

**JEREMY QUIN MP**  
Member of Parliament for Horsham



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

23rd August 2016

*Dear Constituent,*

**RE: ADVERTISING STANDARDS (EDM 278)**

Thank you for contacting me about political advertising. I don't sign EDMs as they have no parliamentary benefit but do generate cost! I am however pleased to respond to the points you raise.

In general, political campaign material in the UK is not formally regulated, and it is a matter for the press and public to decide on the basis of such material whether they consider it reasonable and accurate.

While the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the UK's independent regulator for advertising across all media, political adverts are not within its remit. The ASA suggests that anyone with concerns about a political advert could contact the party responsible, and exercise their democratic right to tell them what they think. The free press also has an important role in holding politicians and campaigners to account.

Of course, the wider law does generally apply to political campaign material, including the law of defamation and public order offences. Electoral law also makes it a criminal offence to publish false statements about a candidate: the courts do enforce this legislation, as illustrated during the April 2015 election court ruling which disqualified the mayor of Tower Hamlets.

Electoral law also requires for parties and other campaigners to include an 'imprint' on their campaign material, identifying its source, to ensure transparency and accountability.

While I understand your concerns, and note the sentiment set out in EDM 278, I cannot agree with its conclusions. I think it is crucial that, during election campaigns, those involved must feel free to make their case robustly and passionately. Differences of opinion and interpretation will inevitably arise when politicians campaign and communicate their point of view.

I feel that creating a new quango to regulate political campaigning could have a chilling effect on freedom of speech within the law. The proposed regime would be likely to fuel malicious and partisan complaints (and counter-complaints), which would undermine, rather than strengthen, confidence in the democratic process.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Quin'.