**Spending rules during the EU Referendum campaign period**

**UNISON Guidance April 2016**

|  |
| --- |
| Referendum spending is expenditure on certain campaigning activities  that are intended to or are otherwise in connection with,  promoting or bringing about a particular outcome  in the referendum. |

The EU referendum spending regulation period starts on 15 April 2016 and ends on 23 June 2016. It includes specific rules and spending limits that apply to certain campaign activities. These rules were passed in the European Union Referendum Act 2015 and related Regulations. They are different from the rules governing spending in UK General Elections, The Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013 and The Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014.

**EU Referendum Campaign spending rules**

UNISON has registered as a ‘Remain campaigner’ with the Electoral Commission. This will allow UNISON to spend up to £700,000 if it decides to. All UNISON activities, events, donations and materials - regardless of where in the UK - will be representative and inclusive of UNISON’s total spending costs as a whole throughout the UK. All spending must be recorded by UNISON and reported to the Electoral Commission.

Because all activity or communication to both members and the public will need to be costed as part of UNISONs ‘registered Remain campaign’ there is a need to follow certain guidelines’ on communications and activities in branches, regions, service groups and committees.

All printed communications must strictly have a UNISON imprint on them which will include the name and address of the printer, promoter and organisation. An example of the UNISON Centre Imprint is here:

|  |
| --- |
| Printed by National Print & Distribution, The I.O. Centre, Unit 7, Skeffington Street London SE18 6SR. Promoted by L. Snape on behalf of UNISON both of UNISON Centre,130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AY |

For all regional materials and communications published Regional Secretaries will be the authorised promoter. It is an offence not to include an imprint on printed campaign material which is made available to the public during the referendum period. As good practice it is also recommended that UNISON should put an imprint on electronic material, such as websites and emails too.

**All activities must also be either neutral/balanced or promote the Remain outcome but not the Leave side due to UNISONs Registered status with the Electoral Commission.**

**What is not counted as campaign spending on the EU Referendum**

Business as usual activities or communications which are not aimed at members or the public voting and do not reach a value judgement on the two outcomes at the referendum or take a positive or negative tone towards a particular outcome are not included in any EU Referendum campaign spending costs.

If, for example you hold an event where you invite speakers to represent both sides of the outcome and allow all those attending an equal opportunity to participate, so that the event is not intended to promote or otherwise bring about a particular outcome, then spending on the event is unlikely to be referendum spending.

**What is counted as campaign spending on the EU Referendum**

All Branch, Regional, National, Service Group and Committee activities or communications taking place during the referendum period, which is intended to, or is otherwise in connection with, promoting or bringing about a particular outcome in the referendum, will need to be recorded and included in the costing of UNISON’s EU Referendum Remain campaign.

In other words any activity or communication that is intended to influence the voting choice of members by expressing a view on an outcome has to be counted as EU Referendum campaign spending. This can include where two outcomes are compared, or a value judgement is made as to which outcome should be preferred, or statements use positive or negative language rather than having a neutral, objective tone. Examples of UNISON activities included in spending costs:

* Campaign broadcasts and advertising of any kind. For example, street banners, websites or YouTube videos
* Design, research, print and administration or overhead (telephone and utility) costs of any UNISON activities or communication produced
* Press conferences or other dealings with the media
* Annual reports which highlights the risks of a certain EU Referendum outcome
* Professional advice provided to members in service groups or members who are EU migrants about the risks of a certain EU Referendum outcome
* A service group research report or risk analysis specifically about the EU referendum
* A regional, service group or sector event relating to the referendum intending to influence the way members will vote
* Polling and surveys intending to influence the way members and their families and friends vote
* Market research or other methods of finding out how people intend to vote
* Unsolicited material sent to voters and members. For example, emails, letters or leaflets sent that aren’t in response to specific queries
* Other material about the referendum, such as setting out UNISONs campaign’s arguments, setting out expectations as to what would happen in the event of a particular outcome, or encouraging people to vote
* Rallies and events, including the cost of people’s attendance, and any goods, services or facilities provided
* Transport or accommodation paid in connection with publicising UNISONs campaign

**To sum up branches, regions, service groups and committees are asked to only use materials and information that are branded with a UNISON imprint as demonstrated above and promoted by the UNISON Centre or Regional Secretaries. Regions will shortly be invited to bid for EU Referendum campaign GPF funds. Further information on how UNISON will record its spending on activities and communications will follow.**

Additional information on spending rules can be found at the Electoral Commission

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/party-or-campaigner/campaigners-in-referendums>

Contact Allison Roche Policy Officer [a.roche@unison.co.uk](mailto:a.roche@unison.co.uk) 020 7121 5457 for more details