

Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal two | Electoral Commission Search

Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal two You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 On this page Key achievements Performance measures Our activities during the year First published: 1 August 2022 Last updated: 1 August 2022 Goal two To ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches. This goal captures our regulatory role. We focus on two areas that are at the heart of a healthy democracy: ensuring transparency of political finances, and effective regulation. These areas are essential to ensuring voters have confidence in our elections. Our focus, as ever, has therefore been on our stakeholders, in every aspect of our regulatory work. Key achievements To ensure transparency, we: published financial reports from parties and campaigners worked with parties to deliver financial reports, and adapted our pattern of routine publications as a consequence of challenges parties faced with delivering reports as a result of the pandemic registered political parties and other campaigners and published details in online registers continued work on our new Political Finance Online system, including with the successful move to in-house development To support good regulation we: completed our largest ever survey of campaigners to understand their needs from our tools to support compliance with the law. continued to evolve our regulatory approach to deliver a greater package of support for parties and campaigners revised many of the guidance documents on the political finance laws on our website to move them to a new web format, progressing towards our aim of moving all guidance to this format over the coming years found flexible and new ways to continue our focus on supporting parties and campaigners during the pandemic built up our regulatory intelligence work to drive proactive interactions with individual campaigners took action and imposed sanctions when the political finance law was broken updated and enhanced our enforcement processes, drawing on best practice and learning from past cases. This will reinforce effective, timely and impartial investigations. Performance measures Measures Performance 100% of statements of accounts published within 60 working days of statutory deadline 100% of donation and loan reports received by statutory deadline published within 30 working days 100% Achieved 100% of donation and loan reports received by statutory deadline published within 30 working days 100% Achieved 25% of regulated and quarterly party donation and loan returns checked for permissibility 38.34% Achieved Number of effective regulatory guidance products/resources that we deliver to help the regulated community comply with the rules 118 90% of responses to requests for financial reporting regulatory advice issued within targets based on their complexity (Routine advice: 5 working days, medium complexity advice: 10 working days, formal advisory opinions and other advice on novel and complex matters: 20 working days) 92.79% Achieved 90% of applicants are notified of the outcome of their registration application within targets based on their complexity (simple applications: 35 working days, complex applications: 45 working days, non-party campaigners: 5 working days) 93.91% Achieved 90% of investigations are conducted within targets based on their complexity (simple cases: 90 calendar days, complex cases: 180 calendar days, highly complex cases: individual targets set on a case by case basis) 69.05% 1 Not achieved 90% of final notices issued within 21 calendar days of the deadline for representations passing, or 21 days of the date representations received if accepted after the deadline, whichever is later 88.89% 2 Not achieved Our activities during the year Ensuring transparency We maintained the registers of political parties,

assessing applications from new entrants to ensure only parties meeting the legal tests are on the register. We also processed changes to the details of existing ones as quickly as possible. Both activities enabled those parties to stand candidates in elections, and ensured the online registers of parties were up to date. We continued to publish political finance data as quickly as possible after it was delivered to us from parties and campaigners. Publishing this data means that voters have the information they need to understand how those seeking their vote are funded and how they spend their money. In the largest standalone publication of the year, in August we published 721 statements of accounts from parties and accounting units. While the pandemic continued to impact on parties and campaigners, we were largely able to publish donations and loans data, and statements of accounts as usual. We also published data on candidate pending in the 2021 Scottish Parliamentary and Senedd elections. Supporting good regulation We engaged with parties and campaigners to explore new and innovative ways to support compliance with the political finance regime. We sent more than 1,000 communications to parties, campaigners, regulated donors, members associations and unincorporated associations asking them to complete a survey to help us understand their needs. We received 347 responses, giving us detailed insight that is changing the way we support compliance. We continued development of the improved and updated version of Political Finance Online, which will make it easier for parties and campaigners to deliver the information to us that they are required to. We revised many of the guidance pages on our website, with more to follow, from documents to web text, working towards guidance that is more interactive and connected. As a result, we improved the search function so our guidance can be found more easily. We also published a specific suite of guidance for the May 2022 elections ahead of schedule. Our work to support parties and campaigners comply with electoral law, a lower number of regulated elections, and our continued supportive approach to non-compliance arising from COVID-related issues were all factors in a reduction in enforcement casework during the year. But because voters and campaigners need to know that we will take action where the rules are not followed, we have used our enforcement and sanctioning powers to identify and respond to non-compliance and deter future non-compliance where appropriate. We imposed financial penalties totalling £42,370 throughout 2021/22 and accepted the voluntary forfeiture of impermissible funds totalling £15,700 removing these from the political finance system. We adopted a proactive approach to gathering intelligence and making interventions during the campaign the Scottish Parliamentary and Senedd elections to prevent or reduce non-compliance. We also closely monitored compliance, as well as the ways in which parties and campaigners complied with, the new digital imprints regime that was in force for the Scottish Parliamentary election. This will help to inform future guidance and regulatory approaches. Navigation Previous Next

Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal one Performance analysis 2021/22: Goal three 1. We seek to conclude investigations as quickly as possible, but our first priority is always to conduct a fair and thorough investigation. There was no consistent issue leading to missed deadlines, in some complex cases there were multiple issues and offences to consider, in others lengthy communications with subjects, and COVID impacted generally on subject's resources, and at times on our resources. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 2. One final notice was issued outside of the target timeframes. The final notice was due to be issued at a time where there were competing deadlines with a high priority complex investigation that took priority. ■ Back to content at footnote 2