
Protecting the UK's Democracy: Key Electoral Reforms Recommended by Independent Experts

Independent expert bodies have provided a catalogue of recommendations to improve the UK's political finance laws and their enforcement. From landmark reports by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) in 2011 and 2021 and interventions by the Electoral Commission, to reports by select committees and research by civil society, academia and others.¹ These organisations broadly agree on the problems and solutions, but successive governments have not implemented their key recommendations. This has had a corrosive effect on our political system and [poses serious risks to our democracy](#).

The UK is heading into a general election with seriously weak defences against foreign interference and dodgy money entering our politics. [Our electoral finance laws remain riddled with loopholes](#) and the enforcement regime is not robust enough. The Electoral Commission has been weakened and is now subject to political direction – [and there is no national law enforcement body with real responsibility](#) to police breaches of electoral law. [There is much more money coming into political parties](#) with an 80% rise in the amount of money that parties can spend since the previous election. [There may be nearly 3.5 million additional overseas voters](#) who can also donate, with little scope for meaningful checks on who they are and where their money comes from. [The government has consistently resisted calls](#) from independent experts to tighten up the checks that parties should be doing on where their money is coming from.

[Public trust in our political system is now at rock bottom](#). That flows in large part from a sense that politicians do not properly represent those who elect them, that money in our politics exerts undue influence which is often obscured from public view, and that those who break the rules that do exist are not properly punished. [Nearly 60% of the public think funding of political parties isn't transparent](#) and only 30% think political parties that break the rules will face any action. [Of 8,000 people surveyed last year](#), only two in five trusted the current political system. [Data released by the Office for National Statistics earlier this year](#) showed that only 12% of people trust political parties.

The 13 recommendations below reflect solutions that have previously been broadly agreed by independent regulators, parliamentarians, civil society and academia. The areas of agreement that have emerged cover: proper checks on donations; stronger controls on donors; increased civil and criminal enforcement and powers, including an independent and empowered Electoral Commission; greater transparency; consolidation of electoral law and a review of offences; and donation caps.

If implemented, this package of reforms would substantially improve the UK's election finance laws and enforcement regime – and would go a long way towards safeguarding our democracy and addressing plummeting levels of public trust in our politics.

¹ Including the Commission on the UK's Future, the Commission on Political Power and the UK Governance Project

Issue	No	Recommendation	Made or broadly supports recommendation			
			CSPL	Electoral Commission	Select committees	Civil society / academia
Proper checks on donations	1	Political parties should be required by law to identify the true source of funds as part of a risk-based approach to donations.	X	X		X
Stronger controls on donors	2	A donation from a company should not be allowed to exceed its net profits generated in the UK within the preceding two years.	X	X		X
	3	Unincorporated associations should be required by law to conduct permissibility checks on money they receive that is intended as a donation.	X	X		X
Increased civil and criminal enforcement and powers	4	The government's power to issue a Strategy and Policy Statement should be removed to restore the independence of the Electoral Commission.		X	X	X
	5	The Electoral Commission's powers to obtain information from any person outside of a formal investigation should be extended.	X	X	X	X
	6	The Electoral Commission should be given specific powers to share information with other regulators and the police.	X	X		
	7	The Electoral Commission should be given powers to investigate candidates' compliance with the rules, and to impose sanctions.	X	X	X	X
	8	The maximum fine the Electoral Commission may impose should increase to £500,000 per offence or 4% of a campaign's total spend, whichever is higher.	X	X	X	X
	9	There should be much stronger criminal enforcement of election finance laws with the necessary resources, mandate and specialist expertise.		X		X
Greater transparency	10	The financial threshold for parties to report donations to the Electoral Commission should be reduced following consultation.	X			X
Consolidation of electoral law and review of offences	11	Electoral law should be simplified and consolidated into a single legislative framework.	X	X	X	X
	12	There should be a review of whether election finance offences are effective in preventing donations from foreign sources and the proceeds of crime.	X			X
Donation caps	13	Political parties should introduce caps on donations, and reduce caps on spending, with a view to reducing the amount of money in politics.	X			X

Recommendations by CSPL, the Electoral Commission, Select Committees, Civil Society and Academia

CSPL	Electoral Commission	Select committees	Civil society and academia
Proper checks on donations			
1. Political parties should be required by law to identify the true source of funds as part of a risk-based approach to donations.			
<p><i>PPERA should be updated to require parties and non-party campaigners to have appropriate procedures in place to determine the true source of donations. Parties and non-party campaigners should be required to develop a risk-based policy for managing donations, proportionate to the level of risk that they are exposed to.</i> CSPL-B (2021)</p> <p><i>PPERA should be updated to require political parties to include a statement of risk management in their annual accounts that sets out the risks relating to their sources of funds and the steps taken to manage those risks.</i> CSPL-B (2021)</p> <p><i>The Electoral Commission should provide detailed guidance to parties and non-party campaigners on how to develop a proportionate risk-based policy on procedures and checks for identifying the true source of a donation.</i> CSPL-B (2021)</p>	<p><i>We continue to recommend to the UK Government that it introduces laws to help protect parties from those who seek to evade the law, and give voters more confidence in the process by requiring more checks on the identity of donors.</i> EC-C (2023)</p> <p><i>First, registered political parties and non-party campaigners should be required to carry out risk assessments and enhanced due diligence checks to ensure they know where donations have come from. The principles of risk assessment and enhanced due diligence are well-established in many sectors where organisations accept funds from donors or customers.</i> EC-E (2024)</p>	<p><i>The Government should provide an update in its response to this report on the guidance it said it was considering in its response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life’s Regulating Election Finance Report, that would support campaigners to take a “risk-based” approach to donations, similar to the “know your customer” requirements in financial services.</i> PACAC (2022)</p>	<p><i>And political parties should be under stronger obligations to ensure that they have full knowledge of their large donors and their status.</i> CUKF (2022)</p> <p><i>Political parties need to voluntarily implement robust, risk-based ‘know your donor’ policies on an urgent basis ahead of the next election to prevent foreign state interference and dirty money in our political system, and to restore public trust. Political parties should commit to legislation that would require all parties to implement ‘know your donor’ policies, following a consultation on wider reforms and requirements needed for them to be most effective.</i> SpoC (2024)</p> <p><i>Introduce regulatory oversight of checks on donors by political parties. Parties are only currently required to impose controls on the status of a donor – they are not required to conduct a risk-based due diligence approach towards donations to check the suitability of a donor or to identify the true source of donations. ... Legislation could be amended so that parties are required to ask the right questions of their donors. For individuals, for instance, this could include a process for parties to verify that the donor is not donating on behalf of a third party.</i> CPP (2024)</p>

CSPL	Electoral Commission	Select committees	Civil society and academia
Stronger controls on donors			
2. A donation from a company should not be allowed to exceed its net profits generated in the UK within the preceding two years.			
<p><i>To be a permissible donor all companies, whether publicly or privately owned, should have to be able to demonstrate that they are trading in the UK and earning sufficient income here to fund any donations.</i> CSPL-A (2011)</p> <p><i>PPERA should be amended to provide that company donations should not exceed net profits after tax generated in the UK within the preceding two years.</i> CSPL-B (2021)</p>	<p><i>Permissibility status of companies making donations. In the light of the implications of the current permissibility test, the Government and, in due course, Parliament should revisit the underlying policy intention of the permissibility controls on companies.</i> EC-A (2013)</p> <p><i>Second, existing controls on donations should be strengthened so that parties and campaigners can only accept donations from companies that have made enough money in the UK to fund the amount of their donation. Currently, a company can donate to a UK political party or campaigner if it is registered at Companies House and is ‘carrying on business’ in the UK. There is no requirement for the company to show that it has made enough money in the UK to give or lend to campaigners.</i> EC-E (2024)</p>		<p><i>Introduce tighter restrictions on corporate political donations by only allowing companies to donate if they can demonstrate that they are trading in the UK and earning sufficient income here to fund any contribution they make.</i> TI-A (2016)</p> <p><i>The Committee has recommended that companies can only make political donations over £500 if they can prove that they are earning sufficient income here to fund any contribution they make. Transparency International UK has called for this change since 2016.</i> TI-B (2021)</p> <p><i>Company donations should only be made from profits generated in the UK, and donations should not exceed net profits after tax generated in the UK in the preceding two years. Companies should confirm that they comply with this requirement when giving a donation and false declarations should be a criminal offence.</i> SpoC (2024)</p> <p><i>The law prohibiting foreign donations should also be extended to those donations where the beneficial owner is overseas, even if the person who actually made the donation is not.</i> CUKF (2022)</p> <p><i>Ban donations from companies and unincorporated associations. A company can currently donate to a political party if it “carries on business in the UK”. However, there is no requirement for this donation to derive from profits generated in the UK. This loophole is used to obscure the underlying source of donations.</i></p>

CSPL	Electoral Commission	Select committees	Civil society and academia
			CPP (2024)
<p>3. Unincorporated associations should be required by law to conduct permissibility checks on money they receive that is intended as a donation.</p>			
<p><i>PPERA should be amended to require unincorporated associations that meet the threshold for registration with the Electoral Commission to conduct permissibility checks on a relevant donation (that is, money intended for political activity).</i> CSPL-B (2021)</p> <p><i>The law should be updated so that disclosure requirements apply when unincorporated associations provide donations to candidates, in addition to parties and non-party campaigners.</i> CSPL-B (2021)</p>	<p><i>Unincorporated associations are not required to ensure that those who donate to them are permissible donors. This means that they could legitimately make donations using impermissible sources, including from overseas. There are also no transparency requirements in law for unincorporated associations which donate to candidates, rather than to political parties or campaigners.</i> EC-E (2024)</p>	<p><i>The Committee recognises the potential gaps in transparency and weaknesses in the permissibility checks on donations to prevent foreign influence in UK politics, particularly through unincorporated associations (UAs). However, we also note the important role that UAs play in supporting democracy through fundraising. It is vital that any further reporting requirements or mandatory checks on donations that may result from the Government's forthcoming guidance on donations referenced in its response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life's report on Regulating Election Finance are proportionate, and do not adversely affect the organisations subject to them.</i> PACAC (2022)</p>	<p><i>Unincorporated associations (UAs) should be required to undertake permissibility and due diligence checks on all money they receive that is intended as a donation, and to declare the source of all political gifts above £500. There should be a review of whether UAs should be prohibited from donating.</i> SpoC (2024)</p> <p><i>To help protect against funds of unknown provenance entering the political system, Transparency International UK recommended reducing the level at which unincorporated associations report political gifts to £500. There is also a strong case for subjecting these contributions to permissibility controls, as is the case for any donations over £500 to political parties or other political campaigners subject to political finance laws.</i> TI-C (2020)</p> <p><i>All donations to political parties by unincorporated associations should be subject to the requirement that the association disclose the source of its own funding. The current rule whereby no transparency as to the source of funding is required, in respect of donations by an unincorporated association which amount in aggregate in any calendar year to less than a specified threshold, should be terminated.</i> UKGP (2024)</p> <p><i>Unincorporated associations that meet the threshold for registering with the Electoral Commission, should conduct permissibility checks on relevant donations (i.e. money intended for</i></p>

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			<p><i>political activity), and there should be greater transparency around political gifts made to UAs.</i> ERS-C (2021)</p>
<p>Increased civil and criminal enforcement and powers</p>			
<p>4. The government's power to issue a Strategy and Policy Statement should be removed to restore the independence of the Electoral Commission.</p>			
	<p><i>The repeal of the power for government to designate a Statement would improve confidence and trust in our electoral system. It would uphold the principle that an electoral commission remains independent from governments.</i> EC-D (2024)</p>	<p><i>We cannot support this revised draft Statement, and invite the Government to rethink whether a Statement is needed at all. In our initial report we offered to assist the Government to prepare a Statement which recognises and addresses the concerns raised. This offer was not taken up. Nonetheless, we remain prepared to assist the Government.</i> SCEC (2023)</p> <p><i>The overwhelming viewpoint from the evidence received was that no Statement is necessary at the current time: and no evidence has been provided justifying it. However, if there is to be a Statement, the current draft needs to be fundamentally rewritten.</i> DLUHC (2023)</p>	<p><i>A statute should set out the overriding responsibility of the EC, as an independent body, to safeguard and improve the electoral process, and its openness and fairness, in the United Kingdom.</i> UKGP (2024)</p> <p><i>To underline and protect the independence of the EC, the provisions of the Elections Act 2022 which provide for a Strategy and Policy Statement from the Government should be repealed.</i> UKGP (2024)</p> <p><i>The mechanism in the Elections Act 2022 which enables the government to issue the Electoral Commission with a Strategy and Policy Statement should be scrapped..</i> SpoC (2024)</p> <p><i>Enhance the enforcement powers of the Electoral Commission which is tasked with overseeing elections and regulating political finance in the UK – and make it fully independent from government.</i> CPP (2024)</p> <p><i>The Electoral Reform Society is strongly opposed to ministerial involvement in setting the Electoral Commission's strategy as part of the proposed 'Strategy and Policy Statement', and for this to be initially determined by the Secretary of State, which risks seriously undermining the independence of the Commission.</i> ERS-C (2021)</p>

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			<p><i>While it is entirely right and proper that the Electoral Commission is subject to parliamentary oversight, it would be highly inappropriate for the government of the day to dictate its regulatory priorities, which would provide an open door to undue political interference. Parliament should provide rigorous scrutiny to provisions in the government's Elections Bill that would give ministers the power to direct the strategic priorities of the Electoral Commission."</i></p> <p>TI-B (2021)</p>
<p>5. The Electoral Commission's powers to obtain information from any person outside of a formal investigation should be extended.</p>			
<p><i>The Electoral Commission's powers to compel the provision of documents, information and explanation outside of an investigation should be extended to enable the Commission to request information from any person who may hold relevant material that it reasonably requires for the purposes of carrying out its functions.</i></p> <p>CSPL-B (2021)</p>	<p><i>We would welcome the ability to resolve regulatory matters swiftly and effectively outside a formal investigation where one is not warranted. If we were able to obtain information outside a formal investigation (from social media companies or other suppliers to campaigners, for example), we could assess allegations more quickly and determine whether an investigation is in fact necessary.</i></p> <p>EC-B (2020)</p>	<p><i>The reform of electoral law should grant the Electoral Commission the power to acquire information from external parties such as social networks about campaigners' activities outside of a formal investigation.</i></p> <p>HOL-DDC (2022)</p>	<p><i>Foreign Money: We therefore envisage the Electoral Commission playing a more comprehensive role in clamping down on this objectionable practice. To do so it needs more powers: firstly, to obtain information to see whether there is a problem, without necessarily mounting a full formal investigation; secondly, to seek a court order freezing any donation whose status was uncertain while it was being investigated</i></p> <p>CUKF (2022)</p> <p><i>The EC's existing investigatory powers should be strengthened, including powers equivalent to those currently exercised by the National Crime Agency, and it should have access to resources to operate them. Those powers should include the ability to open an investigation into any circumstance where it appears to the EC that an attempt is being made to circumvent the existing legal restrictions in relation to the funding or administration of any relevant election.</i></p> <p>UKGP (2024)</p> <p><i>The Electoral Commission does not currently have the power to obtain information from those it is seeking to regulate outside of a formal</i></p>

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			<p><i>investigation, which limits its ability to assess whether or not an investigation is the most appropriate course of action.</i> ERS-B (2020)</p>
<p>6. The Electoral Commission should be given specific powers to share information with other regulators and the police.</p>			
<p><i>The Electoral Commission should have new, explicit powers to share information with the police and other regulators such as the Information Commissioner's Office, where the Commission considers it to be in the public interest.</i> CSPL-B (2021)</p>	<p><i>We would also welcome explicit powers to share information with the police or other regulators such as the Information Commissioner, for example. We currently rely on general powers and data protection law which makes working with partner agencies complex and, at times, slow.</i> EC-B (2020)</p>		
<p>7. The Electoral Commission should be given powers to investigate candidates' compliance with the rules, and to impose sanctions.</p>			
<p><i>Criminal offences in the RPA that relate to essentially administrative requirements, should be decriminalised and replaced with civil sanctions. The Electoral Commission's regulatory powers should be expanded to include the enforcement of civil sanctions for candidates.</i> CSPL-B (2021)</p>	<p><i>The Commission should be provided with investigative powers and sanctions for offences relating to candidate spending and donations at specified elections. Given the lead-in time that would be required to prepare for these changes, we recommend that changes should apply to the 2020 UK general election at the earliest. We think these tools should initially be available at elections where, from our experience, unsanctioned</i></p>	<p><i>The Electoral Commission should be given oversight of local candidate spending as well as national spending and should review what types of spending are included in each category.</i> HOL-DDC (2022)</p> <p><i>The Committee recognises the rationale behind advocating an expansion of the Electoral Commission's investigatory and enforcement powers to provide maximum transparency to voters, incentivise regulatory compliance,</i></p>	<p><i>The EC should take over prosecutions under the Representation of the People Act(s), as well as the Political Parties and Referendums Act 2000, with the ability to prosecute acts of intimidation or bribery.</i> UKGP (2024)</p> <p><i>We believe that the Electoral Commission should be given the role of monitoring and enforcing compliance with candidate finance laws, so that there is one simple, consistent and proportionate regime for candidates, parties, and third-party campaigners.</i> ERS-B (2020)</p>

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	<p><i>breaches of the rules are likely to have the most impact. These are elections to the following legislatures: UK Parliament; Scottish Parliament; National Assembly for Wales; Northern Ireland Assembly Any proposed changes to these arrangements would need to consider the cost of setting up a new regulatory regime against the potential regulatory benefits.</i></p> <p>EC-A (2013)</p> <p><i>Expanding our role to include enforcement of candidate finance laws would bring more proportionate enforcement to this half of the political finance system, with benefits for campaigners, voters and public confidence. If the Commission had powers to investigate both halves of the party and candidate regime, we could provide more joined-up oversight over the co-existing regimes in the RPA and PPERA.</i></p> <p>EC-B (2020)</p>	<p><i>and increase the pace of investigations and enforcement action. However, we believe more evidence is needed to ensure that any expanded powers for the Electoral Commission, such as powers to monitor and investigate in real-time and impose civil sanctions for breaches of candidate finance law, would not place disproportionate burdens on the largely voluntary workforce that support political campaigns.</i></p> <p>PACAC (2022)</p>	<p><i>To help provide a meaningful deterrent against breaches of the local rules on spending and donations for candidates, we recommend that the Electoral Commission's investigatory powers and civil sanctions be extended to offences under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983) at major elections.</i></p> <p>TI-D (2020)</p>
<p>8. The maximum fine the Electoral Commission may impose should increase to £500,000 per offence or 4% of a campaign's total spend, whichever is higher.</p>			
<p><i>The maximum fine the Electoral Commission may impose should be increased to 4% of a campaign's total spend or £500,000, whichever is higher.</i></p> <p>CSPL-B (2021)</p>	<p><i>The maximum fine should be set at a credible level for all elections and referendums across the UK, as has been recommended by several Parliamentary select committees. The Scottish Parliament recently raised the maximum fine to £500,000 for Scottish referendums, and we believe this would be a</i></p>	<p><i>As part of the reform of electoral law, the maximum fine the Electoral Commission can levy should be raised to £500,000 or four per cent of a campaign's total spend, whichever is greater.</i></p> <p>HOL-DDC (2022)</p> <p><i>We agree with the House of Lords</i></p>	<p><i>The maximum fine leviable by the EC should be raised to £500,000 per offence, or 4% of total campaign spend, whichever is larger. In order to avoid a fine, parties and campaigns should be permitted to amend minor financial reporting errors with the EC before any sanctions are imposed.</i></p> <p>UKGP (2024)</p>

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	<p><i>reasonable benchmark for the maximum fine in relation to the other parts of the UK's political finance regulations.</i></p> <p>EC-B (2020)</p>	<p><i>Democracy and Digital Technologies Committee, and the Committee on Standards in Public Life, that the maximum fine the Electoral Commission can impose for breaches of Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 should be increased to £500,000 or 4% of total campaign spend, whichever is higher. Equally, we believe that regulated individuals, parties, and campaigners should have the opportunity to amend minor, administrative reporting errors before civil sanctions are imposed, and that there should be consistency in making and a clear explanation for sanctioning decisions. This should be factored into the updated Enforcement Policy expected in the coming months.</i></p> <p>PACAC (2022)</p>	<p><i>The Committee recommends that the maximum fine the Electoral Commission may impose should be increased to 4% of a campaign's total spend or £500,000, whichever is higher. Transparency International UK and the Select Committee on Democracy and Digital Technologies also agree with this proposal.</i></p> <p>TI-B (2021)</p> <p><i>The maximum fine that the Commission can impose for each offence should be increased from £20,000 to 4% of a campaign's total spend or £500,000, whichever is higher, as previously recommended by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL),⁸ and this figure should be adjusted annually in line with inflation.</i></p> <p>SpoC (2024)</p> <p><i>Unlock Democracy supports granting the Electoral Commission powers to raise larger fines (Recommendation 37 in the CSPL Review).</i></p> <p>UD (2024)</p>
<p>9. There should be much stronger criminal enforcement of election finance law with the necessary resources, mandate and specialist expertise.</p>			
	<p><i>The current dual jurisdiction for the party and campaigner regime offences between the Commission and the police has created some uncertainties for those we regulate, and for voters. This can be readily addressed by the police and the Commission, with the CPS, bringing more transparency and clarity on which body will lead on the different prosecutory aspects of the offences regime. This would be a normal and common step for regulation and retain the most serious matters still being taken</i></p>		<p><i>The National Crime Agency (NCA) should coordinate the UK's strategic, national enforcement response to election finance crime, and be provided with the immediate resources to create a dedicated election finance unit with specialist expertise.</i></p> <p>SpoC (2024)</p> <p><i>There is no lead national agency for the criminal enforcement of breaches of electoral law around financing in the UK and there is unusually weak apparatus to tackle corruption. Both need to be considered as urgent areas of reform. ... Improve the enforcement of election finance crime by bolstering the work of the National Crime Agency</i></p>

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	<p><i>before the courts by the police and the CPS.</i> EC-A (2020)</p> <p><i>“In practice, however, the overall system is not coherent and does not provide an effective deterrent. For offences which involve intent or recklessness, the only option is police investigation and then criminal prosecution. This means there is still an ‘enforcement gap’ for cases which are intentional but which are not, from a police perspective, in the public interest to take forward. ... The absence of any criminal prosecutions undermines the ability to deter or punish offences.”</i> EC-B (2020)</p>		<p><i>to take a lead in this area. Experts have suggested the creation of a dedicated election finance unit, with specialist expertise, within the NCA.</i> CPP (2024)</p> <p><i>Give the police a clear mandate in matters of electoral law enforcement.</i> UD (2024)</p>

Greater transparency

10. The financial threshold for parties to report donations to the Electoral Commission should be reduced following consultation.

<p><i>The need for continuing central reporting and publication of donations should be reconsidered as part of the post-implementation review. The Electoral Commission should consult on the best way of ensuring continued effective transparency under the new regime. Initially, the threshold for reporting donations to central parties should be reduced to £5,000. Reporting of donations above £1,500 to accounting units and regulated donees should continue.</i> CSPL-A (2011)</p> <p><i>The government should amend the law to simplify the disclosure requirements that apply to unincorporated associations. The new rules</i></p>	<p><i>“Any changes to spending or reporting thresholds must be supported by rigorous analysis, including on the likely impact on public confidence and transparency... We have not seen evidence to support these changes or seen a government analysis of the potential impact of these changes.”</i> Politico (2023)</p>		<p><i>Increase transparency and simplify reporting requirements in UK politics by reducing the reporting threshold for donations and loans to £500 in-line with the current threshold for ‘permissible’ political contributions.</i> TI-A (2016)</p> <p><i>Change the rules on reporting of donations. Reporting thresholds for political parties mean they only have to declare donations of more than £11,180 to the Electoral Commission (with a lower limit of more than £500). This means substantial numbers of smaller donations made by an individual over a period of time, or by a number of individuals, do not need to be declared.</i> CPP (2024)</p>
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CSPL	Electoral Commission	Select committees	Civil society and academia
<p><i>should provide transparency around political gifts made to unincorporated associations donating more than £25,000 (the current threshold) to political parties in a year. They should also be straightforward to understand and simple to comply with.</i></p> <p>CSPL-B (2021)</p>			
<p>Consolidation of electoral law and review of offences</p>			
<p>11. Electoral law should be simplified and consolidated into a single legislative framework.</p>			
<p><i>The government should bring forward a bill to simplify and consolidate electoral law as has been recommended by the Law Commission.</i></p> <p>CSPL-B (2021)</p>	<p><i>“There are currently over 100 pieces of electoral legislation. Every type of election has its own legislation. We have to write hundreds of pages of guidance to explain the rules to candidates, political parties, electoral administrators, and voters. ... It’s time for governments to take this seriously and commit to significant change. We want the UK’s governments to modernise these laws.”</i></p> <p>EC-F (undated)</p>	<p><i>The Committee recognises the complexity of the dual regimes for candidates under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA) and parties and campaigners under the Political Parties, Elections, and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). Consolidating the law into one regulatory framework should be within the scope of the Government’s work on the long-term strategy to rationalise electoral law recommended by this Committee.</i></p> <p>PACAC (2022)</p>	<p><i>Electoral law should be brought together and set out in a single, pan-electoral legislative framework, easily accessible in one place by all.</i></p> <p>UKGP (2024)</p> <p><i>Primary legislation could be used to consolidate those aspects of electoral law for which there are no current proposals for change. Such legislation would allow a single set of polling rules to apply to all elections, and would cover: a. the current electoral franchise; b. the current voting system for national elections; c. electoral administration; d. the election timetable; e. conduct of the poll; and f. provisions on legal challenges to elections and regulation of the electoral offences.</i></p> <p>UKGP (2024)</p> <p><i>A final, broader area of reform relates to the simplification, modernisation and consolidation of electoral law, in line with the recommendations made by the Law Commission of England and Wales and the Scottish Law Commission.</i></p> <p>ERS-B (2020)</p>
<p>12. There should be a review of whether election finance offences are effective in preventing donations from foreign sources and the proceeds of crime.</p>			
<p><i>There should be a review of the current structure of offences under the legislation</i></p>			<p><i>There should be a review of whether offences under the Political Parties, Elections and</i></p>

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<p><i>governing elections and party funding and of the ability of the Electoral Commission to apply effectively the civil sanctions it now possesses.</i> CSPL-A (2011)</p>			<p><i>Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) are broad enough and effective in ensuring that malign or foreign actors cannot donate indirectly, and to ensure that donations cannot be given from the proceeds of crime.</i> SpoC (2024)</p>
Donation caps			
13. Political parties should introduce caps on donations, and reduce caps on spending, with a view to reducing the amount of money in politics.			
<p><i>A cap of £10,000 should be placed on donations to a political party or regulated donee from any individual or organisation in any year.</i> CSPL-A (2011)</p> <p><i>The existing limits on campaign spending during elections to the Westminster Parliament and devolved legislatures should be reduced. The amount of the reduction should be determined when the new arrangements come into force, but should be around 15 per cent.</i> CSPL-A (2011)</p>			<p><i>A cap on the amount that anyone can donate to a party, to end the big-donor culture that has led to scandal after scandal.</i> ERS-A</p> <p><i>Introduce tougher controls on the supply of money to political parties and their candidates by introducing a cap of £10,000 on donations per donor per year.</i> TI-A (2016)</p> <p><i>We should introduce a cap on donations to political parties. An annual and a lifetime cap on individual donations would limit the amount of private money entering British politics. A cap could apply to donations made nationally as well as to local parties. ... A wider exploration of how political parties are funded in the UK should be considered.</i> CPP (2024)</p> <p><i>Political spending and donations should be capped in line with recommendations by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, alongside greater transparency over the source of these funds, to mitigate the structural corruption risks associated with big money in politics.</i> TI-E (2023)</p>

References

Committee on Standards in Public Life

- CSPL-A (2011) - [Political party finance: ending the big donor culture](#)
- CSPL-B (2021) - [Regulating Election Finance](#)

Electoral Commission

- EC-A (2013) - [A regulatory review of the UK's party and election finance laws](#)
- EC-B (2020) - [Electoral Commission response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life review of electoral regulation](#)
- EC-C (2023) - [Political parties accept over £25m in donations in third quarter of 2023](#)
- EC-D (2024) - [Briefing: draft Strategy and Policy Statement](#)
- EC-E (2024) - [Submission to JCNSS inquiry on Defending Democracy](#)
- EC-F - [Reforming electoral law](#)

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee

- DLUHC (2023) - [Draft Strategy and Policy Statement for the Electoral Commission](#)

House of Lords Democracy and Digital Committee

- HOL-DDC (2022) - [Digital Technology and the Resurrection of Trust In Focus](#)

Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee

- PACAC (2022) - [Second Report of Session 2022–23, The Work of the Electoral Commission, HC 462](#)

Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission

- SCEC (2023) - [Response to the draft Strategy and Policy Statement for the Electoral Commission](#)

Commission on Political Power

- CPP (2024) - [Options paper 5 corruption and political funding](#)

Commission on the UK's Future

- CKUF (2022) - [A New Britain: Renewing our Democracy and Rebuilding our Economy](#)

Electoral Reform Society

- ERS-A - [Money in Politics](#)
- ERS-B (2020) - [Response to the PACAC Inquiry into the work of the Electoral Commission](#)
- ERS-C (2021) - [Response to PACAC's inquiry on the Elections Bill](#)

Spotlight on Corruption

- SpoC (2024) - [Urgent Reforms Needed to Safeguard the UK's Elections From Dirty Money and Undue Influence](#)

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- TI-A (2016) - [Take Back Control](#)
- TI-B (2021) - [Long-overdue reforms to UK politics financing essential to protecting integrity of elections](#)
- TI-C (2020) - [Transparency International UK's submission of written evidence to the Committee on Standards in Public Life](#)
- TI-D (2020) - [Submission to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into the work of the Electoral Commission](#)
- TI-E (2023) - [Submission to Standards Committee Inquiry into the House of Commons standards landscape](#)

UK Governance Project

- UKGP (2024) - [UK Governance Project final report](#)

Unlock Democracy

- UD (2024) - [Submission to JCNSS inquiry on Defending Democracy](#)