

What is the Foreign Influence Registration Scheme?



The Foreign Influence Registration Scheme (FIRS) increases the transparency of activity taking place in the UK at the instruction of a foreign state or foreign state-controlled organisation, to protect the safety and interests of the UK.

A 'foreign state' means any country which is not part of the UK. This includes foreign governments, as well as foreign agencies and authorities.

Under the scheme, two types of activity may need to be registered:

- **Political influence tier** – activities carried out at the instruction of a foreign state to influence political decisions, elections or referendums, or registered political parties in the UK.
- **Enhanced tier** – activities carried out at the instruction of a foreign state or foreign state-controlled organisation which has been specified under FIRS. [Further detail on specified foreign states and foreign controlled organisations can be found on here.](#)

For a list of exempted activity, visit GOV.UK.

Political influence tier

Political influence activities include:

- all communications directly with UK government ministers, MPs and election candidates
- giving money or services to a UK national, an individual living in the UK, or a UK organisation or business
- communicating publicly, for example writing a newspaper article or social media post, unless it is clear which foreign state it is on behalf of

An agreement to carry out political influence activities can either be registered by the person who made the agreement or the organisation they work for. Registration must happen within 28 days of an agreement being made.

Enhanced tier

An agreement to carry out activities at the instruction of a specified foreign state can either be registered by the person who made the agreement or the organisation they work for. Activity cannot begin until the agreement has been registered and registration must happen within 10 days of an agreement being made.

Specified foreign state-controlled organisations must also register any activities they carry out in the UK.

[A list of specified foreign states and organisations on the enhanced tier can be found on GOV.UK.](#)

How do you register?

You can register on the dedicated online registration service.

You will need to provide details of who the agreement is with and the activities that will be delivered as part of the agreement.

What is the penalty for not registering?

Failure to register when required is a criminal offence. This risks up to:

- two years in prison and a fine (political influence tier)
- five years in prison and a fine (enhanced tier)

Frequently asked questions

Does FIRS stop me from carrying out political influence activity at the instruction of a foreign state?

No. Activity can still take place but it must be registered within 28 days of the agreement being made.

Does FIRS stop me from carrying out activity at the instruction of a foreign state or organisation that is specified by the enhanced tier?

No. But activity cannot begin until the agreement has been registered and registration must happen within 10 days of an agreement being made.

Do I need to register each separate activity under an agreement?

No. But if there are multiple activities under the agreement, you should provide an overview of the activities that will be carried out.

My agreement covers multiple people carrying out activities. Do we all need to register?

An agreement only needs to be registered once, even if multiple people are carrying out activities under the agreement.

I'm an employer who is employing people to carry out activity covered by FIRS. Can I register the agreement on their behalf?

Yes, an employer can register an agreement on behalf of their employees.

What should I do if I'm unsure whether I should register?

Consult the [guidance available on GOV.UK](#).

Do I need to register if I already have an agreement in place?

You'll have three months to register arrangements that already existed when the scheme starts for both the political influence tier and enhanced tier.