

The Electoral Commission

Publicly funded bodies and the referendum on Parliamentary voting system in the UK

Factsheet

In the run-up to the referendum on 5 May 2011, certain publicly funded bodies are subject to restrictions on issuing publicity material under the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA).

The restrictions affect the material these bodies can issue in relation to the referendum. They apply to general information about the referendum, and encouraging people to vote, not just campaigning for an outcome.

This factsheet explains the restrictions, and where you can find more information.

Who must comply with the rules?

- Central government
- The devolved legislatures and governments
- Local authorities
- Any body that is mainly publicly funded. This could include community organisations and charities.

The following are exempt from the rules:

- The BBC
- S4C and
- The Electoral Commission, or anyone acting on its behalf. At this referendum, we may ask local counting officers to issue public awareness material on our behalf.

When do the rules apply?

The rules apply for the 28 days up to and including polling day on 5 May 2011.

This means that the restrictions start on 8 April.

What do the rules cover?

The rules prohibit publicity material which:

- Gives general information about the referendum – including material that doesn't support one outcome or the other
- Encourages people to vote at the referendum
- Gives arguments for or against a particular outcome
- Deals with the issues raised by the referendum question

The rules do not cover:

- Press notices
- Answers to specific requests for information
- Information about the holding of the poll, such as the date of the referendum or the location of polling stations.

Are there any other rules publicly funded bodies must follow?

There may be other rules that apply to publicly funded bodies in connection with the referendum.

For example:

- Organisations that receive **publicly funded grants** may be subject to other restrictions in the terms and conditions of their grants. You should speak to your funder.
- **Charities** should make sure they follow the Charity Commission's guidance (available on their website at www.charitycommission.gov.uk)

We can only advise on the scope of the restrictions under PPERA.

Our contact details

If you would like more information about the referendum, and our role in it, please see our website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/elections/upcoming-elections-and-referendums/uk/referendum

Call us on:

- England: 0207 271 0500
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