# Code of Conduct for Campaigners at UK Parliamentary general elections in Great Britain, local elections in England and Police and Crime Commissioner Elections

A copy of this code is available on [The Electoral Commission website](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/code-conduct-campaigners-uk-parliamentary-general-elections-great-britain-local-elections-england).

## Electoral registration, postal voting, proxy voting, voter authority certificate and polling stations

Campaigners are an essential element of a healthy democracy, and their right to put their arguments to voters should be supported and protected. It is equally important, however, to ensure that the activities of campaigners do not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process.

This Code provides a guide for campaigners, electoral administrators and police forces to what is, and is not, acceptable behaviour at polling stations and in the community during the lead-up to polling day.

The code also provides information relating to the offence of the handling of postal voting documents by political campaigners and the requirement of secrecy for postal voters.

More detailed guidance about electoral offences can be found in the guidance for candidates and agents, which is available at: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent>

The Code has been sent to all registered political parties in Great Britain, and Returning Officers will draw it to the attention of all candidates and parties contesting elections.

Some Returning Officers may identify the need to develop and seek agreement to specific local provisions which supplement the terms of this Code, in order to address identified local risks. Returning Officers should consult with local campaigners and the relevant national Nominating Officers as well as police forces to secure appropriate local agreement to such provisions, and should ensure that they are communicated and well-understood by campaigners locally.

## Scope of this code

This code covers all those actively involved in campaigning at these reserved elections:

* Elections to the UK Parliament (in England, Scotland and Wales)
* Local authority elections in England
* Parish council elections in England
* Local mayoral elections in England
* Combined authority mayoral elections in England
* Greater London Authority (GLA) elections in England
* Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections (and Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners (PFCC elections) in England and Wales
* Local authority referendums in England
* Neighbourhood planning and business referendums in England

### Other elections and referendums in Great Britain

This code does **NOT** apply to any other polls. The code of conduct for campaigners at devolved elections in Scotland and Wales, can be found here, and covers:

* Elections to the Scottish Parliament
* Scottish council elections
* Referendums held under Scottish Parliament legislation
* Elections to Senedd Cymru
* Welsh local elections
* Referendums held under Senedd Cymru legislation

## Terminology

Some of the points in this code are criminal offences. In this code of conduct, we use ‘must’ when we refer to criminal offences. We use ‘should’ for the parts which are not offences.

## Meaning of the term "campaigner"

All references to campaigners in this code include:

* Candidates standing at an election, their agents and their staff and supporters
* Political party officers, staff, members and supporters campaigning at an election
* Other people and organisations campaigning for or against a candidate, a group of candidates or a party at an election where they are employed or engaged by the candidate or political party

## Campaigners not employed or engaged by a candidate or party

We strongly advise all people and organisations campaigning for or against a candidate, a group of candidates or a party at an election to comply with this Code, even where they are not employed or engaged by a candidate or political party.

## Compliance with this code

Any concerns that criminal offences referred to in the code have been breached should be raised with the local police force.

Any concerns that other parts of the code have been breached should be raised first with the candidate, political party or campaigner in question.

Any further concerns should be drawn to the attention of the Electoral Commission. The Commission will raise them with the relevant party or campaigner if appropriate, and will agree appropriate actions to remedy or prevent a reoccurrence of any breach.