

## **Guidance on completing the candidate's spending return**

This guidance is based on what the Electoral Commission provide to candidates and agents at local government elections in England and Wales. Slight amendments have been made in relation to the spending limit and the return of your expenses form to make them specific to the City Ward elections. The guidance on completing the forms is, however, unchanged.

If you have any queries regarding completing your expenses return please contact the Electoral Commission on 0333 103 1928 or [pef@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:pef@electoralcommission.org.uk).

### **Candidate's declaration mark**

You are required to put the same identification mark on the candidate's and agent's declarations and this form to identify them as a set of documents. For example, many candidates use their initials with a combination of numbers or letters that reference the election or electoral area.

E.g. candidate John Smith standing in Cordwainer Ward in 2016 could use the identification mark: JSC16

But you can choose anything.

### **Section 1 – details of candidate and election**

Please provide the details requested under this section.

You can find out the electorate from the Electoral Services Office. The electorate is the number of eligible electors in the ward that you are standing in.

Your spending limit is £266 plus 5.2p per elector in the ward in which you are standing.

### **Section 2 – Details of election agent**

Please enter the agent's details and note that the agent should sign this form.

### **Section 3 – Summary of spending and worksheets**

Worksheets have been provided within the form for each spending category and for the details of unpaid expenses and claims. Use these worksheets to enter details of the expenses under the appropriate category. When you have totalled up the amounts under each category, please enter the totals into the summary of spending for that category.

If you have no spending to report for a category you do not need to attach the worksheet but you must enter a zero or nil into the summary of spending for that category.

The totals for election spending in section 3a 'Types of payment' and section 3b 'Categories of spending' should be the same.

If your totals are not the same, you have made a mistake in your calculations. You should check the information you have provided and your calculations.  
The categories of spending allocation are:

### **A – Advertising**

This includes advertising of any nature, e.g. posters or advertisements in newspapers. It includes agency fees, design costs and any costs associated with preparing, producing and distributing advertising.

### **B – Unsolicited material to electors**

This includes unsolicited material addressed to electors, whether addressed or not. It includes design costs and all other costs in connection with preparing, producing and distributing such material. The cost of postage should be included.

### **C – Transport**

Transport includes hire costs but excludes the use of personal cars where no charge has been made by the owner.

### **D – Public meetings**

This includes costs in connection with people's attendance at meetings, the hire of premises for the purpose of meetings and the provision of goods, services or facilities at meetings.

### **E – Agent and other staff costs**

This includes payment for the services of an election agent, or anyone else, paid in connection with the candidate's election campaign. This includes staff working on the candidate's campaign who are paid by the candidate's party.

### **F – Accommodation and administration**

This includes the general costs of campaign office rental and utilities.

Each item of spending should be allocated to one category only. Some items will be categorised easily, but others may appear to fit more than one purpose. In these cases you must judge where to put the item.

Generally, items should be placed under the purpose they naturally fall into e.g. the transport costs of the candidate should be included under transport even if the transportation is in connection with participation at a public meeting.

For every item of spending, please give details of:

- The item number. The first payment should be '1' and then items should be numbered consecutively. Item numbers need to be unique because they are used to cross-reference with other sections of the form and the supporting invoices/receipts.
- Whether an invoice or receipt has been submitted. Invoices or receipts are required for all items over £20 except notional spending.
- The item or service used.
- The name and address of the supplier where this is not on an invoice or receipt submitted with the return.
- The date the invoice was paid
- The value of the item.
- The amount paid if this is different than the value of the item. Include nil payments where applicable.
- Whether the item is either a disputed claim or an unpaid claim. You will need to provide additional information on items that are disputed or unpaid.

Please remember to indicate when you are entering a nil payment.

### **Unpaid claims**

Use the unpaid claims worksheet to give more details of claims that remain unpaid on the day you submit the form.

Please ensure you use the same item number to cross-reference the two entries in the different worksheets. You should include details of the court to which you have applied or will apply to make a late payment.

### **Disputed claims**

Use the disputed claims worksheet to give more details about any claims that are disputed.

Please ensure that you use the same item number to cross-reference this entry with the entry on the spending category worksheet.

## **Section 4 – Donations and the worksheets for reporting donations**

Please record the total amount of money provided by the candidate to meet their election expenses.

## **Donations you have accepted**

Use the donations worksheet to advise about any donations from permissible sources that are more than £50.

For each donation accepted by or on behalf of the candidate, please provide the following details:

- the full name of the donor – if it is a registered company please include the company registration number
- the address, or registered address, of the donor
- the status of the donor
- the date you received the donation
- the date you accepted the donation
- the amount (for a cash donation) or value (for a non-cash donation)
- the nature of the donation( e.g. cash, non-cash, services or discounted office space)

If the donation came from a trust please contact the Electoral Commission for more information on what information should be included.

## **Donations you have rejected**

Use the rejected donations worksheet to tell us about any donations you have decided not to accept.

For each unidentifiable donation or impermissible donation received by or on behalf of the candidate, please provide the following details:

- the name of the donor, unless this is not known, in which case please enter 'unknown'
- the donor's address, but if you do not know this then please enter 'unknown'
- the date the donation was received
- the amount or value of the donation
- the nature of the donation (e.g. cash, non-cash, services, or discounted office space)
- the date when and manner in which you returned the donation

## **Completing your expenses form and returning it to the Town Clerk**

The agent, or candidate if you are acting as your own agent, should complete and return the form to the Town Clerk. The form must be submitted within 35 calendar days of the declaration of the result (from the date of Wardmote if election is uncontested, or from the date of Poll if election is contested).

The form must be accompanied by a declaration signed by the election agent to verify the return.

Within seven working days of submitting the spending return, the agent must send a declaration signed by the candidate to verify the return.

The return and the two declarations should be marked with the same identification mark described at the start of this form. Write the mark in the box on the front cover of the form.

### **Further guidance**

For further guidance please contact the Electoral Commission:

0333 103 1928

[pef@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:pef@electoralcommission.org.uk)