



## **Elections 2015**

# **A guide for TUSC candidates and agents**

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This document is a summary guide to the official regulations for candidates and election agents looking to contest the elections taking place in 2015 on Thursday May 7th, both the general election and the council elections in 279 local authorities in England.

The information it contains is based on the official guidance produced by the Electoral Commission, along with some tips and pointers drawn from the previous experience of TUSC election campaigners.

The guide explains the formal procedures that have to be followed to appear on the ballot paper in a local council election, the majority of which also apply to standing as a general election candidate. However there are specific issues relating to general election candidates which are dealt with in a separate section.

In Part One, the section entitled, Before the Elections, the guide also includes information on the procedures agreed by the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition on how to become a TUSC candidate.

But on the official election regulations it is only a summary guide. For a full explanation of election law, applicable for all elections in England, Wales and Scotland, you should go to the Electoral Commission's website at: [www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-those-we-regulate/candidates-and-agents](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-those-we-regulate/candidates-and-agents)

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# Part One – Before the elections

## 1. The election battleground in 2015

**1.1** The 2015 general election will take place on Thursday May 7th on the same day as council elections in 279 local authorities in England and contests for the directly-elected mayors of Bedford, Leicester, Mansfield, Middlesbrough and Torbay.

**1.2** That means, as well as the parliamentary contests in 650 constituencies (including 18 in Northern Ireland), there will be parallel election battles in 6,085 local council wards in 428 constituencies. The exceptions are the constituencies in Scotland (59 seats), Wales (40) and London (73), and a further 32 English parliamentary constituencies in unitary county council administrative areas and a handful of shire districts where there are no local elections in this cycle.

**1.3** In many ways the local council elections are as important for trade unionists, anti-cuts campaigners and socialists as the general election. With all the establishment parties – and UKIP too – committed to austerity, the best that will happen in the Westminster elections is that there will be a change of ‘management style’ at the top.

**1.4** But it will be possible in that situation to make the argument that the best way to put pressure on the new incumbent at Number Ten, alongside maximising support for TUSC general election candidates, is to vote for local council candidates who will refuse to vote for cuts in the council chamber if they are elected.

**1.5** That is why TUSC is appealing for the widest possible number of trade union members, anti-cuts campaigners, young people – everyone in fact who opposes the austerity agenda – to themselves come forward as council candidates in particular for next May’s elections, on our clear policy platform of refusing to implement the cuts.

**1.6** The TUSC national steering committee has set an ambitious target for the elections – to have a TUSC candidate in one thousand local council wards and one hundred parliamentary constituencies. This would mean that TUSC would reach the broadcasting authorities’ criteria to receive ‘fair media coverage’ in the elections, not just a party election broadcast but proportionate representation in ‘election-related’ items. With a bold approach we believe this target is entirely possible.

**1.7** The TUSC steering committee has produced a comprehensive directory of all the ‘election battlegrounds’, available on our website at <http://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/312.pdf>, which includes a regional breakdown of parliamentary constituencies grouped into local authority areas. This will help prospective candidates and local TUSC groups to make sure their planning for the local elections is dovetailed with their general election plans.

**1.8** The directory lists all the councils being contested on May 7th, broken down into regions, with the number of councillors up for election in 2015 and the current political control in each council.

## 2. Who can stand for election in May?

**2.1** To be able to stand as a candidate at a local government election you must:

- be at least 18 years old on the day of your nomination
- be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union

- meet at least one of the following four qualifications:

(a) You are registered as a local government elector for the local authority area in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards.

Note: “Local authority area” here means the council, not necessarily the local ward in which you are standing. This is a common source of confusion. So to be clear – if you are registered in New Town council you can stand for a seat in any ward on that council.

(b) You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the local authority area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of the election.

(c) Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the local authority area.

(d) You have lived in the local authority area during the whole of the 12 months before the election. You are **not** required to have lived at the same address for the whole of the 12 months, but you must have lived in the same local authority and you must be living in the local authority area from March 30th to polling day.

**2.2** Apart from meeting the qualifications for standing for election, you must also not be disqualified from standing. You cannot be a local council candidate if at the time of your nomination and on the day of the election:

(i) You are employed by the local authority or hold a paid office where your appointment has been made, or could be made, by the local authority itself or by any joint committee where the local authority is represented. This means that you may be ‘employed by the local authority’, for example, if you work at certain schools, fire services, police or health services. But if you are a teacher (or are a non-teaching member of staff) at a school maintained by a county council, you will be able to stand at elections to the district council.

(ii) You hold a politically restricted post such as a local authority statutory chief officer (for example, chief education officer, chief officer at certain fire brigades, or the director of social services).

(iii) You are the subject of a currently operative bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order.

(iv) You have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including a suspended sentence), without the option of a fine, during the five years before polling day.

Remember: the council’s Returning Officer (to whom your nomination papers are submitted) will not be able to confirm whether or not you are disqualified so if you are in any doubt, you should seek advice.

## **Different grounds for disqualification of parliamentary candidates**

**2.3** There are different grounds to disqualify someone from being a candidate in a parliamentary election than in a local election:

(i) While there is no requirement in law for a candidate to be a registered elector in the UK, citizens of other countries (including EU member states other than the UK, the Republic of Ireland, Cyprus and Malta) are not eligible to become an MP.

(ii) Certain post-holders are disqualified from becoming an MP. These include members of police forces, members of the armed forces, civil servants, judges, and members of the House of Lords.

## 3. Becoming a TUSC candidate

**3.1** The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) was set-up in 2010 to enable trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists to stand candidates against the pro-austerity establishment parties.

**3.2** Under Britain's election laws candidates can only appear on the ballot paper as an 'Independent' if they are not endorsed by a registered political party. That doesn't make it easy for trade unionists or local anti-cuts campaigners to distinguish themselves as standing for something different to the mainstream. But using the TUSC name does.

**3.3** Since 2010 around 1,200 candidates have stood under the TUSC umbrella. Local community groups, trade unionists and individual anti-cuts candidates and socialists who want to stand under the TUSC banner have autonomy to run their own campaigns. The only provision is that candidates are expected to endorse the TUSC core policy platforms for the general election and local council elections (see <http://tusc.org.uk/policy.php> ).

**3.4** Election candidates who wish to appear on the ballot paper on behalf of a registered party have to submit to the returning officer, along with their nomination forms, a Certificate of Authorisation to use a Party Description, signed by the registered Nominating Officer of the party.

**3.5** TUSC has produced forms to process applications for a Certificate of Authorisation for local council elections and, separately, for the 2015 general election. They are available on the TUSC website at <http://www.tusc.org.uk/candidate>

**3.6** Submitting one of these application forms for a Certificate of Authorisation will be taken as indicating a prospective candidate's agreement with the TUSC election platforms.

### The parliamentary candidate application form

**3.7** The application form to be a TUSC candidate at the general election is different to the local elections application form, requiring more information about the candidate and the planned election campaign.

**3.8** This includes a question about the support that the proposed candidature has received from the local TUSC branch or steering committee and/or the local branches of the TUSC constituent organisations. One of the reasons for including this is to encourage the formation of local TUSC groups, as stipulated in the TUSC rules (see <http://www.tusc.org.uk/16861/14-11-13/How-TUSC-Functions>).

**3.9** But the TUSC national steering committee also needs to know whether or not there was agreement on the candidature in a situation, different to local elections when there are many more seats available to contest, when there may be a number of potential candidates seeking to contest one or two possible seats. The TUSC national steering committee operates by consensus not majority voting – nothing is agreed if a committee member or constituent organisation has strong objections – and the same should apply to TUSC candidates, particularly those aspiring to represent our coalition in parliamentary contests.

**3.10** The form also includes questions about how many local council wards in the parliamentary constituency are likely to have TUSC local election candidates contesting them in the parallel contests taking place on May 7th; and whether or not local TUSC supporters had organised a delegation or lobby of the Labour prospective parliamentary candidate (PPC) in the seat as part of building support for a general election challenge. These are again prompts to the local TUSC group to make sure that the most is got out of the election campaign, including before the election period itself starts. Guidance on organising open letters and delegations to Labour PPCs can be found on the TUSC website at <http://www.tusc.org.uk/17017/11-08-2014/general-election-planning-model-letter-to-labour-candidates-available>

## What happens to candidate applications?

**3.11** Applications are placed before the TUSC national steering committee, which reflects TUSC's character as a coalition. It includes official representatives of the RMT transport workers' union, and leading individuals from the PCS civil servants union, the National Union of Teachers, the Fire Brigade Union, and the Prison Officers Association. The Socialist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, and the TUSC Independent Socialist Network, representing individuals not members of an affiliated organisation, also have committee places. The steering committee operates by consensus and, as stated in the TUSC rules, ultimately has the final say on coalition seats and candidates.

**3.12** Once applications are approved by the steering committee they will be posted on the TUSC website and, before the official opening of nominations on March 30th – or as soon as possible for applications received after that date – a TUSC Certificate of Authorisation will be sent to the candidate's election agent (whose details should be included on the application form).

## 4. The election timetable – summary

**November 2014-February 2015** – The TUSC national steering committee meetings during this period will discuss applications to be candidates in the May elections and approve them as prospective candidates.

**December 18** – The first 'regulated period' when the spending limits and rules for parliamentary candidates apply, known as the 'long campaign', begins on this day (see paragraph **14.5**).

**January 24** – National TUSC elections conference. New applications for unfilled seats received after January 24 will be discussed by the steering committee as they arrive and, where approved, posted on the TUSC website.

**February-March** – The TUSC national steering committee will be processing candidate applications on a weekly basis, with those approved posted up on the TUSC website at the end of each week. Certificates of authorisation will be sent out to agents from mid-March.

**March 9th** – The first date on which local and parliamentary candidates' can sign their official Consent to Nomination form (see paragraph **5.9**).

**Monday March 30th** – The official Notices of Election for the local authority elections are published. The first day of the 'regulated period' for local election candidates' election spending (see paragraph **8.2**) begins. Local election candidate nomination papers can be handed in from this point.

**Tuesday March 31st** – Parliament is dissolved and the writ issued for the general election.

**Thursday April 2nd** – General election candidate nomination papers can be handed in from this point.

**Thursday April 9th** – The deadline for the delivery of nomination papers (**4pm**) for both the local elections and the general election. This is also the deadline for the appointment of election agents.

**Thursday May 7th** – Polling day (7am to 10pm)

**Friday June 12th** – Deadline for the delivery of election spending returns to the Returning Officer (see paragraph **8.8**), for both local and general election candidates.

# Part Two – The local elections

## 5. The official nomination papers

**5.1** To appear on the ballot paper as a candidate you will need to submit a completed set of nomination papers to the local council's Returning Officer by no later than **4pm on Thursday 9th April**. This deadline is set out in law and cannot be changed for any reason. The start date from which the candidate or the local election agent will be able to submit nomination papers, as well as the times and place for delivery, will be set out in the official notice of election published by the council's Returning Officer no later than Monday 30th March.

**5.2** Candidates or agents can obtain nomination papers from a council's local Electoral Services office. Alternatively, the national Electoral Commission has produced a set of nomination papers that can be used, available from its website at <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/local-elections-england-and-wales>

**5.3** To appear on the ballot paper as a TUSC candidate in a local election the following papers must be submitted to make a nomination valid:

- (i) The nomination form.
- (ii) A candidate's Consent to Nomination form.
- (iii) The TUSC 'Certificate of Authorisation' giving the candidate permission to use the TUSC party name or a registered description on the ballot paper, signed by the TUSC National Nominating Officer.
- (iv) A written request to use one of the three TUSC emblems registered with the Electoral Commission, signed by the candidate.

**5.4.** The nomination form must include:

- The candidate's full name. This means their surname and other names in full. Using initials only could lead to the nomination paper being rejected.

Note: There is space on the form to include a commonly used name if the candidate is usually known by a name that is different from their actual name and they wish this to appear on the ballot paper – for example, Liz instead of Elizabeth. But for this to appear on the ballot paper it must be stated on the nomination form. If the commonly used name box on the nomination paper is left blank, then the candidate's actual name will be used.

- The candidate's home address. This must be completed in full and must not contain abbreviations and it must be their current home address – which, remember, does not need to be in the ward.
- The signatures of ten registered electors (known as subscribers) in the ward where the candidate is standing, who must appear on the register that is in force on March 30th.
- A description. The candidate can ask for either the party's name as registered with the Commission (Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition) or one of the registered descriptions to appear on the ballot paper underneath the candidate's name.

**5.5** Each candidate's nomination form needs to be signed ('subscribed' in the jargon) by ten electors registered in the ward. The first two electors sign and print their names as proposer and seconder, and the remaining eight as 'assenters'.

**5.6** The elector number of each subscriber as it appears on the electoral register, including the numbers or letters of the polling district, must be entered on the nomination form.

**5.7** Each elector may not subscribe more nomination forms than there are vacancies. For example, if there are two vacancies in a ward, an elector may subscribe up to two candidates' nomination forms in that ward. If three candidates submit nomination forms signed by the same person, the two that were submitted first will be accepted, but the third will be invalid. It is advisable therefore to enquire, before asking a subscriber to sign the nomination form, if they have already signed someone else's.

**5.8** The candidate's Consent to Nomination form must be completed in order for the nomination to be valid. The candidate must meet at least one of the qualifications to stand for election and it is advisable to state on the form as many of the qualifications as apply.

**5.9** Candidates are not allowed to sign the consent form earlier than one calendar month before the deadline for submitting nomination papers, ie **March 9th**. The signature must be witnessed, and the witness must sign the form and give their full name and address. There are no restrictions on who can be a witness to the consent to nomination.

## 6. The certificate of authorisation & emblems

**6.1** The certificate of authorisation will be sent out to the candidate's agent by the TUSC National Nominating Officer. It states that the named candidate can stand on behalf of TUSC and allow them to use one of the following:

- The exact party name as registered with the Commission, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. This is the name the TUSC national steering committee is recommending that candidates in England use for the 2015 elections; or
- One of the party's registered descriptions. These include Trade Unionists and Socialists Against Cuts (and Scottish and Welsh descriptions).

Note: candidates do **not** need to choose the description Trade Unionists and Socialists Against Cuts to use the TUSC AGAINST CUTS emblem No.3 (see below). This is a common source of confusion. You can use that emblem while appearing on the ballot paper as Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition.

**6.2** The other form in the nomination pack to complete is the Request to Use an Emblem on the Ballot Paper form. TUSC has two registered emblems available to use in England and Wales, as below, and the TUSC national steering committee is recommending that candidates use Emblem No.3.



Emblem  
No.1



Emblem  
No.3

**6.3** But it's your choice. (Emblem No.2, in case you're wondering, is a Scottish version of Emblem No.1). The Request to Use an Emblem on the Ballot Paper form must be **signed by the candidate**, not the local agent or the TUSC National Nominating Officer. Again, this is a common source of confusion. But once a candidate has received a Certificate of Authorisation from TUSC, they are responsible for their campaign, including choosing which emblem they want to appear on the ballot paper.

**6.4** After nomination papers have been submitted candidates will be sent a notice by the Returning Officer to let them know whether or not their nomination is valid.



## 7. The election agent

**7.1** The election agent is the person responsible for the proper management of the candidate's election campaign and, in particular, for its financial management. There are no particular qualifications needed to be an election agent and candidates can be their own agent if they wish. But a candidate must have an election agent. If they do not appoint an agent, they will become their own agent by default.

**7.2** The nomination pack from the council's Returning Officer should include a declaration form to appoint an agent, which should be signed by the candidate and by the agent to show their acceptance of the appointment.

**7.3** The form asks for the name, address and office address of the election agent. The agent can actually live anywhere but the office address – which can be someone's home address (the agent, the candidate, or another TUSC member) – must be within the same council area where the election is being held, or within a district (or a London borough) which adjoins the council.

**7.4** It makes administrative sense to have one election agent for each local council, not least as a point of contact with the TUSC national election agent. But TUSC is a coalition of different political forces and it is totally acceptable for candidates from one political party in a council area, for example, to have one agent, while candidates from another party have their own. But there must be co-ordination – which is another reason why the TUSC rules call for local steering committees or branches to “be established, where possible, for local government areas where it is planned to contest seats” (see [How TUSC functions](#) on the TUSC website).

## 8. Rules on election spending

**8.1** Candidates and their agents must follow certain rules about how much they can spend, who they can accept donations from, and what they must report after the election. The election agent has the main responsibility for complying with these rules. However after the election both the candidate and the agent must sign declarations to say that their spending and donation return is complete and correct to the best of their knowledge.

**8.2** Candidate spending is expenditure on activities to promote a candidacy, or to criticise other candidates, during a particular period in the run-up to the election, the ‘regulated period’. The regulated period begins on the date someone officially becomes a candidate, which is when the official notice of election is published (**March 30th**). Someone officially becomes a candidate on that date if on or before then they have already declared themselves a candidate at the election (or another person has declared that they are a candidate – for example, on the TUSC website).

**8.3** The spending limit for the local elections for the regulated period is £740, plus 6p per local government elector in the ward. The local electoral registration officer will be able to provide the number of electors in the ward to make this calculation.

**8.4** There are lower spending limits for joint candidates, ie where there are two or three TUSC candidates in the same ward. These are calculated by using the spending limit as explained above, and then reducing it by 25% – a quarter – if there are two joint candidates, or 33% – a third – if there are three or more joint candidates.

**8.5** The costs of most campaigning activities count towards the spending limit, including leaflets, posters, newspaper adverts, websites or YouTube videos, mail-outs, offices and meetings. But meetings that are held mainly for purposes other than the candidate's election campaign, where the candidate's attendance is incidental – for example, a regular TUSC group meeting – do not need to be included.

**8.6** Costs can include items only partly used for an individual candidate's election campaign, such as leaflets used both before and during the regulated period or shared leaflets with a general election candidate. These can be legitimately split between activities that count as the individual candidate's spending and those that don't but, unless a candidate's expenditure is going to be near the spending limit, it can be easier to include the total cost of most 'split items' in the spending returns.

**8.7** The election agent must record all election spending, and must keep invoices or receipts for any payments **over £20**. This means recording what the spending was for – for example, leaflets or a public meeting – the name and address of the supplier, the amount, and the date that the agent spent the money.

**8.8** After the election, the agent must deliver a spending and donations return to the local returning officer by no later than **Friday 12th June**. Both the agent and the candidate must also submit declarations that the return is complete and accurate. A return and declarations must still be submitted even if the candidate hasn't spent any money. This is called a 'nil return'.

## 9. Rules on donations to your campaign

**9.1** Candidates can only accept contributions ('donations') of money, items or services towards their campaign spending from certain sources, known as 'permissible donors', and must report them to the local Returning Officer after the election. These include contributions towards a candidate's campaign spending from TUSC nationally, a local trade union branch, or constituent organisations of TUSC. Anything with a value of £50 or less does not count as a donation.

**9.2** 'Permissible donors' include:

- An individual registered on a UK electoral register, including overseas electors;
- A registered political party – such as TUSC;
- A UK-registered trade union or one of its branches;
- A UK-based unincorporated association that carries on activities in the UK – such as the constituent organisations of TUSC, the Socialist Party, the SWP, and the ISN.

**9.3** When an agent receives any donation of **more than £50**, the following information must be recorded:

- The donor's name and address.
- The amount of the donation.
- The date on which the donation was accepted

The donor's address must be recorded as it is shown on the relevant statutory register (this is the electoral register for an individual, the register of trade unions for a union branch etc). If the donor is an unincorporated association the main office address must be put (as there is no register of unincorporated associations).

**9.4** If the donation isn't from a permissible donor, it must be returned within 30 days (with the dates of the receipt and return of the donation recorded). If the donation isn't returned, the agent will be deemed to have accepted it and the Electoral Commission may apply to the courts for it to be forfeited.

**9.5** After the election the agent will need to report these details in the spending and donations return. A form for use for returns, and forms for the agent's and candidate's declarations, are usually included in the original nominations pack or, sometimes, sent out separately by the Returning Officer. They cover all the information that must be included.

## 10. Getting the register of electors

**10.1** A candidate can start campaigning at any time. They do not have to wait until they are validly nominated to declare that they will run for election, publish campaign material, or canvass people for support. Doing the latter means getting hold of a copy of the electoral register.

**10.2** Once someone has officially become a candidate, they are entitled to a copy of the register of electors and absent voters' lists for the ward they are standing in to complete their nomination form and for canvassing purposes. But the earliest someone officially becomes a candidate is when the official notice of election is published (**March 30th**).

**10.3** Most council electoral services departments will release a copy of the electoral register to someone declaring themselves as a candidate or election agent before the official notice of election, once they have signed a legal assent form stating that the register will only be used for electoral purposes. But there have been cases of Returning Officers not giving the same leeway to local TUSC candidates and agents as they do the establishment parties. They cannot do the same nationally however. Registered political parties are entitled to receive a copy of the full electoral register at any time so a local election agent designated by the TUSC National Nominating Officer is able to collect registers on behalf of prospective candidates before March 30th – another reason for sorting out who the local agent will be as soon as possible!

**10.4** The register will be supplied in electronic format unless a specific request is made for a paper copy.

## 11. Using council buildings for public meetings

**11.1** Election candidates are allowed to use schools and council maintained rooms for public meetings. The Electoral Registration Officer should keep a list of all suitable meeting rooms in their area and their availability, and should make this available for candidates and agents to inspect from the day of the notice of election.

**11.2** To use this facility you will need to contact the owner of the premises to make a booking, giving reasonable notice to reduce the risk of the request being refused.

**11.3** There is no hire charge for using these rooms, but you must pay for any expenses incurred, such as heating, lighting and cleaning and for any damage to the premises. Candidates' right to use rooms does not include hours during which a school is used for educational purposes. Equally, any prior letting of a meeting room takes precedence.

## 12. Imprints on campaign material

**12.1** All campaign material must, by law, include an imprint to show who is responsible for its production. This means leaflets, posters, and also websites.

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

- the printer
- the 'promoter' (the agent)
- the candidate – or the organisation (TUSC) if the leaflet is promoting a number of candidates – on behalf of whom the material is being published

**12.3** An example of an imprint for a leaflet promoting an individual candidate would be:

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

If the candidate is also the agent, the promoter of the material, the 'on behalf of' part of the imprint is not required.

**12.4** An example of an imprint for a leaflet promoting a group of TUSC candidates would be:

Printed by [printer's name and address]. Promoted by [agent's name] of [agent's address], on behalf of the TUSC candidates in [ward or council name].

**12.5** There are rules on where the imprint must be put. If the material is single-sided – such as a window poster – it must be put on the face of the document. If it is multi-sided, the imprint must be put on the first or last page.

**12.6** Imprints must also be included 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. This also applies for newspaper adverts.

## 13. Joint campaigning with other groups

**13.1** As a coalition the different organisations participating in TUSC locally will probably incur expenditure in support of the TUSC election candidates. Additionally, sympathetic organisations not formally participating in TUSC or standing candidates themselves may also come forward with offers to help promote candidates as part of their own, independent campaigning activity. Under electoral law this is known and permitted as 'Third Party' activity although there are certain rules that the third parties, and TUSC election agents, have to follow.

**13.2** Any expenditure by a third party that "advertises (or otherwise promotes) to the public" an election candidate, including material that merely attacks other candidates or parties, must be authorised by that candidate's agent. This rule has often been used in the past, for example to hamstring CND or anti-racist activity at election times when no candidate has given authorisation to a third party's campaigning.

**13.3** But this problem can be overcome, however, if a TUSC candidate's agent issues what is known as a 'Section 75' authorisation to a named officer of a third party to "incur and pay" the costs of producing leaflets, holding a public meeting etc. The third party pays these costs, not the TUSC candidate, but they are authorised to do so by the local TUSC agent. A model 'Section 75' authorisation notice that can be adapted for local use is available from the TUSC national agent.

**13.4** Third party material published under these provisions needs an election imprint, following the same rules as at paragraph **12.2**, but this is not the TUSC imprint – ie the third party is legally liable for the content. The named individual must also keep an account of expenditure incurred and submit them to the local TUSC agent to be included in the TUSC candidate's spending returns.

**13.5** This all may seem a bit daunting to (electorally) inexperienced campaigners, but it shouldn't be. The advantage of such arrangements is that supportive but independent organisations not contesting the election can run their own campaign in an election period, which they wouldn't otherwise be able to do, but then 'strike together' with TUSC at the ballot box – in other words, supporting the TUSC candidate while promoting as they see fit their own profile and organisation. TUSC agents should offer them every encouragement to do so.

# Part Three – The general election

## 14. Differences with local election rules

**14.1** Most of the official regulations for contesting a parliamentary seat are the same as those that apply for local council elections. But there are some differences, such as the grounds on which someone can be disqualified from being a parliamentary candidate (see paragraph **2.3**). Sometimes the differences are very slight but are nonetheless still important, and candidates and agents need to be aware of them.

**14.2** The rules for completing nomination papers for a parliamentary contest are a case in point. The process is very similar to that for the local elections (see paragraphs **5.1** to **5.9**) but there are some slight differences, namely:

- There is a separate home address form to be completed for parliamentary candidates, who do not have to meet any residential requirements in order to stand. Parliamentary candidates, for example, do not have to live in or have any formal connection with the constituency in which they intend to stand.
- The ten electors that need to sign a parliamentary candidate's nomination form (see paragraph **5.5**) must be electors in the constituency but not in any specific council ward.

**14.3** The regulations covering the role and appointment of parliamentary election agents are also virtually the same as those for the local elections (see paragraphs **7.1** to **7.4**) with the only difference being that the agent's office address must be within the parliamentary constituency, or within a constituency which adjoins the constituency where you are standing (or within London, within a London borough which is part of, or adjoins, the constituency). As for the local elections, the office address must be a physical address, ie somewhere to which any legal notices could be delivered, and therefore it cannot be a PO or other mailbox address.

### Spending rules for parliamentary elections

**14.4** The rules on how candidate spending is defined, how to deal with split costs, and what an agent needs to record, are the same for parliamentary and local election campaigns (see paragraphs **8.1** to **8.8**). But the spending limits are different and there are two separate 'regulated periods' within which spending on promoting a candidate, and donations to the candidate's campaign, need to be recorded.

**14.5** The first 'regulated period' when the spending limits and rules for parliamentary candidates apply, known as the 'long campaign', begins on **18 December 2014** and ends on the day that parliament is dissolved. It is at this point that the 'short campaign' regulated period starts.

**14.6** TUSC candidates and agents are not going to have to worry about breaching the parliamentary election spending limits. The limit for campaign spending in one constituency in the 'long campaign' is £30,700 plus 6p per registered parliamentary elector! The limit in the 'short campaign' is £8,700 plus 6p per elector. But agents will have to keep a record of expenditure for both periods for the returns they will have to submit after the election.

**14.7** A couple of points to note. As for the local elections, the agent must keep invoices or receipts for any payments made of £20 and above but items used in the 'long campaign' that promote TUSC generally but do not include the candidate's name are covered by the rules on a national party's campaign expenditure and usually don't need to be counted. And payment of a candidate's parliamentary election deposit (see paragraph **15.1**) also does not count towards a candidate's spending limit.

# 15. Paying deposits in parliamentary elections

**15.1** The most obvious difference with contesting a local council seat is that to be a valid candidate in a parliamentary election the sum of £500 must be deposited with the Returning Officer by the deadline for nominations, in other words by **4pm on Thursday 9 April**.

**15.2** The deposit can be made using:

- Cash
- A UK banker's draft

**15.3** Some Returning Officers may also accept a deposit made by a debit or credit card payment or an electronic funds transfer but they legally able to refuse to do so. So if you want to pay the deposit in one of these ways, you must discuss with your Returning Officer at the earliest opportunity whether the payment method is acceptable.

**15.4** Candidates who poll more than 5% of the total valid votes cast in the constituency will have their deposit returned. Those candidates who have polled less than, or equal to, 5% of the total valid votes cast will lose their deposit.

# 16. The right to a Freepost delivery

**16.1** The other major difference with local elections is that validly nominated parliamentary candidates are entitled to free postage on a leaflet – an 'election address' or 'election communication' – to be delivered to electors in the constituency they are contesting. Candidates are entitled to have the postage paid on either:

- One unaddressed election communication of up to 60 grams to every postal address; or
- One election communication of up to 60 grams individually addressed to each elector

But of course the print costs of these, and the cost of the special packaging requirements needed for delivery to the Royal Mail, have to be paid for by the TUSC candidate's campaign (for an average of 45,000 addresses per constituency or 75,000 individual electors).

**16.2** Before the publication of the official statement of persons nominated, anyone declaring them self to be a candidate is entitled to exercise this right, but only if they give legal assent for Royal Mail to charge them for any postage costs incurred in the event that they are not subsequently validly nominated.

**16.3** There are some restrictions on what can be included in a parliamentary election address, which must only contain matters relating to the election. Royal Mail check candidates' campaign material to confirm that it is acceptable, with a dedicated artwork team at [artwork.checking@royalmail.com](mailto:artwork.checking@royalmail.com), who must sign off artwork proofs before leaflets are printed.

**16.4** Royal Mail will also be able to help agents work out the volume of printed election material needed for each constituency. There is a section on their website with guidance on candidate mailings at [www.royalmail.com/candidatemail](http://www.royalmail.com/candidatemail) which agents should check out at the earliest opportunity if the local TUSC campaign is planning to use the Freepost facility.