

## Topic Overview: Hustings events

Guidance for parties, candidates, agents and hustings organisers

September 2009

This guidance will help you decide whether or not a hustings event you are organising or attending may need to comply with election spending rules.

### What is a hustings?

Hustings events are meetings where election candidates are given a platform for their views.

They are often held by organisations such as local community groups or trade unions so that their members can ask candidates about issues important to them.

### I am organising a hustings. Are there election spending rules I need to be aware of?

There are rules on how much can be spent by people who are not candidates, but who spend money at an election. These people are called 'third parties'.

In our view, you will **not** be affected by these rules if:

- you have invited all the candidates in the constituency to attend – even if not all of them actually turn up, **or**
- your hustings is only open to members of your organisation

If you have not invited all the candidates in the constituency, or your hustings is open to the public, please ask us for advice as soon as possible so that we can help you to identify and comply with the rules that apply to that event.

## I am a candidate who has been invited to a hustings. Will I have to declare this as a notional expense in my spending return?

In our view, you will **not** have to declare this if:

- all the candidates in the constituency have been invited to attend – even if not all of them actually turn up, **or**
- the hustings is only open to members of the organisation that has organised it

If not all the candidates in the constituency have been invited, or the hustings is open to the public, please ask us for advice as soon as possible so that we can help you to identify and comply with the rules that apply to that event.

## Where can I get further advice?

If you have any questions about spending at elections or would like more information, please contact us on 020 7271 0616, [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk) or [pef@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:pef@electoralcommission.org.uk), or at:

Party and Election Finance  
The Electoral Commission  
Trevelyan House  
London  
SW1P 2HW

You can also contact one of our devolved offices:

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38 Thistle Street  
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