

No: 671/19

20th November 2019

To: All Branches

Dear Colleague

Election spending and campaigning

The purpose of this LTB is to give branches a guide to spending and campaigning in the general election, following on from the information provided at the national briefing on 8th November.

Attached to this LTB are guides from the Electoral Commission on campaigning and spending that set out the rules in greater detail, but the following is a summary of rules branches should be aware of. To be clear, these relate to spending on campaigning/activities that the union is carrying out. Where a Branch or Region has donated money to a local Labour Party the party has separate rules relating to its expenditure that it must comply with.

It is also important to stress that we want branches and regions to be undertaking as much campaigning as possible between now and 12th December and the purpose of this information is to ensure we do so in the right way.

1. Reporting expenditure

After the general election, we will need to report all of our campaigning expenditure by 12th March 2020. This will cover everything that branches, regions and the union nationally has spent between 12th December 2018 and 12th December 2019 on political campaigning.

The test for this is whether spending is on an activity that could “reasonably be regarded as intended to influence voters to vote for or against a political party, or categories of candidates, including campaigns on policies or issues closely associated with a particular party or category of candidates.”

We will be asking branches to provide a full breakdown of expenditure after the election date on 12th December – branches must therefore keep a comprehensive record of this, with receipts and invoices, throughout the election.

2. Spending limits

It is important that branches talk to regions about any campaigning activity they are undertaking in advance to ensure this falls within the relevant spending limits. The most important spending limits for branches and regions to be aware of are as follows:

- firstly, there is a maximum spending limit of just £700 for any activity we undertake/material we produce that is specifically about a particular candidate or a particular constituency (e.g. leaflets saying 'vote for candidate X, in constituency Y') – this includes any communications to our own members; and
- secondly, there is a maximum spending limit of £9,750 for campaign activity within any one constituency with a *generic* non-constituency/non-candidate message (e.g. leaflets saying 'Vote Labour' without specifying the candidate or the constituency).

Branches should speak to their Regional Secretary about campaigning activities and any expenditure they are planning in advance. This is particularly important where the candidate is a CWU member.

3. Door-knocking and canvassing

We want members to be out door-knocking, canvassing and campaigning as much as possible in support of local Labour Party candidates. It is important that where they are doing so, they do this in their own time and are not accruing expenses (on travel or release). Any expenditure on this would be a donation in kind to the local party and would need to be agreed by them in advance to ensure they do not breach spending limits.

4. Imprints

Any campaign material must include an imprint specifying the name and address of the printer and the promoter. Any CWU campaign material printed by a branch should state on it: Promoted by Dave Ward General Secretary, CWU, 150 the Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19 1RX; Printed by [the relevant CWU branch and its address / the name and address of any external company doing the printing for us].

If a branch or region is printing material for a local Labour party/candidate, the imprint will need to specify that it is printed by the CWU and promoted by the candidate's agent (or whoever they specify) – the details should be confirmed with the local Labour party.

Finally, for social media graphics or videos, an imprint should be included but if it would not be legible, branches or regions should make sure the union's logo is visible so it is identifiable as coming from the CWU.

5. Joint campaigning

There are specific rules about how expenditure is declared where there are joint campaign activities. For instance, if we do a joint leaflet or rally with another union and split the costs for it, we would still need to declare the *total* costs of the leaflet or rally as part of our expenditure (even though we would only have actually paid part of the costs).

Where there are any joint campaign activities branches should talk to their regional secretary about these in advance to check how this needs to be dealt with.

6. Invoices

Where we are paying an external supplier/organisation for services (e.g. printing material) we must ensure that they invoice us within 30 days and that all invoices are paid within 60 days after the general election on 12th December. Where neither of these things happen branches or regions must notify CWU headquarters at the earliest opportunity.

Conclusion

As set out above, we want branches to be as active as possible in the general election and there is a huge amount at stake for our industries and our members. This note is not intended to stop branches campaigning, but to ensure we comply with relevant requirements when doing so – if in doubt branches should speak to their Regional Secretary.

Any queries on the contents of this LTB should be address to gsoffice@cwu.org copying in the relevant Regional Secretary.

Yours sincerely,

Dave Ward.

Dave Ward
General Secretary



Overview-of-NPC-activity-Gen.pdf



Managing-NPC-campaign-spending-gen.pdf