

RULES FOR CAMPAIGNING DURING AN ELECTION PERIOD

GUIDANCE FOR BRANCHES AND GROUPS

An election period offers a great opportunity to raise awareness of MND and build support for our campaigns. Parliamentary candidates will be keen to meet and hear from local people in the run up to election day (12 December 2019), so we encourage all our branches, groups and volunteers to make the most of this opportunity.

However, there are certain rules that apply to campaigning during an election period. The Charity Commission and Electoral Commission both set rules for charity campaigning. This note provides guidance on what these rules mean in practice. You can read further information on page 2.

There are three key things to bear in mind during an election period:

1. **Remain impartial** – at no time must your branch/group indicate its support for a particular candidate or political party. This includes activity on social media (see below) or for example displaying candidates' campaign materials at meetings or events.
2. **Treat candidates equally** – if you invite a candidate to an event or ask them to support a campaign, you should at least invite all the candidates from the main political parties* too. (Ideally you should invite all candidates, but this might not be practicable given limited volunteer capacity).

It doesn't matter if only one or two candidates attend a meeting/support the campaign, as long as you can provide evidence that you invited the others if you are asked. This applies to meetings already in the diary with sitting MPs in the run up to election day– a similar invitation should go to candidates from the other main political parties standing in that constituency. Don't forget that if you have an MP as a Patron, you must treat them in the same way as any other candidate during the election period.

3. **Be careful on social media** – social media is a great way of raising awareness of MND and seeking support from candidates for our campaigns. However please follow these simple rules:
 - We actively encourage you to use your branch/group social media accounts to post about a candidate you have met or who has supported a campaign, as long as your post is impartial i.e. it doesn't call for people to vote for a specific party, endorse a candidate or party; or criticise a candidate/political party
 - You can retweet/share a Twitter/Facebook post from a candidate as long as the tweet/Facebook post isn't political in nature i.e. calls for people to vote for a specific

party or criticises another candidate/political party. Be careful not to share posts with a political hashtag such as #VoteLabour or #VoteConservative

- NB If you have a personal social media account with no reference to the MND Association, you are able to post political tweets. However, this doesn't apply to Trustees, who must remain impartial at all times.

The overarching message for branches and groups is to use the general election to raise awareness of MND as much as possible, but to remain impartial.

Further information

Further information on charity campaigning during election periods can be found on the following websites:

In England and Wales:

Charity Commission – [Charities, Elections and Referendums](#).

Electoral Commission – [Non-party campaigners](#)

The Charity Commission also publishes general guidance on campaigning for charities - [Campaigning and political activity guidance for charities \(CC9\)](#)

In Northern Ireland - [Political activity and campaigning guidance for charities](#)

Any questions?

If you have any questions, please contact:

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* The main political parties are currently defined as:

- In Great Britain, the Conservative Party; the Labour Party; and the Liberal Democrats.
- In Wales, Plaid Cymru.
- In Northern Ireland, the Alliance Party; the Democratic Unionist Party; Sinn Fein; the Social Democratic and Labour Party; and the Ulster Unionist Party.
- In England and Wales, The Brexit Party (in the constituencies in which they are standing)

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