



**An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail**  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development

13/4/18

### **Circular Letter CVSP 5/2018**

#### **Referendum on the 36<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Constitution – Bodies & Agencies in receipt of public funding.**

A chara,

The purpose of this communication is to alert all bodies under the aegis of the Department in receipt of public funding regarding the legal advice from the Office of the Attorney General in respect of the application of the principles of the various Court judgements relevant to the Government's role in referendum campaigns.

A Referendum Commission has been established and provided with public funding to carry out its statutory responsibilities. There are no publicly-funded Government information campaign for the referendum. In that regard, Bodies under the aegis of this Department **are not entitled to spend public money for the purpose of promoting a campaign for a particular outcome.**

Where a body or agency **receiving public money** is disseminating any information relative to the 36<sup>th</sup> Amendment, they must ensure it is equal, fair, impartial and neutral. The Department cannot and will not act as an assessor or evaluator of any such material and in this regard the strong advice to all is to remain totally impartial.

It is also recommended that in the interests of impartiality, the display/distribution of any literature relating to the amendment including but not limited to brochures, badges, leaflets, newsletters, notices, posters etc. in offices or premises of a body or agency receiving public funding be avoided. Websites and social media sites of publically funded bodies and agencies should not be used to promote for a particular outcome.

Individual members of bodies or agencies are entitled **in their own right** to advocate, participate or campaign for a particular outcome. A Body or Agency under the aegis of the Department of Rural and Community Development must ensure that it never promotes

directly or indirectly a particular outcome in a referendum nor indulges in what might be termed partisan propaganda.

In the interests of clarity, this circular applies to all bodies under the aegis of the Department in receipt of public funding irrespective of their legal status.

Mise le meas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Kearney', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jason Kearney,  
Principal,  
Community & Voluntary Supports.