

Candidate imprints – England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Under the Representation of the People Act 1983 and associated legislation, there are rules about putting imprints on election material.

Candidate election material is any material that can be reasonably regarded as intended to promote or procure the election of a candidate at an election.

Whenever printed election material is produced, it must contain certain details (which we refer to as an 'imprint') to show who is responsible for the material. This helps to ensure there is transparency about who is campaigning.

We provide advice and guidance on these rules but we do **not** enforce them. Decisions on the investigation and

prosecution of imprint offences are a matter for the police and the prosecution services, and any allegations of non-compliance should be made to the police.

The rules on imprints apply to all candidates. Different imprint rules apply for candidates in Scottish Parliamentary elections and council elections in Scotland. Please see [Candidate imprints – Scottish Parliamentary elections and council elections in Scotland](#) for more details.

This factsheet explains the rules you must follow if you are a candidate in any other election.

What is candidate election material?

Election material is published, material such as leaflets and adverts that can be reasonably regarded as intended to promote or procure the election of a candidate at an election.

Election material also includes material that criticises other candidates.

What must you include?

On printed election material such as leaflets and posters, you must include the name and address of:

- the printer,
- the promoter, and
- any person on behalf of whom the material is being published (and who is not the promoter)

The promoter is whoever who has caused the material to be published.

You must use an address where you can be contacted. It can be a home address or an office or business address. You can also use a PO Box address or other mailbox service.

If you are putting an advert in a print newspaper, your advert does not need to include the printer's name and address, but the name and address of the printer of the newspaper must appear on the first or last page of the newspaper. The advert must include the other details as usual.

If you are being paid to publish election material, the material must include an imprint which includes the

details of whoever is paying you. This is because either they are the promoter, or you are publishing the material on their behalf.

In all cases, you must make sure that the imprint lists all the organisations involved in publishing and promoting the material.

It is an offence for a printer or promoter to publish printed election material without an imprint.

Examples of an imprint

For the candidate's own material, the promoter will usually be the agent. The person on whose behalf the material is being published will usually be the candidate.

An imprint on candidate campaign material should look like this:

- Printed by [printer's name and address].
- Promoted by [agent's name and address], on behalf of [candidate's name and address].

For example:

Printed by Armadillo Printing Ltd, 22 Thornfields Avenue, Glasgow.

Promoted by John Smith, 110 High Street, Airdrie on behalf of Jane Smith of 112 High Street Airdrie.

or where you are using an office address:

Printed by Armadillo Printing Ltd, 22 Thornfields Avenue, Glasgow.

Promoted by John Smith, on behalf of Jane Smith of 112 High Street Airdrie.

If the material is digital there is no printer, so a digital imprint on candidate campaign material should look like this:

Promoted by John Smith, on behalf of Jane Smith, both of 112 High Street Airdrie.

Where the candidate is also the promoter of the material, the 'on behalf of' part of the imprint is not required. This may happen when a candidate is their own agent.

For example:

Printed by Armadillo Printing Ltd, 22 Thornfields Avenue, Glasgow.

Promoted by Jane Smith of 112 High Street Airdrie.

If the candidate also prints leaflets using their own printer, the imprint should look like this:

Printed and promoted by Jane Smith of 112 High Street Airdrie.

Where do you put the imprint?

If your material is a single-sided printed document – such as a window poster – or where most of the information is on one side, you must put the imprint on that side of the document.

If it is a multi-sided printed document, you must put it on the first or last page.

Websites and other electronic material

As good practice, we recommend that you should put an imprint on electronic material, such as websites and social media posts. The imprint should include the name and address of the promoter and any organisation on whose behalf it has been published.

Where it is impractical to place the full imprint on the election material you should consider how to provide some other means for the material to be associated with you.

Social media

We recommend that you include the imprint in the post itself. You can also include it somewhere closely and clearly linked.

For example, on Twitter your imprint can be included prominently on your profile. For paid adverts on Facebook, you can include the imprint in the disclaimer text which accompanies the advert.

Crowdfunding

If your crowdfunding page contains election material as well as asking for donations, it must contain an imprint. Whether or not this is the case, you should ensure that it is clear on the page who the money is being donated to.

You can find out more information in our [crowdfunding factsheet](#).

Images and cartoons

We recommend that you include the imprint in the image itself.

If it is posted on social media, you can include the imprint in the same way as you would for any social media post.

If it is impractical to place a full imprint on to an image, you should include the text of a link, or a hyperlinked logo or emblem that leads to your full imprint.

Videos

We recommend that you include the imprint in the video itself. The imprint should be legible and appear for long enough for voters to read it.

If the video is posted on social media, you can include the imprint in the same way as you would for any social media post.

Posters for downloading

Any posters that are available for download from a website should carry the full imprint. If the posters are printed out and displayed as printed material, they must carry a full imprint including the printer's details. If you intend people to do this, you should leave a space for them to include their details as the printer.

Online discussion forums

As good practice, we suggest that if you use these forums you make your identity as a candidate clear where possible.

Where you can find more information

In addition to the rules about imprints, there are also rules on fundraising and spending that candidates must follow in the run-up to elections. We publish a suite of guidance for candidates that explains these rules, which you can find [here](#).

We also offer an advice service and you can contact us on one of the phone numbers or email addresses below.

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Translations and other formats

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