donations' worksheet to report the details of any donations with a value of more than £50 from permissible sources you have accepted towards campaign spending. For each donation accepted by or on behalf of the candidate, please provide the following details:

- the full name of the donor
- the address of the donor
- the company registration number for donations from companies
- the date that you received the donation
- the date that you accepted the donation
- the amount (for a cash donation) or value (for a non-cash donation)
- the nature of the donation if non-cash, for example free office space

You can also accept donations from types of trusts, bequests and Gibraltar sources. The rules on these donations are complex, so please get in touch with us if you need more information about how to deal with these donations.

- you should also give the type of permissible source you have accepted the donation from (for example a company, trade union or political party)

Completing the Impermissible Donations worksheet:

Use the Impermissible Donations worksheet to tell us about the details of any donations towards campaign spending you have decided not to accept. For each unidentifiable or impermissible donation received by or on behalf of the candidate, please provide the following details:

- the name of the donor, unless this is not known, in which case please enter unknown
- the donor's address, unless this is not known, then enter 'unknown'
- the date the donation was received
- the manner in which the donation was made
- the amount or value of the donation
- the nature of the donation (e.g. cash, non-cash or services)
- the date and manner in which you dealt with the donation

When you have completed all the relevant worksheets, indicate which ones will be included with your return by marking the boxes in Section 5 on the main form. You should also enter the total amount of donations accepted and rejected.

Submitting your return

Print each worksheet that you have completed and the main form. The return for the short campaign must be submitted to the relevant (Acting) Returning Officer by the election agent within 35 calendar days of the election result being declared.

If you have appointed an election agent, the forms must be accompanied by a [declaration](#) signed by the agent to verify the return.

Within seven working days of submitting the spending return, a [declaration](#) signed by the candidate must also be submitted to the relevant (Acting) Returning Officer.

If the candidate is outside the UK when the declaration is due, the deadline is extended to 14 days after they come back.

If you are acting as your own agent, you must complete the candidate's declaration and submit it within seven working days of submitting your return.

Important

If the 35 day period ends on a weekend or bank holiday, the deadline is extended until the next working day.

Where can I get further advice?

If you have any questions about candidates' election spending you can call us on:

- England: 0333 103 1928
pef@electoralcommission.org.uk
- Scotland: 0333 103 1928
infoscotland@electoralcommission.org.uk
- Wales: 0333 103 1929
infowales@electoralcommission.org.uk
- Northern Ireland: 0333 103 1928
infonorthernireland@electoralcommission.org.uk