

Objective: Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance | Electoral Commission Search Objective: Transparent political campaigning and compliant political finance You are in the Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 section Home Our plans and priorities Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 On this page What we are working to achieve Work done to achieve this aim Performance indicators First published: 4 July 2023 Last updated: 27 September 2023

What we are working to achieve It is a fundamental part of the democratic process that campaigners are able to get their messages to voters. s, including parties, must be able to communicate with voters to explain their views and policies, so that voters are informed when they vote. It's important that voters hear from a wide and diverse variety of campaigners. s must be able to campaign without facing undue actual or perceived barriers, while we continue to ensure political finance is transparent. We are working to improve the transparency of political campaigning, and help parties and campaigners to comply with the law by: ensuring campaigners can access support to understand the law in the way and at the time that works best for them ensuring political finance laws are enforced fairly, working with police services and other regulators to support their work in areas outside our legal remit publishing complete and accurate political finance data providing insights to campaigners and parliaments on how campaigning methods directly affect voter confidence in elections.

Work done to achieve this aim Ahead of the May 2022 elections, the Commission ran its digital transparency campaign, encouraging voters to think critically about the campaign information they see. Our candidate surveys following the May 2022 polls found that over 40% of candidates across the UK experienced intimidation or abuse during the campaign. As a result, the Commission has taken steps to convene relevant stakeholders to discuss ways to improve their experience, as well as providing candidate guidance and advice on protecting their safety. As a result of the Elections Act, we updated our guidance to reflect new political finance laws for parties and campaigners to support compliance. We worked with campaigners to design a new code of practice for non-party campaigner spending. We consulted on the code and submitted it to Ministers as the law required. We also consulted on new digital imprints guidance to support changes in the law in this area. We held webinars for parties, candidates, agents and others before the May 2022 elections to explain the law, and did the same again for the May 2023 polls. We held virtual advice surgeries that allowed candidates and agents to discuss specific issues around the spending and donation laws with one of our expert advisers. We also offered further advice surgeries in advance of the reporting deadlines, to provide practical and ongoing support with spending returns. We delivered targeted advice and guidance resources to the full range of parties and campaigners. We improved the accessibility and usefulness of our guidance by increasing consultation with parties and campaigners when drafting it. This also enhanced our evidence base on how the law is applied in practice, to inform future compliance resources. We bolstered our advice service on the political finance laws with the recruitment of additional advisors. We launched a new initiative that provides targeted support for newly registered parties, who are likely to be less familiar with the law and their obligations and responsibilities. To ensure our Enforcement Policy is as clear as possible, we made changes to it and consulted parties and campaigners. The Policy sets out how we approach our regulatory investigations and sanctions. Our annual tracker of public opinion found that confidence in the transparency of political finance is in decline. We continue to make recommendations for improving controls on the system to improve confidence, including through engagement with the government,

with parliamentarians, and through the national media. Member of Parliament on their contact with the Commission Very informative and easy to work with. Highly engaging with a broad knowledge Member of Parliament on their contact with the Commission

Performance indicators

Indicator	Target	2022-23
Timely publication of donation and loan reports which are received by the statutory deadline	100%	100%
Publication of statements of accounts within 60 working days	100%	5.02%
Timely progression and conclusion of investigations	90%	91.18%
Timely notification / issuance of decisions on sanctions	90% (final notices)	following representations period 90%
Timely notification of outcome of party and non-party campaigner registration applications (for new and change of details)	90%	81.91%
Timely responses to requests for regulatory advice on financial reporting	90%	99.17%
Effective regulatory guidance products / resources delivered to support compliance with the law	N/A	59

Guidance product related queries that help identify existing and/or new areas of the guidance that provide additional clarity with the law 100% 100% There are different deadlines by which parties with income and expenditure under and over £250,000 need to submit their annual statement of accounts to the Commission. Owing to internal resource constraints, a decision was taken in 2022 to combine publication of the two tranches. This meant postponing the publication of a large number of statements until after the reporting deadline for the larger parties. 100% of statements were published on the agreed publication date. Ongoing and future work Following consultation, the Commission's revised Enforcement Policy comes into force after the May 2023 elections and will continue to be used as the basis on which we make decisions relating to enforcement. We will monitor changes as a result of the measures for parties and campaigners in the Elections Act implemented during 2022-23 and, subject to parliamentary process, publish a non-party campaigner code of practice and new digital imprint guidance to support our regulated community to understand the changes. The Commission will continue to monitor potential threats and risks to the electoral system, including the integrity of the political finance laws. We will keep advocating for improvements to controls on donations to political parties to prevent the threat of foreign interference, and monitor relevant legislation, such as potential impacts from the National Security Bill. In response to feedback, we are trialling a process of dedicated points of contact for larger parties, or those who contact us frequently for advice, to help support compliance further. We will continue to monitor the themes of queries received to inform and shape our regulatory guidance, enhancing our evidence base on how the law is applied in practice and helping to ensure our guidance is as clear and helpful as possible. Along with the police, we will take proportionate actions to ensure compliance with the digital imprints regime when it commences. The Commission will also continue to work with police forces across the UK on tackling intimidation and harassment of candidates. Member of Parliament on their contact with the Commission Have had good quality conversations about regulation and the pressures facing political parties. Member of Parliament on their contact with the Commission

Navigation Previous Next

Objective: Accessible registration and voting Objective: Resilient local electoral services