

@BRIEF

Bargaining and Campaigns

UNISON
Scotland

General Election – Registration Drive & Campaign Rules May 2024

The July 4th General Election will have profound implications for UNISON members across Scotland and the whole of the UK. It is vital that every effort is made to encourage UNISON members to vote. This short briefing outlines ways to do that and the legal limitations placed on branch activities during the election. Further election briefings will follow.

This election matters...

The vast majority of UNISON Scotland's members work in areas which are devolved to the Scottish Parliament, even so the general election will still have a huge bearing on our working lives. With reserved issues including overall public spending levels, most economic policy, most welfare spending, energy and employment rights it could hardly be otherwise. We can't afford to sit this out.

Get Registered!

Branches should do everything they can to ensure members are on the electoral register. The closing date for registering and getting a vote in the general election is **18th June**. Registering is easy and can be done online [here](#). Make sure you select Scotland as your location.

Voters now require photo ID to vote in person

People who do not have an accepted form of voter ID (listed [here](#)) can apply for a free voter ID document known as a Voter Authority Certificate [here](#). People can also apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate if they are concerned that their voter ID no longer looks like them, or if they do not wish to use the form of voter ID that they have.

Don't worry if you are on holiday: vote by post.

A polling day in the school holidays might be difficult for some people. Anyone can get a postal vote so long as they apply, in this case, **by June 19th at 5pm**. It's easy and can be done online [here](#).

Election rules branches must follow

Various Acts of parliament set out a range of strict rules regarding spending during elections. This means the amount of money that UNISON spends campaigning during the election is very tightly controlled. In particular there are restrictions on the amount that UNISON (and other campaigning organisations) can spend on public-facing campaigning. It requires us to include staffing and other resources when calculating campaign costs.

Everything the union does that can be seen as seeking to influence how the general public votes at the election will have to be accounted for. However, there is still a lot that we can do to highlight the importance of public services and the need for investment not austerity. The cost of communications with UNISON members is not counted as something we have to declare. This means that we can highlight to our members what's at stake at the election – and challenge candidates about where their parties stand on the key issues facing public services.

We will be sending updates on our general election campaign soon but in the meantime, branches should familiarise themselves with the rules.

It's important that branches do not

- jointly brand election-related campaigns with our allies
- pay for staff time related to election campaigning
- produce any of their own materials related to the election unless paid for from union's political fund
- make any donations to political parties or any other organisation campaigning during the election campaign

The law is complex regarding events like public rallies or hustings including events where UNISON would be a partner or sponsor. Branches should seek advice before taking part in such events— please contact your RO in the first instance.

The good news is:

Materials that have been produced by UNISON nationally or from UNISON Scotland for engaging with **UNISON members** do not count. We will be sharing more of these with you soon. If you have any questions about what is and is not allowed – please contact your RO in the first instance.

Imprints

Imprints exist to ensure transparency about who is publishing political material. The rules exist throughout the political cycle, and not just in the run-up to an election. All printed election campaign materials should carry an imprint, as has always been the case. These rules have not changed. However, the 2022 Elections Act introduced an additional requirement for digital materials to also bear an imprint. All national and regional social accounts now comply. Any branches that post anything election related on their social accounts must include the following imprint in the account bio. UNISON - the UK's largest union. Need support? Call 0800 0857 857. Promoted by UNISON Scotland; 14 West Campbell Street Glasgow G2 6RX . **All printed material must include the name and address of the printer and UNISON's name and address as the promoter.**

