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registered Political parties are vital to a healthy democracy. The Commission maintains the registers of political parties – one for Great Britain and one for Northern Ireland. To register, political parties must show that they are set up to be able to meet the obligations of electoral law. And, so that voters can mark their ballot paper with confidence, parties cannot have names, descriptions or emblems that are offensive, misleading or confusing. Did you know? Did you know? Parties can only be registered if party candidates will be put up to contest elections. Otherwise, candidates can stand as independents and they don't need to register a political party to stand for election Once registered, a party's name, description and emblem can appear on the ballot paper alongside the name of its candidate Once registered a party has legal responsibilities under electoral law, such as reporting financial data to the Commission If we refuse a party's application, we tell the party why and the party can re-apply Applications to register a party can be submitted online – our guidance will help with the process We aim to reach a decision on registration applications as soon as possible. We assess all applications carefully against the legal tests To register a party we need: a completed application form and a fee of £150 a copy of the party's constitution, setting out its structure and organisation a copy of the party's financial scheme, showing that it has the processes in place to comply with electoral finance laws details of at least two officers, who must fill the roles of registered leader, treasurer and nominating officer The registration process Making an application The Commission is responsible for registering political parties and an application to register must be submitted to the Commission to be assessed against the statutory tests The party's structure, organisation and financial processes must be in place and must show the party can comply with electoral law Assessing an application Registration is not automatic. The Commission assesses whether the party's application and identity marks meet the criteria set out in electoral law, as well as legal obligations under equality laws As part of this assessment process, we publish the party's identity marks so members of the public can comment on them. Views can be submitted on this page of our website The Commission will also assess whether the party's constitution is consistent with electoral law and its financial scheme has been adopted and shows the party has the processes in place to comply with electoral finance law There are different legal tests for names, descriptions and emblems. For example, for party names we look at whether the name is too long, is offensive or obscene, could mislead voters or hinder instructions on voting, or is likely to confuse a voter Taking a decision To be registered, as a minimum, we must decide that the application was complete, the constitution and financial scheme were compliant and the party name met the legal tests Once the assessment process is complete and all public comments considered, the decision whether to register a party is taken by the Director of Regulation. In Scotland, the decision is taken by the Head of the Electoral Commission – Scotland. Outcome If the party registration application is approved, the publically available register of political parties is updated with the details. The party must follow the political finance rules that ensure integrity and transparency in the system. We provide guidance that can help the party meet its responsibilities, and the party can also contact us with questions If the party registration application is rejected, the Commission will inform the applicant of the reasons for the rejection. The applicants can re-apply and we will work with them to overcome registration difficulties, and

enable them to be registered. A new application fee is likely to be needed for a new application.