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# Purdah begins - what you need to know

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## What is purdah?

'Purdah' (formally known as the 'election period') is the period leading up to an election, during which care should be taken to avoid making decisions or public announcements that could be seen to be favourable to any particular party or candidate, or otherwise question political impartiality. Purdah in advance of the snap general election called for 8 June 2017 will begin at midnight Friday 21 April 2017 and end once polls close after the election.

## Who does it apply to?

Purdah directly applies to local and central government organisations, as well as non-departmental public bodies and other arm's length bodies. NHS bodies such as CCGs and Trusts are also expected to comply with election guidance issued by the Cabinet Office.

## What do we need to do?

The Cabinet Office has now released [guidance](#) for the 2017 general election which is similar to guidance published in previous years.

The general principles remain the same:

- while essential business should carry on as normal, controversial decisions or announcements should be postponed until after the election, unless it would be detrimental to the national interest or wasteful of public money;
- care should be taken to avoid competition with candidates for the attention of the public; and
- no activity should be undertaken which could call into question political impartiality or give rise to criticism that public resources are being used for political purposes.

In practice, any action or inaction that is likely to attract attention (for example, making a decision to commence a controversial procurement, announcing a new policy, or controversially delaying or abandoning a previously announced course of action) may need to be delayed until after the election. Ongoing consultations can continue, but public events or engagement activities may have to be rescheduled for after the election (which may, in turn, mean extending the consultation period). However, each matter will need to be considered on a case by case basis. For those within national organisations, we would suggest that discussions about the application of purdah take place on a national level to ensure a joined-up approach.

Should you require any advice regarding purdah, please let us know.

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