

Frequently Asked Questions – General Election 2017

General Election rules and procedures

1. My seat is a “safe seat” – what’s the point?

Lots of MPs seats are considered “safe seats” (this means they are thought very unlikely to change from one political party to another because they have a large majority, though it can and does happen). If you live in a “safe seat”, it is still important to engage with all your Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs). Candidates report back to their political party head offices on the main issues that are coming up in the constituency and by engaging and responding to you, they will have to ask the head office for the official response. This will show that these issues are important to people all across the country.

2. I can’t find all my Prospective Parliamentary Candidates what do I do?

If you haven’t been able to find out who your PPCs are on <https://yournextmp.com/> try looking at all the websites for the political parties that have a candidate standing in your area – they will have the candidates listed. If you still can’t find all your PPCs, then contact the advocacy team on mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk. There will also be coverage in your local newspaper and on local news websites of all the candidates, so you should be able to find out more from those websites.

3. Not all my Prospective Parliamentary Candidates agree to meet.

It is important to try to meet all your PPCs. If not all of them agree to meet, then make sure you write to the rest setting out the important points you will raise in the meeting and ask them for a response.

4. How will the lobbying act affect my group?

If you campaigned with us at the last election, you’ll know that since January 2014, a new piece of legislation has impacted our work around elections. Officially it’s known as the Transparency of Lobbying, non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014, and usually called the Lobbying Act. Importantly, it shouldn’t stop you campaigning on any issues, including those related to an election. You don’t need to change your planned campaigning over this period, but it’s important you read our guidelines below, and let us know if you have any concerns about activities you’re planning.

When campaigning during the General Election, we ask you to please maintain a record of all your expenditure on public activities and keep all receipts that are more than £200 in value. Please provide us with your receipts and records, starting end of 3rd May. You can scan or photograph them and email them to mypolitician@amnesty.org.uk, or you can post them to: Eilidh Macpherson, Amnesty International UK, Human Rights Action Centre, 25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA.

If you receive donations – including goods or services of £500 or more in value – and these are specifically for regulated campaign activity, then you will need to record the donor

Internal document – for Amnesty International UK supporters only

contact details and tell us straight away so that we can ensure that this is treated correctly under the law (for more information on what constitutes regulated activity, or any other issue relating to the Lobbying Act, please see our [Lobbying Act Guidelines](#)). If you are planning on printing your own materials to use publicly on the General Election/work with PCCs, please talk to us first. This is because they may need to carry what is known as an 'imprint', stating the publisher and promoter.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with Eilidh in the Campaigns team on Eilidh.macpherson@amnesty.org.uk

5. What do we want our PPCs to commit to?

We want PPCs to demonstrate support for human rights publically, ideally through Tweeting about what human rights issues they will raise their voice in support of in Parliament e.g. *If elected I will raise my voice for human rights - my priorities are ... #GE2017 @amnestyuk*. We want PPCs to state what issues they are interested in so that we – activists and the Advocacy Office – can engage with them on those issues if they are elected.

6. Can I raise any issue with my PPCs?

Of course you can! It is important that you raise the human rights issues and/or cases that you or your group is most passionate about.

7. What is Amnesty International UK calling on political parties to include in their manifestos?

We have sent a [briefing](#) to all of the main political parties. We are urging all political parties to ensure their General Election manifestos commit to:

- ensuring human rights are prioritised and protected throughout and beyond the process of leaving the EU.
- defending UK human rights protections, including the Human Rights Act and remaining party to the European Convention on Human Rights.
- protecting the rights of people seeking asylum in the UK and elsewhere.
- a UK foreign policy which champions human rights.
- ensuring responsible arms controls which protect human rights.
- putting the rights of women and girls front and centre of government policy.

8. Brexit is a big issue in this election, where does Amnesty International stand?

Amnesty International does not take a position on political elections and referendums. As an independent and impartial organisation, we do not support or endorse any political party or organisation and we avoid communicating any message that implies political support for or opposition to a country, political party, political leader or a political cause. Our messages are always related to the universality of human rights and we call on all participants in elections and referendums to stand up for these rights.

Internal document – for Amnesty International UK supporters only

The UK's departure from the EU (Brexit) could raise opportunities and challenges to the current human rights protections in the UK. It is important to note that the human rights impacts of Brexit will depend on the nature of the Brexit agreement sought and achieved by the UK government. However, whatever the nature of Brexit, the UK must remain committed to an international human rights system, whose norms it should continue to uphold and whose mechanisms it should continue to respect. Even as it negotiates its exit, the UK government should be careful to ensure that leaving the EU does not result in a diminution of current rights standards at home and abroad.

9. Do I have to invite all candidates to the event I am organising?

Advice from the Electoral Commission is as follows:

We have to be able show that our events/ hustings are non-selective. This means you should:

- be able to give impartial reasons why you have not invited particular candidates or parties. You should be prepared to explain your reasons to candidates or parties you haven't invited.
- make sure that candidates or parties you invite represent a reasonable variety of views, from different parts of the political spectrum.
- allow each candidate or party representative attending a fair chance to answer questions and, where appropriate, a reasonable opportunity to respond to points made against them by other candidates or party representative.
- inform the audience at the meeting of candidates or parties standing who haven't been invited.

However, you can take the following considerations into account when deciding who to invite

- local prominence of some parties or candidates over others.
- the number of elected representatives at the local or national level.
- recent election results in the area.
- resources and other practicalities constraining numbers of invitees.
- security concerns.