

SPUC GUIDE NOTES ON INTERVIEWING GENERAL ELECTION CANDIDATES IN ENGLAND AND WALES

These notes accompany the form:
“2017 GENERAL ELECTION - QUESTIONS TO PUT TO CANDIDATES”

SETTING UP CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

Who should you interview?

On this occasion we do not need you to interview your sitting MP if they are standing for re-election, as we already have their voting record on pro-life issues. Try to interview all the other main party candidates. Contact your local party offices to ask who their respective candidates are, and how they can be contacted. We do not normally interview minor party and independent candidates who are unlikely to poll significant votes. If you do not know how to contact the local party office, try the party headquarters (see overleaf).

Arranging the interviews

Contact the candidate and ask for a face-to-face interview. The interview need only take 5 minutes. Explain that you wish to ask them about abortion and assisted suicide. This is the most difficult part of the exercise. It sometimes requires great persistence to track down candidates and/or their agents, and arrange a date and place to meet.

Please let us know each candidate's response straight away. Don't wait until you have interviewed all the candidates.

Difficulties arranging interviews

Most candidates are happy to talk to constituents, but if a candidate refuses to be interviewed, do not worry. Simply let us know.

If a candidate will only agree to an interview by telephone this is much less satisfactory, so be sure to ask the questions very clearly and confirm the answers. Make a note on the form to say it was conducted by phone.

If a candidate says they will only deal with the questions by e-mail or in writing please contact us for advice. Please don't send the questionnaire to the candidate.

PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEW

The questionnaire

Read the “2017 GENERAL ELECTION – QUESTIONS TO PUT TO CANDIDATES” beforehand (copies available from SPUC HQ). If you have any problems or queries about the questions please contact Katherine Hampton at SPUC HQ on 020 7820 3137 or political@spuc.org.uk

Witnesses

Take along one or two others if possible to accompany you and listen to what the candidate says. This helps the candidate recognise that the issues are not just the concerns of one individual. It also means that if a candidate's response to any question is uncertain or ambiguous, you can discuss with others what exactly the candidate meant, and if there is any later dispute you have witnesses to the interview.

please turn over

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AT THE INTERVIEW

The questions

Explain to the candidate that you have two prepared questions and that you would like to note down his/her answers. Read the questions clearly, repeating them if necessary, and note down the answers. Ask the questions from the sheet: “2017 GENERAL ELECTION – QUESTIONS TO PUT TO CANDIDATES” and note down the candidate's responses during the interview. If the candidate does not answer a question, record that fact. Remember that the questions relate to how the candidate will vote on abortion and euthanasia. The questions are not just about 'views' or 'opinions' of the candidate.

The answers

If candidates ask what we plan to do with the information they provide, the answer is we hope to inform our supporters in the constituency about all the candidates and what commitment they have on pro-life issues. In the past we have published leaflets for individual constituencies. Whether we do so depends on a number of factors – including the frequent changes in the legal rules, which we monitor. Candidates sometimes offer a written statement on the issues. You should not give any undertaking to publish such a statement, whether it is a helpful statement or otherwise.

PARTY CONTACTS

You may need to contact the central party office if you have difficulty contacting your party locally. The party offices should be able to tell you how to contact your local constituency office, and the name and contact details of the candidate, once they have been selected.

Conservative	www.conservatives.com	020 7222 9000
Labour	www.labour.org.uk	0345 092 2299
Liberal Democrats	www.libdems.org.uk	020 7022 0988
UKIP	www.ukip.org	0333 800 6800
Plaid Cymru	www.plaidcymru.org	029 2047 2272