

Political fund rules 2026

February 2026

Part 17: Political fund

Introduction

17.1 The objects of Prospect include the furtherance of the political objects to which section 72 of the amended Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (the 1992 Act) applies. Those political objects are:

72 Political objects to which restriction applies.

- (1) The political objects to which this Chapter applies are the expenditure of money—
 - (a) on any contribution to the funds of, or on the payment of expenses incurred directly or indirectly by, a political party;
 - (b) on the provision of any service or property for use by or on behalf of any political party;
 - (c) in connection with the registration of electors, the candidature of any person, the selection of any candidate or the holding of any ballot by the union in connection with any election to a political office;
 - (d) on the maintenance of any holder of a political office;
 - (e) on the holding of any conference or meeting by or on behalf of a political party or of any other meeting the main purpose of which is the transaction of business in connection with a political party;
 - (f) on the production, publication or distribution of any literature, document, film, sound recording or advertisement the main purpose of which is to persuade people to vote for a political party or candidate or to persuade them not to vote for a political party or candidate.
- (2) Where a person attends a conference or meeting as a delegate or otherwise as a participator in the proceedings, any expenditure incurred in connection with his attendance as such shall, for the purposes of subsection (1)(e), be taken to be expenditure incurred on the holding of the conference or meeting.
- (3) In determining for the purposes of subsection (1) whether a trade union has incurred expenditure of a kind mentioned in that subsection, no account shall

be taken of the ordinary administrative expenses of the union.

- (4) In this section –

“candidate” means a candidate for election to a political office and includes a prospective candidate;

“contribution”, in relation to the funds of a political party, includes any fee payable for affiliation to, or membership of, the party and any loan made to the party;

“electors” means electors at an election to a political office;

“film” includes any record, however made, of a sequence of visual images, which is capable of being used as a means of showing that sequence as a moving picture;

“local authority” means a local authority within the meaning of section 270 of the Local Government Act 1972 or section 235 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973; and

“political office” means the office of member of Parliament, member of the European Parliament or member of a local authority or any position within a political party.

17.2 Any payments in the furtherance of these political objects shall be made out of a separate fund of the union. This fund shall be called the political fund.

- (1) The Trustees of Prospect political fund shall be the Trustees of Prospect as appointed in Rule 11.5.
- (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 13.1, the affiliation of Prospect to a political party will be subject to prior Conference approval following a full ballot of the membership, such ballot being authorised by Conference alone.
- (3) Notwithstanding the provisions of Rule 11.2, any contributions to the fund of a political party will be subject to prior Conference approval following a full ballot of the membership, such ballot being authorised by Conference alone.

17.3 The union shall make clear how much of any regular contribution is for the political fund. If the political fund is included in regular contributions, the union shall specify that £0.60 of each annual contribution is for the political fund. The union shall ensure that members who have opted out do not pay this amount,

by reducing or removing it from their contribution. Except for members who joined between 1 March 2018 and 18 February 2026, where the political fund is charged as a separate levy, the union shall set the amount at £0.60 per year.

- 17.4** Any member who chooses not to contribute to the political fund of the union shall not be excluded from any benefits of the union or placed in any respect either directly or indirectly under any disability or disadvantage as compared with other members of the union (except in relation to the control or management of the political fund). Any form (including an electronic form) that a person has to complete to become a member of the union must include a statement to that effect, as well as a statement to the effect that the person may opt out of contributing to the political fund.
- 17.5** Any member who claims to be aggrieved by a breach of these political fund rules may complain to the Certification Officer. After making such enquiries as they think fit, the Certification Officer shall give both the complainant and a representative of the union an opportunity to make written representations. They may also give both the complainant and a representative of the union an opportunity to make oral representations. After this, if the Certification Officer considers that such a breach has been committed, they make such order for remedying the breach as they think appropriate in the circumstances. Any such order of the Certification Officer may, subject to the right of appeal provided by section 95 of the 1992 Act, be enforced in the manner provided for in sections 82(4A) and 82(4B) of the 1992 Act.
- 17.6** Contribution to the political fund of the union shall not be made a condition for admission to the union, and members of the union who choose not to contribute to the political fund must not be placed under any obligation to do so.
- 17.7** The union shall ensure that a copy of the political fund rules is available, free of charge, to any member of the union who requests a copy.

Opt-out information notices

- 17.8** As soon as possible, and no later than eight weeks after the union votes to adopt political objects, the union shall publish the notice at Appendix 1 to every member.
- 17.9** The union will publish the notice using the same methods it normally uses for important information. At present, this includes:
- Sending in a regular email newsletter to members.
- 17.10** The same notice shall be published again, within eight weeks of each ten-year anniversary of a vote to adopt political objects (including any vote that took place before the commencement of the new section 84A of the 1992 Act, as substituted by the Employment Rights Act 2025), unless the resolution has been rescinded or otherwise ceases to have effect.

Submitting an opt-out notice

- 17.11** Any member can give notice to opt out of contributing to the political fund at any time. To do so, members can:
- Use the official opt-out notice form, or
 - Send a written request that clearly states that they do not want to contribute to the political fund. Such a written request can be delivered in person, sent by post, email, or through any electronic form the union provides.
- 17.12** Members can get a copy of the official opt-out notice form:

- From the union's website;
- From the Certification Officer by emailing **info@certoffice.org**

17.13 The official opt-out notice form in use can be found at Appendix 2.

17.14 When the union receives an opt-out notice from a member, it will send the member an acknowledgement to the address provided.

When the opt-out notice takes effect

- 17.15** The opt-out takes effect on 1 January in the year following the year in which the notice is given.
- 17.16** The union shall make sure that members who have opted out do not pay into the political fund.

Withdrawing an opt-out notice

- 17.17** Any member who has opted out of contributing to the political fund may withdraw their opt-out at any time. Doing so means the member will start contributing to the political fund again. To withdraw an opt-out notice, the member should give the union an opt-out withdrawal notice, which is a written statement saying they wish to withdraw their opt-out notice and start contributing to the union's political fund again.
- 17.18** The opt-out withdrawal notice can be delivered in person, sent by post, email, or through any electronic form the union provides.
- 17.19** When the union receives the opt-out withdrawal notice, it will send the member an acknowledgement to the address provided and process the withdrawal of the opt-out notice as soon as reasonably practicable.

Transitional arrangements for members who joined Prospect between 1 March 2018 and 17 February 2026

17.20 Between 1 March 2018 and 17 February 2026, members were not automatically opted in to the political fund. Instead, they had to actively opt-in. The Employment Rights Act 2025 has amended the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, so that new members are treated as opted-in unless they choose to opt-out. The following rules explain how unions must handle members who joined between 1 March 2018 and 17 February 2026.

Default opt-outs for certain members

17.21 Any member who joined the union between 1 March 2018 and 17 February 2026 and was not contributing to the political fund immediately before 18 February 2026, is treated by law as having given an opt-out notice under the new section 84 of the 1992 Act, substituted by the 2025 Act. This opt-out remains in effect until the member gives a withdrawal notice in accordance with these rules. The union does not need to take any action to process these opt-outs, as they apply automatically under the law. This automatically applied opt-out notice is treated as effective from 18 February 2026 and will remain in effect until the member gives an opt-out withdrawal notice to cancel it (as addressed above in paragraphs 17.17-17.19).

Transitional period for opt-in withdrawals

The following rules (17.22-17.25) apply to members who joined the union between 1 March 2018 and 18 February 2026 and submitted an opt-in notice that remains in force on 18 February 2026. These rules cover the four-week period until (and including) 17 March 2026. After that period, these members

will be captured by the processes described earlier in these rules.

17.22 Any member who joined the union between 1 March 2018 and 18 February 2026 and, during that time, submitted an opt-in notice, may for a short period give a withdrawal notice under section 84 of the 1992 Act, as it stood before the 2025 Act.

17.23 During the transitional period until (and including) 18 March 2026, if a member who submitted an opt-in notice wishes to stop contributing to the political fund, they may give the union an opt-in withdrawal notice, which is a written statement saying they no longer wish to contribute.

17.24 The opt-in withdrawal notice can be delivered in person, sent by post, email, or through any electronic form the union provides.

17.25 The opt-in withdrawal notice takes effect one month after the date on which it is given.

Appendix 1: Opt-out information notice

Notice to Members in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992

Prospect has a political fund. This fund is used for activities connected with political objects as defined by section 72 of the above Act. All spending on these activities comes from this separate political fund.

Every member has the right not to contribute to the union's political fund. To exercise this right, you must give the union an opt-out notice.

You can give an opt-out notice in any of these ways:

- Deliver it in person, by post, or through a person you have asked to deliver it on your behalf
- Send it by email to **membership@prospect.org.uk**;
- Complete an electronic form provided by the union and submit it online following the union's instructions.

A form of opt-out notice can also be obtained:

- From the union's website; or
- From the Certification Officer by emailing **info@certoffice.org**

If you later change your mind, you can give a withdrawal notice to cancel your opt-out. This will put you back into contributing to the political fund.

Date

Appendix 2: Opt-out notice

Prospect	
Political fund opt-out notice	
I do not want to contribute to the union's political fund. By giving this notice, I will be exempt from making any payments to the political fund.	
Signature	
Print name	
Postal or email address	
Date	

Political Fund (Northern Ireland)

17.26 In the application of the rules to Northern Ireland the following modifications shall have effect

17.27 Under Article 59 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, no member of Prospect in Northern Ireland shall be required to make any contribution to the political fund of Prospect unless that member has delivered, as provided in Rule 17.30 at Prospect headquarters, or to any Branch Secretary of Prospect, a notice in writing, in the form set out in Rule 17.28 of a willingness to contribute to that fund, and has not withdrawn that notice in the manner provided in Rule 17.29. Every member of Prospect who has not delivered such a notice or who, having delivered such a notice, has withdrawn it in manner provided in Rule 17.29 is to be deemed for the purpose of these rules to be a member who is exempt from the obligation to contribute to the political fund of Prospect.

17.28 The form of notice of willingness to contribute to the political fund of Prospect is as follows:

FORM OF POLITICAL FUND CONTRIBUTION NOTICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND MEMBERS

Prospect

Name of member's branch.

Political Fund.

(Contribution notice)

I HEREBY give notice that I am willing, and agree to contribute to the political fund of Prospect and I understand that I shall, in consequence, be liable to contribute to that fund and shall continue to be so liable unless I deliver at Prospect headquarters, or to any Branch office of Prospect, a written notice of withdrawal; I also understand that after delivering such a notice of withdrawal I shall continue to be liable to contribute to the political fund until the next following first day of January.

Signature.

Number of Branch.

Address.

Date. Membership No.

17.29 If at any time a member of Prospect who has delivered such a notice as is provided for in Rules 17.27 and 17.28 gives notice of withdrawal thereof delivered as provided in Rule 17.30 at Prospect headquarters, or to any Branch office of Prospect, that member shall be deemed to have

withdrawn the notice as from the next following first day of January.

17.30 The notices referred to in Rules 17.27, 17.28 and 17.29 may be delivered personally by the member or by any authorised agent of the member and any notice shall be deemed to have been delivered at Prospect headquarters, or to any Branch office of Prospect, if it has been sent by post properly addressed to that office.

17.31 The National Executive Committee shall give effect to the statutory exemption of Northern Ireland members to contribute to the political fund of Prospect by making a separate levy of contributions to that fund from the members of Prospect who are not exempt, namely 5p per month from all non-exempt members who pay their general subscription monthly or 60p per annum payable on the first day of January each year from all other non-exempt members. Notwithstanding any other provision as to the alteration of the rules, this rule may be altered from time to time as to the amount payable by way of levy by a simple majority vote of Conference.

No levy shall come into force as respects a new member who has agreed to the political fund until the expiration of one month from that member being supplied with a copy of these rules under Rule 17.7 hereof on admission to Prospect.

17.32 If any Northern Ireland member alleges being aggrieved by a breach of any of the rules made pursuant

to Article 59 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, that member may complain to the Northern Ireland Certification Officer at info@nicertoffice.org.uk, under Article 57 (2) to (4) of that Order.

If after giving the complainant and a representative of the Union an opportunity to be heard the Certification Officer considers that a breach has been committed, the Certification Officer may make an order for remedying it as the Certification Officer thinks just in the circumstances. Under Article 70 (4) (b) of The Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 69 an appeal against any decision of the Certification Officer may be made to the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal on a question of law.

Moreover, if any Northern Ireland member alleges being aggrieved by a breach of the political fund rules made pursuant to Section 82 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, that member may complain to the GB Certification Officer at info@certoffice.org. After giving the complainant and a representative of the Union an opportunity of being heard, the GB Certification Officer considers that a breach has been committed, the GB Certification Officer may make an order for remedying it as the GB Certification Officer thinks is just in the circumstances. Any such order of the GB Certification Officer is subject to the right of appeal provided for by Section 95 of the 1992 Act.



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