

Interpreting and Applying the Guidelines for Government Advertising



Scenario: Publicity of future services and benefits

An agency is responsible for a new programme which, if the current government is re-elected, will come into effect in April of the year following a general election. The agency wants to start early with publicity so that all those who would be entitled to the new services and benefits under the programme are aware of it. The advertising will commence in October, which is one month before the general election.



Practical guidance

In this situation, it may be prudent to delay the campaign until after the general election, particularly as the implementation of the programme may be dependent on the election outcome. That will reduce any risk that the campaign is seen as not being politically neutral. However, if the affected people need all the time between October to April to prepare for the possible change then this could be a good reason to proceed.

Similarly, existing services may need to be advertised periodically so people can access them. Agencies still need to consider contextual factors that may be relevant to the timing of this advertising.

