

How to register your political party

How to register your political party This guidance tells you what you will need to know and do to register a political party or a minor party for the first time. We highly recommend you submit your application via our PEF Online system . We also have paper forms you can download from our website. The Electoral Commission maintains the registers of political parties for Great Britain and Northern Ireland. These are separate registers. Registered political parties and their officers must comply with the law, in particular as set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). These rules include continuous controls on donations, loans, campaign spending, annual accounts, keeping your registered details up to date and annual renewal of your registration. Before deciding to apply, it is important that you read all our published guidance on registering a political party and our guidance for party treasurers to get an understanding of the registration process and the financial reporting obligations. If you fail to comply with the law, you may be subject to civil or criminal sanctions. It is therefore an important part of the registration process that your party demonstrates that it has suitable arrangements and processes to enable the party to comply with the legal framework. In this guidance, we use 'must' when we refer to a specific legal or regulatory requirement. We use 'should' for items we consider to be minimum good practice, but which are not legal requirements. You do not have to follow this guidance, but if you do, you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law.

Minor parties You can choose to register either a political party or a minor party. A political party can field candidates in all elections in the area they are registered - some or all parts of Great Britain, or in all of Northern Ireland. A minor party can only contest parish council elections in England and/or community council elections in Wales. Minor parties cannot contest elections in Scotland or Northern Ireland. Independent candidates at parish and community council elections can, at the discretion of the Returning Officer, use a description not registered with us provided that the description does not exceed six words in length and cannot be confused with a registered political party. Minor parties are not subject to the same financial reporting obligations that political parties are.

Book traversal links for How to register your political party

Before you register Before you register Before you register, you need to set up your political party. You should make sure you have a constitution , and that your financial processes are in place. You also need to think about where your party intends to stand candidates. This will affect which register you will need to apply to be included on. Your intention to stand candidates Your party must intend to field at least one candidate in at least one election in the UK. If you intend to contest elections in both Great Britain and Northern Ireland, you will need to register two separate political parties, one on each register. They are two separate parties for the purposes of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). You can register parties on both registers in a single application. You must ensure the financial affairs of both parties are conducted separately and this must also be reflected in each party's financial scheme. The reason the registered parties must be legally separate is that your NI and GB parties will have separate financial reporting requirements. If you register on the GB register, you must specify if you wish to contest elections in England, Scotland and/or Wales. Please remember you will only be able to field candidates as a party in those parts of the UK your register entry specifies. As part of the application process we may ask you what the party has done or will do to realise its intention to contest elections. One way of doing this is to outline what specific elections your party intends to contest in your party's constitution. Minor

parties Minor parties can only register in Great Britain and must also specify if they intend to field candidates at parish council elections, Welsh community elections or both. Making changes If your party is registered and later wishes to change where it intends to field candidates, you can make an application to amend these details. An application to change your registration from a minor party to a political party requires a £150 application fee. Last updated: 24 November 2022 Book traversal links for Before you register How to register your political party What you need to do to register What you need to do to register Registration of a political party is not automatic upon submission of an application to us. We will assess your application against certain tests and criteria set out in law. If the party's application does not meet the statutory tests then it will be refused. You must ensure that all the information you provide is accurate. It may be a criminal offence if you include information which you know (or reasonably ought to have known) is false. Your application must include: your completed application form your party's constitution your party's financial scheme a non-refundable fee of £150 It is quick and easy to apply online. To get started, you will need to set up a PEF Online account. You can pay your fee electronically when you apply online. There are also paper forms available. PEF Online - getting started Form RP1 GB - Register a political party in Great Britain (PDF) Form RP1 NI - Register a political party in Northern Ireland (PDF) Last updated: 24 November 2022 Book traversal links for What you need to do to register Before you register Party details Party details Under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), you must provide certain details as part of your application to register a political party. This includes: The party's headquarters (or correspondence address) Whether you do not wish to field candidates at UK Parliamentary general elections – this will impact on which financial returns you may have to submit to the Commission ahead of those elections. You must provide your party's headquarters address. If you do not have a party headquarters, you must provide an address where the party can receive correspondence. This must be a physical address, and not an email address. It is important to note that this address will be available on our public register. You should avoid using any home addresses if you do not want them to be publicly available. You may therefore wish to consider using a PO Box address instead of a home address. You should also provide the Commission with your email address and a contact number to enable us to be able to contact with you about important information about your application and in future about important statutory deadlines. Making changes If later your party is registered and wishes to change any of its registered details, you can make an application to amend your register entry at any time. Last updated: 24 November 2022 Book traversal links for Party details What you need to do to register Are you intending to contest UK Parliamentary general elections? Are you intending to contest UK Parliamentary general elections? Under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), registered political parties are required to report (including nil reports) donations they receive or loans they enter into in the run up to a general election, unless they are exempt. We call these reports pre-poll reports. These reporting requirements are in addition to the quarterly reporting requirements for political parties. If you do not intend to contest UK Parliamentary general elections (UKPGEs), you are able to exempt yourself from pre-poll reporting. You can do this by declaring your intention not to field candidates at a UKPGE on your application to register a political party. Form RP6: Declaration of exemption of a registered political party - integrated notes You must re-confirm the declaration every time the party delivers its annual renewal

notification in order to maintain the exemption. By making this declaration, you will not be required to submit weekly pre-poll donation and loan reports for a general election. If your party subsequently fields candidates at a general election, this exemption will not apply for that election. This means the party will be required to submit pre-poll donation and loan reports in the run-up to that general election. This does not apply to minor parties, who are unable to contest UKPGEs. If later your party is registered and wishes to amend a declaration you have previously made, you can make an application to amend this at any time. Form RP7: Withdrawal of declaration of exemption made by a registered political party - integrated notes Last updated: 24 November 2022 Book traversal links for Are you intending to contest UK Parliamentary general elections? Party details Your party's officers Your party's officers Political parties must have people registered in certain official roles. These roles are: party leader party treasurer (not applicable for minor parties) nominating officer You must provide the names and home addresses for your officers. You do not need to have three separate individuals in each role, but you must have at least two people as officers for the party. If one person fills all of the official roles you must register someone as an additional officer. The additional officer must hold a specified office or role within the party. If your party has a campaigns officer then they may be registered as the additional officer. The treasurer and nominating officer cannot be the same person unless they are also the leader. Please be aware that these are statutory roles that carry legal responsibilities. Optional officer roles Campaigns officer – who will be responsible for your party's compliance with the financial laws for campaign expenditure instead of the treasurer. They cannot also be the treasurer Additional officer – you must apply to have an additional officer if the party leader is also the treasurer and nominating officer and your party does not have a campaigns officer. Minor parties If you are a minor party, you must register a party leader and nominating officer. You must have at least two people in officer roles. If one person fills both roles, you must register someone as an additional officer. Minor parties cannot be registered with a treasurer or campaigns officer. Last updated: 24 November 2022 Book traversal links for Your party's officers Are you intending to contest UK Parliamentary general elections? Officer responsibilities Officer responsibilities Registered officers of political parties will have a particular role within a party. Their roles will also carry certain statutory responsibilities. Party leader A party leader must be the overall leader of the party. If your party does not have an overall leader (if you have co-leaders, for example), you must register a person who is the leader for a particular purpose within the party. For example a final decision maker on internal party matters. In the event that the party treasurer is no longer in post, the party leader will become the interim treasurer until the party notifies us of a replacement treasurer. Party treasurer The registered treasurer of a political party has significant legal responsibilities. They must ensure the party complies with the political finance rules set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). It is therefore important that an appropriate person is registered as the party's treasurer. The treasurer must not have been convicted of any election offences in the 5 years before their appointment. Nominating officer The nominating officer for the party has overall responsibility for arranging the nomination of candidates and approving the party identity marks used on nomination forms and ballot papers at elections. There is no provision under PERA to register a deputy nominating officer. However, the registered nominating officer can authorise in writing someone to act on their behalf. Additional officer If you register an

additional officer, they will have an official role of some kind in the party. You must register an additional officer with us if the party's leader, treasurer, and nominating officer are the same person, and you do not have a campaigns officer. If this is not the case, then you cannot register an additional officer with us.

Campaigns officer The campaigns officer will have responsibility for compliance with the financial reporting rules for campaign expenditure at particular elections. They will take these responsibilities from the treasurer of the party. The campaigns officer must not have been convicted of any election offences within 5 years of their appointment and cannot be the same person as the treasurer.

Deputy treasurer and deputy campaigns officer The registered treasurer or campaigns officer of the party can appoint up to 12 deputy officers to assist with authorising campaign expenditure. You may find this useful if your party is contesting a lot of seats. Use Form RP5 to register deputy officers.

Form RP5: Notification of details of deputy treasurer or campaigns officer - integrated notes Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for Officer responsibilities](#)

Your party's officers

Identity marks on ballot papers Identity marks on ballot papers "Identity Marks" are how we refer collectively to your party name, descriptions and emblems. These are how a party may be identified on a ballot paper at elections. Some identity marks are mandatory whilst others are optional. You must register a party name. This is a mandatory identity mark. You may register up to three emblems and 12 descriptions. These are optional identity marks. You do not need to register any party identity marks that you intend to use on campaign materials, unless you also intend to use them on a ballot paper. There are certain statutory tests and requirements which identity marks must meet in order to be registered. We will assess your application to register identify marks against these tests. From time to time, the Commission will also carry out reviews of identity marks on our registers. This is part of our duty to ensure we are maintaining the register of political parties. You can apply to change your party name, descriptions, and emblems and add joint descriptions at a later date if you wish for an additional non-refundable fee of £25 per application. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for Identity marks on ballot papers](#)

Officer responsibilities

Party name Party name A party must register a party name with us. It can use this name on ballot papers. Parties that are applying to be registered in Great Britain and intend to contest elections in Wales may apply with a name in and a name in Welsh to be the party's registered names. Parties that are applying to be registered in Northern Ireland may apply with a name in and a name in Irish to be the party's registered names. We do not regulate how a party wishes to brand itself or which campaign phrases it uses with its name when that message does not appear on ballot papers. If a party name is not registered with us, candidates will not be able to contest an election using that party's name on ballot papers. If your party is not registered with us a candidate can only apply to the Returning Officer to stand as an independent. In this case the candidate can choose to use either: the word 'Independent' (or 'Annibynnol' if standing in Wales) appearing next to their name on the ballot paper no identity mark on the ballot paper. This is along with any other details required by the relevant election rules. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for Party name](#)

Identity marks on ballot papers

Party emblems on ballot papers Party emblems on ballot papers An emblem is an optional visual representation (or logo) of a party. Along with other identity marks, an emblem can help voters identify the party on ballot papers. Parties are able to register up to three emblems. In order for the party or your candidate to use an emblem on a ballot paper, the party must register it with Electoral Commission. You do not need to

register an emblem if you only wish to use it on campaign material and not on ballot papers. An emblem is intended to primarily comprise a pictorial or symbolic representation, and so must include this element. It may contain some text. If it comprises mostly of text then it is unlikely that we will register it as an emblem. An emblem that contains text which cannot be read at the size emblems appear on ballot papers (2cm square) is also highly likely to be refused. We suggest that any text in an emblem is at least 1.2mm in height. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for Party emblems on ballot papers](#)

[Party name](#) [Party descriptions on ballot papers](#)

[Party descriptions on ballot papers](#)

A party description is an optional identity mark that you can register in addition to the party name which can appear on a ballot paper. A party is permitted to register up to 12 descriptions at any one time. On most ballot papers, a party description can be used as an alternative to a party name. The description must therefore identify your party to a voter, in case it is used on a ballot paper rather than the party name. For example, a way to do that may be to include the party name in the description. If in the Commission's opinion a voter cannot identify the party from the description, it is not a description under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) and cannot be registered. A description cannot be exactly the same as the party name. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for Party descriptions on ballot papers](#)

[Party emblems on ballot papers](#)

[Joint party descriptions](#)

[Joint party descriptions](#)

Two or more registered political parties can choose to share a party description which can then be used on a ballot paper. This is called a 'joint description' and can be used by all the parties that have registered one with other parties. There are certain rules regarding the registration of joint descriptions. These are that: you can only share and jointly register one joint description per group of parties - however, you may register a joint description with more than one group of parties the wording of the joint description must identify all of the applicant parties to be capable of being a joint description joint descriptions do not count towards the maximum of 12 descriptions that you can register with us - this means you can register up to 12 descriptions, in addition to joint descriptions When using a joint description the candidate will need to choose which of the party emblems that they wish to use on ballot papers. You cannot register a joint emblem and instead can only use an emblem registered to any of the parties who have registered the joint description. If you are thinking of registering a joint description, please contact us for advice in the first instance. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for Joint party descriptions](#)

[Party descriptions on ballot papers](#)

[How we assess your identity marks](#)

[How we assess your identity marks](#)

The law says that we will register your identity mark unless in our opinion it does not meet certain tests. We therefore have to assess your identity marks against those tests. We look at how the proposed identity marks can be used on ballot papers, including the different ways in which they can be used on the ballot paper at different elections, and the need for every voter to be able to cast their vote with confidence. We will register your identity mark unless in the Commission's opinion it: is the same as another registered or protected identity mark which is on the same register is likely to result in voters confusing it with another party identity mark that is already registered or protected is likely to mislead voters as to the effect of their vote is likely to contradict or hinder instructions or guidance given for voting is obscene or offensive contains certain prohibited words contains more than six words is not in Roman script is likely to amount to an offence if published As a guide, we are unlikely to register your identity mark if it: is, or contains an acronym or abbreviation that is not well

known and widely used and not spelt out is a description that does not identify your party links in any way to online material or contains reference to online content, such as a Twitter hashtag or a QR code in most cases, if it contains a reference to a person's name is an emblem that contains text which cannot be read at the size emblems appear on ballot papers (2cm square) – at this size, we suggest that any text in an emblem is at least 1.2mm in height We cannot confirm whether your application will be successful in advance of you submitting it. It is your responsibility to determine the details of your application and to ensure that it complies with the requirements of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). If your application is refused, we will notify you of our reasons in writing. Last updated: 2 June 2023 Book traversal links for How we assess your identity marks Joint party descriptions What we mean by “likely to confuse” What we mean by “likely to confuse” We are required to make sure that a voter can be confident that they do not confuse one party with another on the ballot paper, and so potentially cast a vote incorrectly. This test looks at whether, in our opinion, a voter would confuse the identity mark of a party with another party's identity mark which is already registered. Our assessment of whether an identity mark is confusing will normally take into account whether the identity mark is visually the same (e.g. the words ‘stationary’ or ‘stationery’, similar images of boats) or contextually the same (e.g. ‘Party of the Oak’ and ‘The Oak Party’). For emblems, we will consider whether the designed elements and text are different from other emblems. Last updated: 2 June 2023 Book traversal links for What we mean by “likely to confuse” How we assess your identity marks What we mean by “likely to mislead a voter” What we mean by “likely to mislead a voter” This test looks at whether in our opinion a party identity mark would be likely to lead a voter either to vote in a way they did not intend (e.g. for a party other than their preferred party) or to otherwise mark the ballot paper in a way which was not their intention. We cannot register an identity mark if, in the Commission's opinion, it is likely to result in a voter believing they are voting for an organisation that is not the party they intend to vote for. We therefore recommend that prior to your application you undertake a search of the internet to see if there are any existing groups or organisations which have a name or logo which is the same as, or similar to, the identity marks that you want to apply to register. These groups may be campaigning groups, registered charities or other well-known organisations. Last updated: 2 June 2023 Book traversal links for What we mean by “likely to mislead a voter” What we mean by “likely to confuse” What we mean by ‘likely to contradict or hinder instructions or guidance given for voting’ What we mean by ‘likely to contradict or hinder instructions or guidance given for voting’ We are required to consider whether an identity mark would contradict instructions or guidance for voting (e.g. ‘tick here’, or an emblem with a cross in it). We will also reject an identity mark if, in our opinion, we believe a voter would likely make a mistake on the ballot which would invalidate their vote, for example by voting for too many candidates. Last updated: 2 June 2023 Book traversal links for What we mean by ‘likely to contradict or hinder instructions or guidance given for voting’ What we mean by “likely to mislead a voter” What we mean by “offensive” What we mean by “offensive” We are likely to reject a name, description or emblem on grounds of offensiveness if, in our opinion, it: contains offensive language, phrase or terminology links something generally accepted to be offensive with a particular group of people In assessing your proposed identity marks, we will have regard to the fact that parties must be able to express their political views and a voter must use a ballot paper in order to exercise their right to vote. We also consider the wider

external context and circumstances in which a name, description or emblem can or is likely to be used. Last updated: 2 June 2023 [Book traversal links for What we mean by “offensive”](#) What we mean by ‘likely to contradict or hinder instructions or guidance given for voting’ What is a “protected” identity mark? What is a “protected” identity mark? When a party deregisters, its identity marks remain protected until a certain time. This is usually the end of the financial year in which the party is deregistered. Until that time, other parties may not register identity marks that are the same as or, in our opinion, are likely to be confused with those protected identity marks. Last updated: 2 June 2023 [Book traversal links for What is a “protected” identity mark?](#) What we mean by “offensive” Copyright and trade marks Copyright and trade marks As it is not covered by electoral law, we do not make any checks for infringement of intellectual property rights when we register a party’s identity marks. So, before you apply, you should make sure that your identity marks are not breaching any copyright and trade mark laws. If you register your party’s identity marks and then discover that they are infringing copyright or trademark, you could be subject to legal challenge by the registered owner. For more information, please visit the Government’s Intellectual Property Office website . Last updated: 2 June 2023 [Book traversal links for Copyright and trade marks](#) What is a “protected” identity mark? Can acronyms or abbreviations be used? Can acronyms or abbreviations be used? If an acronym or abbreviation is not well-known or widely-used in everyday language, it will not normally be permitted for you to use as your party identity mark. This is because in our opinion, most voters will not know the meaning, and are therefore likely to be misled. Examples of well-known acronyms used in common language include ‘UK’, ‘GB’ and ‘NHS’. We will consider certain well-known and widely-used acronyms such as these as one word. If in our opinion an acronym is not well-known and widely-used, the words it is intended to represent must be spelled out and written in lower case or in sentence case. The acronym can then be added next to this, and each word, including the acronym will count towards the overall six-word limit. Words within a party identity mark can have initial capital letters. Words that are not acronyms should not be in all capital letters. If you apply to register an identity mark containing fully capitalised words that are not acronyms, we will consider that identity mark instead as though those words had initial capital letters instead (e.g. ‘PARTY OF THE OAK’ would be considered as ‘Party Of The Oak’). Last updated: 2 June 2023 [Book traversal links for Can acronyms or abbreviations be used?](#) Copyright and trade marks What languages can I use in party identity marks? What languages can I use in party identity marks? You can apply to use a language other than in your identity marks for use on ballot papers. However, the party name and any descriptions must be in Roman script, even if it is registered in a language other than . It is likely to be acceptable if you can use a UK based keyboard to produce the identity mark without using special characters. Parties that are applying to be registered in Great Britain and intend to contest elections in Wales may apply with a name in and a name in Welsh to be the party’s registered names. These parties can also apply to register descriptions expressed in or Welsh (or both). You can choose to display both of these on ballot papers. Parties that are applying to be registered in Northern Ireland may apply with a name in and a name in Irish to be the party’s registered names. The proposed identity mark in each language cannot be longer than six words. For elections in other parts of the UK the party name or description can only appear in one language on the ballot paper. If a party applies to register a name in a language other than , Welsh (if in Wales), or Irish (if in Northern Ireland), the application must include an accurate translation as part of

your application. All translations are verified for accuracy. This means that you will be able to choose the most appropriate language for your party's identity mark to appear on ballot papers. Last updated: 2 June 2023 [Book traversal links for What languages can I use in party identity marks? Can acronyms or abbreviations be used?](#)

Other things to consider if you intend to contest elections in Wales Other things to consider if you intend to contest elections in Wales As a public body operating in Wales, we are required to carry out our functions in line with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards. We treat the Welsh language with equal favour to in performing our functions in Wales, including when taking decisions on party applications. This means that if you intend to contest elections in Wales, and have applied with either -only or Welsh-only identity marks, then we will translate your identity marks (either from to Welsh, or Welsh to) and consider the relevance that those translations have with regards to the statutory tests. It is possible, therefore, that a proposed identity mark in or Welsh may be refused based on how it is expressed in the other language, even if you have not applied to register a translation for that identity mark. It is important for us to undertake these steps to make sure that voters in Wales can mark their ballot paper with confidence. You should take this into account if you are applying to register in Wales and, where possible, consider how your party's identity marks would be interpreted by a voter in Wales. Last updated: 2 June 2023 [Book traversal links for Other things to consider if you intend to contest elections in Wales What languages can I use in party identity marks? Can numerals be used? Can numerals be used?](#)

If your party identity mark either starts or ends with a numeral, we are unlikely to approve it for registration in that form. Instead, we will ask you to spell it out as a word rather than use a numeral. This is because at some elections voters are asked to rank candidates by order of preference using digits. Party identity marks that start or end with a numeral are likely to be misleading with the numbers on the ballot paper and the instructions on how to vote. We may register a party identity mark that uses numerals in the middle, depending on how they are used and whether it is likely to mislead voters. Last updated: 2 June 2023 [Book traversal links for Can numerals be used? Other things to consider if you intend to contest elections in Wales Can links to online material be used? Can links to online material be used?](#)

Your party may use a website or social media to communicate with voters. However, websites or social media links (e.g., Twitter hashtags or Facebook pages) should not be used as part of your identity marks. In assessing your identity mark, we must determine whether it meets the statutory tests. If your identity mark links to online material we are likely to refuse it as we are unable to assess material that has potential to change over time against the statutory tests. Last updated: 2 June 2023 [Book traversal links for Can links to online material be used? Can numerals be used? Can an individual's name be used? Can an individual's name be used?](#)

Generally we will not accept the use of an individual's name in an identity mark. This is because instructions on ballot papers often state that the ballot paper is for the election of a candidate to a specific constituency, ward or other area. If a person's name, other than one of the candidates', appears on ballot papers for any given area it is likely to contradict the instructions for voting. We will need to form an opinion as to whether in the particular identity mark we are assessing, the inclusion of the name is likely to contradict or hinder an elector's understanding of directions given for their guidance in voting, on the ballot paper or elsewhere. Last updated: 2 June 2023 [Book traversal links for Can an individual's name be used? Can links to online material be used? What are prohibited words? What are prohibited words? Some words](#)

cannot be used on ballot papers without being qualified by other words. This applies to the plural or singular of the prohibited words, as well as the prohibited words written in another language. These words are split into four categories (see below). In addition to the rules below, you cannot register 'None of the above' either in isolation or in conjunction with other words or expressions.

Category 1 Category 1 prohibited words are: Duke, Duchess, Her Majesty, His Majesty, King, Prince, Princess, Queen, Royal, Royalty. These words cannot be used in identity marks on their own. You can only use category 1 words in conjunction with the name of a place, institution or local government area. For example you cannot use 'Royal Forever Party' because 'Royal' is not being used with the name of a place, institution or local government area. You could use 'Royal Tunbridge Wells Party' because 'Royal' is being used in conjunction with a place.

Category 2 Category 2 prohibited words are: Britain, British, England, , National, Scotland, Scots, Scottish, United Kingdom, Wales, Welsh. These words cannot be used in identity marks on their own. You can only use category 2 words if you use them with another word or expression other than the name or description of a party already registered in the relevant part of the UK. For example you cannot register 'One Big Party' if there was an already registered 'One Big Party', because 'One' is being used with the name of an existing registered party.

Category 3 Category 3 prohibited words are: Independent, Official, Unofficial. These words cannot be used in identity marks on their own. You can only use category 3 words if the word is used with another word or expression, but not with any of: an existing registered name or description only with the word 'party' another category 3 word. For example you cannot use the 'Independent Stop the Bypass Party' if there was an already registered 'Stop the Bypass Party' because 'Independent' is being used with the name of an existing registered party. You cannot register the 'Independent Party'.

Category 4 Category 4 prohibited words are: Ratepayers, Residents, Tenants. These words cannot be used in identity marks on their own. You can only use category 4 words in conjunction with the name of a local government or geographical area. For example you can register 'Residents of York Party' because 'Residents' has been used in conjunction with 'York', a geographical area. You cannot register 'Residents Action Group' or 'Residents Unite' because 'Residents' is not being used in conjunction with the name of a local government or geographical area.

Last updated: 2 June 2023

[Book traversal links for What are prohibited words?](#)

[Can an individual's name be used?](#)

[Your financial scheme](#)

Your party must submit a financial scheme as part of your application to register which sets out how the party will comply with the legal controls of the political finance rules under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act (PPERA). The financial scheme you provide must have been adopted by the party. We produce a template scheme that you can use to create your party's own financial scheme. You do not have to use this template scheme. It is a template only and the scheme that the party submits with its application must accurately reflect how the party actually operates in practice.

Model financial scheme (DOC) If you use our template scheme, you should check carefully that it accurately reflects the party's own procedures. For example, if the party has a campaigns officer, you should include their name at the appropriate places in the scheme in addition to the party treasurer. If your financial year will not run from 1 January to 31 December then you should amend this within the template scheme as well. We must be satisfied that your financial scheme sets out the arrangements for regulating the financial affairs of the party for the purposes of PERA, and that it has been adopted by the party, for your application to be approved. One way you can demonstrate that the scheme has been adopted is to have all

of the proposed registered officers of the party sign the scheme. Minor parties are not required to adopt a financial scheme or submit one as part of their application. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for Your financial scheme](#) What are prohibited words? What must your financial scheme include? What must your financial scheme include? Your scheme must include procedures for: recording and reporting your accounts handling donations and loans maintaining your registered details with us authorising and reporting on campaign spending As part of the assessment process, we may ask you to evidence how the party has adopted its financial scheme. For example, you may be asked about what procedures the party has in place to deliver the obligations set out in its financial scheme. A party registered in both the Great Britain and the Northern Ireland registers are two separate registered parties for the purposes of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). If you register on both the Great Britain and Northern Ireland registers, your financial scheme must show that the financial affairs of the party in Great Britain will be conducted entirely separately from those of the party in Northern Ireland. This is important because the rules about where a party can obtain its funding from differ depending on which register the party is registered. If you are, or are intending to be, registered as a party with accounting units then each unit must be named within the party's financial scheme. Our template scheme is not suitable if this is what you intend. We can provide further advice on what is required, so please contact us in the first instance if you intend to have accounting units. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for What must your financial scheme include?](#) Your financial scheme Your party's constitution Your party's constitution You must submit your party's constitution as part of your application to register a political party. Political parties must have a written constitution that sets out the structure and organisation of their party. This should set out the arrangements for your party's governance and the rules for carrying out its business. The constitution must show that the party can comply with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) – i.e., nothing in it can contradict legal requirements. It is possible that your party's constitution will comprise more than one document. For example, your party may have a set of Rules and Standing Orders for meetings. Any document which determines the party's structure and organisation will be part of the party's constitution under PERA and must also, therefore, be provided to us as part of the application. It is important your financial scheme and constitution correspond and do not conflict with each other. For example, the two documents should agree on how your accounts are signed off, who is responsible for the accounts and who can authorise campaign expenditure at elections. Your constitution must include sufficient information about the structure and organisation of your party for your application to be approved. A party does not need to be registered as a company so that it can register with us. If your party is structured in this way then the constitution should include details of how the company registration impacts on, or interacts with, the party's structure and organisation. Any relevant information should also be reflected in the processes outlined in the party's financial scheme. Minor parties are not required to have a constitution or submit one as part of their application. Equalities law You must ensure that your constitution and how your party operates complies with equalities law. In particular, you should ensure that your constitution does not unduly discriminate against persons with protected characteristics from becoming party members. Otherwise, your constitution will not be lawful and your application will be refused. You should read the guidance for political parties produced by the Equality

and Human Rights Commission which is available on their website . As with the other requirements for registration, the fact that your application must be compliant with equalities law does not mean that your party cannot campaign on policies to change the law. Last updated: 24 November 2022 Book traversal links for Your party's constitution What must your financial scheme include? What should your party's constitution include? What should your party's constitution include? Your constitution must reflect how your party is run and managed. As a guide your constitution should include: details of the register or registers the party is registered in. A party registered in both the Great Britain and Northern Ireland registers are two separate parties for the purposes of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). Where a party is registered in both the Great Britain and Northern Ireland registers, the party's financial scheme must show that the financial affairs of the party in Great Britain will be conducted separately from those of the party in Northern Ireland. The constitution should also reflect that. the party's aims and objectives a reference to an intention to contest elections and at what type of elections, for example UK Parliamentary general elections the candidate selection process (or at least a statement that the party will have one). the structure of the party and who is responsible for managing the party, including the responsibility of the party officers, the terms of office and procedure for change of those officers how the party will make and record decisions, as well as any other governance arrangements. For example, the frequency, timing and type of meetings and the quorum for meetings how the party will resolve internal disputes and whether the party has any disciplinary procedures. You should be aware that we cannot resolve internal disputes for your party the processes and rules governing membership of the party that the party have adopted its financial scheme how the constitution can be changed and the process for dissolution of the party. Last updated: 4 January 2023 Book traversal links for What should your party's constitution include? Your party's constitution Your declaration of assets and liabilities Your declaration of assets and liabilities Under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), when you make an application to register a political party, the proposed treasurer must also make a declaration regarding the assets and liabilities held by the party. This declaration must state whether your party meets, or does not meet, the assets/liabilities condition. Your party will meet the assets/liabilities condition if both the total value of the party's assets and total amount of the party's liabilities are £500 or less. If you meet the assets/liabilities condition, you are not required to provide us with any further detail. However, if either the total value of the party's assets, or total amount of the party's liabilities, are more than £500, your party will not meet the assets/liabilities condition. Parties that do not meet the assets/liabilities condition must submit a record of assets and liabilities to the Electoral Commission with their application to register a party. For example, Party A has £50 in assets and no liabilities. Party A meets the assets/liabilities condition as it does not hold assets or liabilities that meet the reporting threshold of more than £500. It is not required to submit a record of assets and liabilities. Party B has no assets and no liabilities. Party B also meets the assets/liabilities condition as it does not hold assets or liabilities that meet the reporting threshold of more than £500. It is not required to submit a record of assets and liabilities. Party C has £700 in assets and £600 in liabilities. Party C does not meet the assets/liabilities condition as both the assets and liabilities are more than £500. Party C is therefore required to submit a record of assets and liabilities. Party D has £100 in assets and £600 in

liabilities. Party D does not meet the assets/liabilities condition as it holds more than £500 in liabilities. Party D is also required to submit a record of assets and liabilities. The Commission will include whether your party meets or does not meet the assets and liabilities condition as part of the details published on the public register of political parties. We will also publish a copy of the record on the register. Please see [What is a record of assets and liabilities?](#) for information on how to complete a record of assets and liabilities. Last updated: 24 November 2022

[Book traversal links for Your declaration of assets and liabilities](#) [What should your party's constitution include?](#) [What is a record of assets and liabilities?](#) [What is a record of assets and liabilities?](#) A record of assets and liabilities acts as a snapshot of your party's overall financial situation at the time of application to register as a political party. It sets out the assets that you control, such as money in the bank or computers, and the amounts you owe, such as loans and money owed to suppliers. We have produced a template to aid you in reporting your assets and liabilities. The following guidance sets out the categories you should report in your record and includes definitions for the terms we use in the template. Using the Commission's templates is a quick and simple way to make sure your record of assets and liabilities gives us all the required information. [Record of assets and liabilities](#) Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for](#) [What is a record of assets and liabilities?](#) [Your declaration of assets and liabilities](#) [What should your record of assets and liabilities include?](#) [What should your record of assets and liabilities include?](#) The following categories should be included in your record of assets and liabilities: Fixed assets Current assets Liabilities You should only report assets and liabilities owned by the party in your record. In some cases, this may include assets and liabilities under a party officer's name, such as a bank account used to hold party funds. However, you should not report assets and liabilities that are owned and controlled solely by party officers. You should make an honest assessment, based on the facts, of the assets and liabilities you need to include in the record. If you are unsure whether an asset or liability should be included in your record, please contact us for advice. The following pages provide detail on how to report each category. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for](#) [What should your record of assets and liabilities include?](#) [What is a record of assets and liabilities?](#)

[Fixed assets](#) [Fixed assets](#) [Fixed assets](#) are items bought for long-term use by your party. For example, property, office equipment, furniture, plus investments such as stocks, shares and investment property. Under Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in the UK (UK GAAP), fixed assets are also known as non-current assets. The categories recorded under fixed assets are: [Property](#) [Fixtures and fittings](#) [Office equipment](#) [Investment property](#) [Other investments](#) [Property](#) [Property](#) is any premises owned by and used for your party's business. You should record the total value of the property. The value of the property should be recorded as the original price. If the property is professionally revalued, you may decide to record the new value. If this is the case, then you should include a sentence in the note box explaining this. [Fixtures and fittings](#) [Fixtures and fittings](#) are non-structural items within a property. For example, furniture, carpets, white goods and light fittings. The value should be recorded at the original purchase price. You should not carry out revaluations. If you do not know the original purchase price of an asset, you should make a reasonable estimate of its original value. [Office equipment](#) [Office equipment](#) includes electronic and IT supplies such as computers, printers, photocopiers and telephones. The value should be recorded at the original purchase price. You should not carry out revaluations. If you do not know the original purchase price of an

asset, you should make a reasonable estimate of its original value. Investment property Investment property is any property owned by your party, but not used for party activities. You should record the total value of investment property. The value of the property should be recorded at its original price, or the price given by a professional valuation. If the property is revalued during the year, you should include a sentence in the note explaining this. If the investment property is held by a trust or a holding company, you should only record the value that is attributed to your party. For example, if your party controls 50% of an investment property, only 50% of the value should be recorded. Other investments Other investments include stocks and shares, or other assets that are likely to appreciate or depreciate in value. This includes cryptocurrency and other digital currencies. The total value of all other investments owned by your party should be included on the balance sheet. The value of the investment should be recorded at its original cost, or the price given by a professional valuation. Stocks and shares should be recorded at their market value on the 31 December. For example, if you are submitting a record of assets and liabilities in September, any stocks and shares your party owns should be recorded at the value at 31 December of the previous year. Last updated: 24 November 2022 Book traversal links for Fixed assets What should your record of assets and liabilities include? Current assets Current assets Current assets are assets used to fund the day-to-day operations and pay the ongoing expenses of your party. Current assets include 'cash in hand' and 'in the bank', as well as other assets not tied up in long-term investments. In other words, current assets are anything of value that can easily be converted into cash. The categories recorded under current assets are: Cash in hand and in the bank Stock/inventory Debtors and prepayments Cash in hand and in the bank Cash in hand and in the bank includes all petty cash and current and deposit accounts. Deposit accounts are longer-term investment accounts, where money is less accessible. The deposit is held for a fixed term, or where withdrawals can only be made by giving notice or by losing interest on the account. The total value of petty cash and current and deposit accounts held by the party should be included. The accounting note should show petty cash, the types of current and deposit accounts, and the amounts held in each type. Stock/inventory Stock, or inventory, are items of significant value that have been purchased but not yet used by the party. Examples include literature, paper, envelopes and stamps, merchandise and campaign items such as t-shirts, mugs, bags, and items for raffles/prizes. These are valued at the cost of item, or the relevant fraction of the cost if partially used. They may be subject to a different value (usually zero) if the stock is of no further use. Debtors and prepayments Debtors relate to specific definite amounts owed to your party by known organisations or individuals and must be supported by a commitment or obligation to pay. This could include guarantees of future sponsorship payment for events that have already occurred, or payment after the event for office services provided by the party. Prepayments are more common. They occur where the party has paid for something in advance and not yet received the benefit. This could include payment in advance to rent a venue for an event that has not yet occurred or payment for posters and promotional material that you have not yet received. You should include as a note a breakdown of how the totals of these amounts are made up and what they relate to. Last updated: 24 November 2022 Book traversal links for Current assets Fixed assets Liabilities Liabilities Liabilities are any obligations you have to pay for something. In other words, things that you owe. Examples of liabilities include loans, credit cards and money owed to suppliers. The categories recorded under liabilities are: Financial institution loans Other loans Trade and other

creditors Financial institution loans Financial institution loans include credit cards, overdraft facilities or loans taken out with a registered bank or building society. Other loans Other loans include amounts owed by your party to individuals or organisations under specific agreements. For example, this could include a loan of money to fund the establishment of your party. Trade and other creditors Creditors are specific, definite amounts owed to known suppliers for which you have been invoiced, but which you have not yet paid. This could include amounts owed to a supplier of merchandise for goods bought by your party. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for Liabilities](#)

Current assets Parties registering in Great Britain and Northern Ireland Parties registering in Great Britain and Northern Ireland A party applying to register in Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a single entity until an application has been approved for each respective register. At the point of registration, the single entity will become two separately registered parties under electoral law. The party in Great Britain and the party in Northern Ireland will be subject to different financial controls under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). As one organisation at the time of application, you are only required to submit one record of assets and liabilities when applying to register a party on both registers. Your financial scheme must demonstrate how the financial affairs of the party in Great Britain will be conducted separately from those of the party in Northern Ireland to comply with the respective controls applying to each register. You may be asked to provide additional evidence that the financial affairs are being conducted separately before your application can be approved. Please see [Your financial scheme](#) for more information on producing your financial scheme. We will assess each application on a case-by-case basis. As part of the assessment, we may request further information or evidence from you to ensure we are satisfied your application fulfils the requirements of PERA. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for Parties registering in Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#)

Liabilities What happens to the record of assets and liabilities after you submit your party registration application? What happens to the record of assets and liabilities after you submit your party registration application? After you submit the record of assets and liabilities, we will process and assess this as part of your application to register a political party. We will then make a decision on whether your application as a whole satisfies the requirements set out in Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), and can be approved. We will consider your record alongside the evidence provided in your application. In some cases, we may request that you provide us with further information as part of our assessment. It is important that you ensure your declaration and the information you provide in the record is accurate and complete, to the best of your knowledge. It is an offence to make a false statement knowingly or recklessly. It is your responsibility to determine the details of your application, and to ensure that your application and record of assets and liabilities comply with the requirements of PERA. If the record of assets and liabilities does not satisfy the requirements, the party cannot be registered. The Electoral Commission is legally required to make a copy of each registered party's record available for public inspection. Once a party is registered, we will publish the record of assets and liabilities on our public register of political parties alongside the party details. Each record will be available on the register for six years. We will not publish any personal information, such as home addresses, personal email addresses, phone numbers and bank details. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for What happens to the record of assets and liabilities after you submit your party registration](#)

application? Parties registering in Great Britain and Northern Ireland Accounting units Accounting units Most parties operate as a single unit, which means the treasurer of the party has oversight over the finances of the entire party. However, you may wish to register party branches that have financial autonomy. These are called “accounting units” and each unit is responsible for its own finances. Registering accounting units is optional. Your financial scheme must specify if your party will have accounting units. Please note that our standard template scheme is not suitable for parties with accounting units. If you have branches that are not financially autonomous, you do not need to register them as accounting units and they do not need to appear in your financial scheme. However you may still want to refer to them in your constitution. If you choose to register accounting units, each unit must have their own treasurer and Second Officer. You must also register the accounting unit’s headquarters address or a correspondence address if the accounting unit does not have a headquarters. We can provide further advice on what is required, so please contact us in the first instance if you need more advice on accounting units. Last updated: 24 November 2022 Book traversal links for Accounting units What happens to the record of assets and liabilities after you submit your party registration application? Submitting your application Submitting your application Before you submit your application, you should review the details of what you are submitting to ensure your application is complete and contains all mandatory and relevant information in accordance with our guidance. If you are applying using PEF Online , once you are satisfied with your application, your system administrator will be able to send your application online to all relevant officers to authorise. Your party’s officers must approve the application and accept their role within the party. If they hold more than one officer role, please ensure they authorise for each position they hold. It must be clear in what capacity they are authorising. Your party’s administrator will be unable to submit your application until all relevant officers of the party have completed their authorisation. If you are applying offline, all relevant officers of the party must sign the application form. Once all officers have authorised the application, your party administrator can submit your application and pay your £150 non-refundable application fee. You can pay your fee online by card payment. You can also make a payment by post via cash, cheque or postal order. If you send the payment by cheque please make the payment to ‘The Electoral Commission’. Last updated: 24 November 2022 Book traversal links for Submitting your application Accounting units How we assess your application How we assess your application Once your application is completed and you submit it to us we do the following: Stage 1 We receive, conduct an initial check for completeness and acknowledge receipt of your application. Stage 2 Once your application contains all of the information required by law, we publish your proposed identity marks on our website for public comment. Stage 3 We assess your application against the statutory tests in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). Stage 4 We make a decision to approve or refuse your application and notify you of the result. If your application is refused, we will explain our reasoning in writing. If approved, we update the publicly available register of political parties with your details. We also send you information about your financial reporting and other obligations as a registered political party. Last updated: 24 November 2022 Book traversal links for How we assess your application Submitting your application Stage 1 Stage 1 We will conduct an initial check that your application contains the required information and documents and that your fee has been paid. If we identify any initial issues with your application, we may put it on hold for a reasonable

period of time and contact you in order for you to consider the matters we have raised and make changes to your application if necessary. You should note that ultimately it is your responsibility to determine the details of your application and to ensure that your application complies with the requirements of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). Until a final decision is taken on your application, we cannot confirm whether it will be successful. Any changes to your application may need to be authorised by all of the party officers. If we do not hear from you by the advised deadline your application may be refused. Once all of the required information and documents are included, we will formally acknowledge the application. The next stage of the application process will then begin. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for Stage 1](#) How we assess your application

[Stage 2](#) [Stage 2](#) Before taking a decision on the application, we will normally publish your proposed identity marks on our website for comment. Your identity marks will remain online until we come to a decision on whether to register them or not. Anyone can comment on your proposed identity marks during this period. We will consider any comments made and take any relevant information into account when considering your application. You can subscribe to an email alert to these notices being published by contacting us via email . Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for Stage 2](#) [Stage 1](#) [Stage 3](#) [Stage 3](#) The Commission will assess your application against the statutory tests in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). This includes: Verifying the information provided in your application. This will mean checking, for example, that home addresses have been given for party officers. Reviewing your constitution and financial scheme to check if they meet the requirements of PERA. For constitutions it also means checking that it does not contravene UK equality law. Assessing whether your proposed party name, any descriptions and any emblems meet the statutory tests in PERA. It is possible that we may identify matters with the application that we suggest you consider at this stage. If this is the case, we may put your application on hold for a reasonable period of time to allow you to respond. Any delay in responding to us may delay the processing of your application. If we do not hear from you by the deadline your application may be refused. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for Stage 3](#) [Stage 2](#) [Stage 4](#) [Stage 4](#) Once the assessment is complete it will be put, along with any relevant comments from our online publication, to the Commission's internal Approval Board. This Board is made up of senior officers of the Commission. It is chaired by the Director of Regulation, who normally takes the final decision on your application. The Head of the Commission in Scotland takes decisions for applications concerning parties solely in Scotland. Once we have made a decision, we will tell you whether your application has been successful or not. We will also publish our decision online and, if the application has been successful, update the register. If your application, or part of your application, is refused you can submit a fresh application. You won't have to pay a further application fee if you submit an application to us within one calendar month of being contacted with the refusal. You will only get one opportunity to submit a fresh application without a fee. Any further applications after that will require the non-refundable application fee. What happens if we decide your application is not complete? If your application is not complete the party cannot be registered. What happens if your financial scheme or constitution do not meet the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) requirements? If your financial scheme or constitution do not meet the PERA requirements the party cannot be registered. What happens if we cannot register your party name? If, in our opinion, your party name does not meet the statutory tests the

party cannot be registered. What happens if we cannot register your description or emblem? Providing that the rest of your application meets the statutory tests, we will still register your party. But we will refuse the particular description or emblem that does not meet the requirements. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for Stage 4](#) [Stage 3](#) [How do you object to our decision?](#) [How do you object to our decision?](#) If we refuse your application as a whole, or we refuse a particular identity mark, you can choose to submit a fresh application. All applications are assessed against the statutory tests in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). We will always explain the reasons why we have rejected an application. If you have questions about the reasons for our refusal, please contact us. There is no statutory right of appeal against our decision. If you disagree with our decision and the reasons for it you can seek a remedy through the courts by applying for a judicial review of our decision. If you believe that we have not adhered to our stated administrative procedures when considering your application you could enquire if the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman would be prepared to consider the matter. Before you do so you would need to first proceed under our complaints process referred to below. This covers: a failure to gather or properly to consider certain information bias in arriving at a decision unreasonable delay You must be explicit about the nature of your complaint, providing evidence where possible, rather than simply making an assertion based on disagreement with the outcome of a decision. Our complaints web page has information about how to make a complaint. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for](#) [How do you object to our decision?](#) [Stage 4](#) [After registration](#) [After registration](#) Once you have registered successfully we will send you information about your obligations as a registered political party. Under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), a registered political party must, for example: make sure all donations and loans over £500 come from mainly UK-based sources report donations and loans every quarter, and report weekly during a UK Parliamentary general election keep to campaign spending limits at elections, and report campaign spending to us keep accurate accounts and records send us annual accounts if the party's income or expenditure is over £250,000 a year, also send an auditor's report on your annual accounts operate consistently with your constitution and financial scheme, and keep them current keep the party's details up to date, and confirm them annually These rules are to ensure the integrity and transparency of party political finance. If you don't follow them, you may be subject to fines or other enforcement action by us or the police. You have significant responsibilities as an officer of a political party, so it's important that you understand these fully before you register with us. You should make sure you familiarise yourself with the guidance available for political parties on our website. In addition we also provide guidance to candidates and agents on how to stand for election and their rights and responsibilities. Last updated: 24 November 2022 [Book traversal links for](#) [After registration](#) [How do you object to our decision?](#)