

Election Pacts Election pacts This guidance is for candidates and parties who are entering an election pact and want information about how the rules work when they do this. An election pact is where a party or candidate reaches an agreement not to stand as a candidate in a seat, in order to give another party or candidate a better chance of winning the seat. There is nothing wrong with candidates or parties reaching this kind of agreement, any arrangement is a matter for them. The aim of this guidance is to ensure that any spending and donations is properly reported. Election pacts are not defined in electoral law but we recognise they are becoming more common. The application of the rules in this area is complex and will vary according to the facts. If you are entering an election pact, please contact us to discuss your individual circumstances. This guidance does not cover non-party campaigners who are not political parties and who are working together or parties and candidates who are working with established non-party campaigners. For more on how this works see our guidance for non-party campaigners . [Book traversal links for Election Pacts](#)

What does an election pact look like? What does an election pact look like When we use the term 'election pact' we mean where a party or candidate reaches an agreement not to stand a candidate in a seat, in order to give another candidate or party a better chance of winning the seat. This could be an informal arrangement in a single seat or a more organised agreement by several parties across several seats. We have considered the rules in the following examples: you are party A and you want to enter a pact with Party B. You publicise this and in doing so promote your party to voters. you are Party A and you reach an agreement with Party B that you will not stand a candidate in a constituency. You do not announce the pact or campaign in any way. You are party A and you reach an agreement with Party B that you will not stand a candidate in a constituency. You announce this publicly but you do not campaign. you are Party A and you reach an agreement with Party B. You publicise the pact and promote the party or candidate of Party B in the constituency. you are Party A involved in a pact with several other parties across constituencies. There are public announcements and campaigning. If your party is campaigning for: a candidate that is not standing in the name of your party another party you might be treated as a non-party campaigner. You should carefully consider in what capacity you are acting and where any spending should be reported. How you report spending will be a matter of the facts in each instance. Last updated: 24 May 2021 [Book traversal links for What does an election pact look like?](#)

Election Pacts Important things to remember about election pacts Important things to remember about election pacts There is nothing wrong with candidates and parties reaching this kind of agreement, however they need to observe the rules and ensure that any spending or donation given is properly reported. Agents need to authorise candidate spending. Where notional spending is being incurred, the candidate or their agent must make use of it for it to be notional spending. A registered political party can also be a registered non-party campaigner. A party who registers as a non-party campaigner will have to complete a separate return to report its non-party campaigner spending. Registered political parties cannot donate, via notional spending or directly to a non-party campaigner. You must ensure that any donation you receive as a non-party campaigner is from a permissible source. Last updated: 10 August 2021 [Book traversal links for Important things to remember about election pacts](#)

What does an election pact look like? Which laws might apply? Which laws might apply? The application of the rules in this area is complex and will vary according to the facts. If you are entering an election pact, please contact us to discuss your individual circumstances. **Party spending** Some spending might be your own party spending. This is likely to be the

case where spending is promoting your own party, for example where you are publicly proposing another party enter a pact with you. Notional spending for the candidate If you spend money promoting another party's candidate and the candidate makes use of that spending, then this will be notional spending for the candidate. The candidate will report it in their spending return as notional spending and as a donation from you. This is likely to be the case where you are working with the candidate on their campaign. You can find more information about how a candidate makes use of something and notional spending here. Notional spending for the party If you spend money that promotes another party and the party makes use of it, this is notional spending for the party. They must report it in their spending return as notional spending and as a donation. This is likely to be the case where you are working with the party on their campaign. You can find more information about notional spending here . Local non-party campaigning If you spend money campaigning for or against a particular candidate in a particular electoral area, and this spending is not used by the candidate, then this is local non-party campaigning. At a UK parliamentary general election, there is a £700 limit in a constituency. Over this limit needs to be authorised by the candidate's agent and appear in their return. This is likely if you are spending money in a particular constituency but doing so independently of the candidate that you are supporting. You can find more information about local non-party campaigner spending here . General non-party campaigning If you spend money campaigning for or against a number of candidates or parties over a number of electoral areas, and this spending is not used by the candidates or their parties, then this is general non-party campaigning. There are registration thresholds for general non-party campaigners in each part of the UK. If you intend to exceed these, you must register with us. Registered non-party campaigners get higher spending limits and must report their spending at the end of each election. This is likely to apply if you are spending money promoting candidates or parties over a number of constituencies, but doing so independently of the candidates and parties you are supporting. You can find more information about general non-party campaigner spending here . Last updated: 24 May 2021 Book traversal links for Which laws might apply?

Important things to remember about election pacts You want to enter a pact with Party B and you publicly announce this You want to enter a pact with Party B and you publicly announce this Where you as a party are seeking a pact and there is public activity around this, spending is likely to be spending promoting your party. For example you might make a public call to other parties to join or arrange a pact to achieve an outcome. Your spending on this is likely to be spending promoting your own party. No other party is involved at this point. Last updated: 24 May 2021 Book traversal links for You want to enter a pact with Party B and you publicly announce this Which laws might apply? You are Party A and you enter a pact with Party B but do not announce it or campaign You are Party A and you enter a pact with Party B but do not announce it or campaign The rules on spending do not cover the organisation of an electoral pact where there is no other activity. There is no spending in this circumstance where the pact has been agreed but not publicised and no campaigning has occurred. Last updated: 24 May 2021 Book traversal links for You are Party A and you enter a pact with Party B but do not announce it or campaign You want to enter a pact with Party B and you publicly announce this You are Party A and enter a pact with Party B, you announce it but you don't campaign You are Party A and enter a pact with Party B, you announce it but you don't campaign You are party A and you enter into an election pact with Party B. Party B's candidate will stand in the electoral area. You publicise the pact but you do not campaign for Party B or the candidate. You will

only be required to consider reporting any spending to do with the public announcement. You need to look at this spending to work out if it is: your own party spending by you as the party that is standing aside notional spending by you on behalf of the candidate notional spending by you on behalf of the party that is standing a candidate Where it will be reported depends on the content of the announcement and whether the candidate or party B has made use of it. Where there is co-ordination of the announcement and it is not spending promoting your party, it is likely that this will be notional spending for the candidate or Party B. This is because they are likely to have made use of it and therefore the rules on notional spending apply. Last updated: 24 May 2021 Book traversal links for You are Party A and enter a pact with Party B, you announce it but you don't campaign You are Party A and you enter a pact with Party B but do not announce it or campaign You are party A and enter a pact with Party B, you announce it and then campaign You are party A and enter a pact with Party B, you announce it and then campaign If you enter an election pact and then campaign either for the candidate or party that is standing the candidate, there will be implications for reporting spending and donations. In the first instance the candidate's agent should consider whether any of your spending is used by the candidate in his or her campaign. If so this will be notional spending and must appear in the candidate return. This is likely where you are working with the candidate on their campaign. It is also possible that you could be incurring notional spending on behalf of the party that is standing the candidate. This will be the case where you are working closely with the other party and promoting them in your material. In some circumstances the spending on campaigning by you will be non-party campaigner spending. This is likely where your spending is not used by the candidate or party that is standing, for example you do not tell them about it. Where you campaign for or against a candidate or advise your supporters to do so, then depending on how that occurs, the local non-party campaigning rules may apply to your spending. This is limited to £700 at a UKPGE. When this kind of activity happens across several constituencies or your campaigning is focused on party B, it is likely to engage the general non-party campaigner rules. You will need to consider registering with us. If you register with us you will need to report your spending in separate return from your party return. Last updated: 24 May 2021 Book traversal links for You are party A and enter a pact with Party B, you announce it and then campaign You are Party A and enter a pact with Party B, you announce it but you don't campaign You are one of several parties who are part of a large pact across several constituencies You are one of several parties who are part of a large pact across several constituencies Where two or more parties come together to form an electoral pact and do this on a larger scale the general non-party campaigner rules will sometimes be engaged. We are assuming that in this instance there will be some public announcement and some campaigning done by one party for another party or its candidates. Careful consideration should be given as to where the spending on the public facing and organisational activity should appear. In the first instance you should consider whether this is spending: promoting your party notional spending for a particular candidate notional spending for another party If the spending is not candidate or party spending, that is it is independent of the parties and candidates involved, it is likely to be non-party campaigner spending. You should then consider which non-party campaigning rules apply. There are rules around general campaigning by non-party campaigners and this includes for or against a category of candidates. Where there is a substantial network of electoral pacts, it is likely these rules that will cover this activity. This means that spending on certain activities will be

regulated and if you spend over £20,000 in England or £10,000 in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland you must register with us as a non-party campaigner. This is a separate registration from your party registration. It means you will need to do a separate return for your non-party campaigner spending. You do not need to report your donations separately. If there are several parties who are working together and some of those parties are acting as non-party campaigners you will need to carefully consider the joint campaigning rules. These rules apply where non-party campaigners are spending money as part of a common plan between two or more non-party campaigners. Last updated: 24 May 2021

Book traversal links for You are one of several parties who are part of a large pact across several constituencies

You are party A and enter a pact with Party B, you announce it and then campaign