
Factsheet for candidates: Election material and imprints-Scotland local elections May 2017

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

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 production of 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** regulate compliance with 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. This factsheet explains the rules you must follow.

What is election material?

Election material is published, printed material such as leaflets and adverts that is used to promote or procure the election of a candidate at an election.

Election material also includes material that criticises other candidates.

What is an imprint?

An imprint is added to election material to show who is responsible for its production. It helps to ensure that there is transparency about who is campaigning, and should therefore be clear and visible.

What must you include?

On printed 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 the person who has caused the material to be printed.

You can use either home or office addresses. An email address is not acceptable as an imprint address.

If you are putting an advert in a 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.

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

Examples of an imprint

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.

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:

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

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

Where the candidate prints leaflets using a printing company, the imprint should look like this:

- Printed by [printer's name and address].

- Promoted by [candidate's name and address].

Printed by Armadillo
Printing Ltd, 22
Thornfields Avenue,
Glasgow. Promoted by
Jane Smith of 112 High
Street Airdrie.

In all cases, you must make sure that the imprint lists all the promoters and organisations involved.

Where do you put the imprint?

If your material is a single-sided document – such as a window poster – or where most of the information is on one side, you must put the imprint on the face of the document. If it is a multi-sided 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 emails. The imprint should include the name and address of the promoter and the organisation on whose behalf it has been produced. You should include an imprint unless the size or format of the election material would mean that the imprint is not legible.

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.

Any posters that are available for download from a website should carry the full imprint.

Tweeting and posting on social media sites

You should display your full imprint details prominently on your profile. You can include a shortened link to your imprint in your tweet or post.

Images and cartoons

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.

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 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 the phone number or email address below.

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Translations and other formats

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