



Note to Broadcasters – Election programming in the local elections taking place on 1 May 2025

Election programming

On 1 May 2025 there will be local (and mayoral)¹ elections taking place in some parts of England.

Ofcom reminds all broadcasters that they must comply with the rules for election-related programming – in particular [Section Five](#) (Due Impartiality)² and [Section Six](#) (Elections and Referendums)³ of the Broadcasting Code (“the Code”). Broadcasters should also note the prohibition on political advertising contained in section 321 of the Communications Act 2003 and reflected in Section 7 of the BCAP Code.

As in previous years we will shortly be publishing a digest of past electoral and current support. The digest will also set out the factors we consider when making decisions on election-related programming, including putting more weight on evidence of past electoral support than evidence of current support (e.g. opinion polls).

The rules in Section Six of the Code will apply when Ofcom defines the ‘election period(s)’ to have commenced. We have taken account of all relevant information and discussed this matter with the specialist elections regulator – the Electoral Commission – with which Ofcom is under a statutory duty⁴ to consult when setting rules in the area of elections.

For the purposes of the Code, for the May 2025 elections Ofcom has determined that **the start of the election period will be Tuesday 25 March 2025**. The election period ends with the close of the poll.

¹ This includes four combined authority mayoral elections in: Cambridge and Peterborough; West of England; Greater Lincolnshire; and Hull and East Yorkshire. There are also single authority mayoral elections in: Doncaster; and North Tyneside.

² See also Ofcom’s published [Guidance to Section Five](#).

³ See also Ofcom published [Guidance to Section Six](#).

⁴ See section 93 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended).

If a complaint raises a substantive due impartiality issue about any election-related programming (both news and non-news) during the election period which Ofcom considers might require redress before the election, it will be considered by Ofcom's Election Committee⁵. In these cases, it will be necessary for Ofcom to act quickly to determine the outcome in a proportionate and transparent manner before the election and broadcasters should be prepared to engage with Ofcom on short timescales.

Ofcom will consider any breach arising from election-related programming to be potentially serious and will consider taking appropriate regulatory action, which could include the imposition of a statutory sanction.

For further information about the forthcoming elections in May 2025, broadcasters should visit the Electoral Commission website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

Key links and other information

Please see our website for our published Guidance to Section Five and Guidance to Section Six.

Other useful information can be found in:

- Ofcom's previous notes to broadcasters on election issues, including those published on [27 March 2023](#), [4 March 2024](#), [24 April 2024](#) and [23 May 2024](#);
- Ofcom's previous note to broadcasters of 3 April 2023 on [Synthetic media \(including deepfakes\) in broadcast programming](#);
- further information about Ofcom's [Election Committee](#) and its previous decisions on due impartiality complaints regarding election coverage; and
- the website for [The Broadcasters' Liaison Group](#).

Ofcom is a post-transmission regulator and cannot assist broadcasters with their compliance decisions. However, if a broadcaster would welcome further information from Ofcom about the Code's requirements on election programming and how we apply them, they should contact the Standards team at: ofcomstandardsteam@ofcom.org.uk

⁵ See Ofcom's Election Committee's [Terms of Reference](#).