**Guide to talking about issues of poverty, inequality, and the environment with prospective parliamentary candidates**

Prospective parliamentary candidates need to know that their constituents care about issues of poverty, inequality, and the environment that matter to you, and that you want them to take action should they be elected.

What are some of the most important issues relating to poverty, inequality, and the environment we should be talking to our candidates about? What questions should we be asking them? Where should we be asking them these questions?

**Ways to engage with candidates:**

1. Ask a question at a hustings event ([Find your nearest hustings](mhttps://churcheselection.org.uk/eventsys_displayall.php))
2. Email your prospective parliamentary candidates with your questions or to share what matters to you ([Find your candidates](https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/))
3. Speak to political canvassers about issues that matter to you when they knock on your door

**Tips on how to talk with candidates:**

1. Be clear and specific – keep your questions direct, short, and focused to help your candidates respond
2. Be kind and respectful – value them as a person even if you disagree with their politics. Treating people how you want to be treated will signal that you want to engage in a productive and helpful manner.
3. Share your knowledge and experience of local issues and local people – candidates will be able to better represent their constituents if they are aware of what’s affecting people locally.
4. Consider what’s within their power to influence – MPs’ represent the interests and concerns of their constituents in the House of Commons. They can make private enquiries on your behalf, raise matters publicly in the Commons, vote on or propose legislation. Where appropriate they may be able to influence other areas of public life, but they don’t hold any powers over local council decisions or policy, the courts or the police, and they can’t offer legal advice.

**Issues to raise**:

We believe one of the calls of Christians is to play our part in addressing poverty and inequality, and responding to the environmental crisis. Whilst there will be other issues that are important to you and your community, here are some of the top issues related to social justice and the environment you could raise with your candidates:

1. **Poverty**
   1. Put poverty on the agenda this election with [Let’s End Poverty](https://letsendpoverty.co.uk/election/) by signing their pledge, emailing candidates, asking a question at a hustings, or talking to candidates and canvassers on your doorstep.
   2. Read JPIT’s [General Elections briefing](https://jpit.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/202405-Election-issues-briefing.pdf), including their six issues (one of which is poverty) and questions to ask candidates
   3. Read the ‘Work and Wages’ and ‘Housing and Homelessness’ chapters in Citizens UK’s [General Election Manifesto](https://www.citizensuk.org/campaigns/citizens-manifesto/)
2. **The environment and the climate crisis**
   1. Read the [Environment and the General Election guide](https://www.oxford.anglican.org/xdb/ecohub/show/environment-and-the-general-election) from the Church of England to help churches talk about the environment, including five key asks for the environment
   2. [2024 Manifesto commitments](https://www.oxford.anglican.org/xdb/ecohub/show/general-election-environmental-manifesto-commitments): Net Zero, Climate Change, and Biodiversity
   3. Read JPIT’s [General Elections briefing](https://jpit.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/202405-Election-issues-briefing.pdf), including their six issues (one of which is environment and climate change) and questions to ask candidates
   4. Read the ‘Climate Justice’ chapters in Citizens UK’s [General Election Manifesto](https://www.citizensuk.org/campaigns/citizens-manifesto/)
   5. Check out the [Climate Coalition’s election guide](https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/united), including advice on engaging with candidates
   6. Explore Christian Aid’s [general election climate justice crib sheet](https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-03/general-election-campaign-climate-crib-sheet.pdf)
   7. Read [Friends of the Earth’s guide](https://groups.friendsoftheearth.uk/elections/guide-meeting-your-election-candidates) on meeting with your candidates
3. **Migration** 
   1. Read JPIT’s [General Elections briefing](https://jpit.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/202405-Election-issues-briefing.pdf), including their six issues (one of which is asylum and refugees) and questions to ask candidates
   2. Check out [City of Sanctuary’s guide](https://cityofsanctuary.org/2024/05/23/the-general-election/) on how to talk about migration with a political canvasser
   3. Read the ‘Pathways to Citizenship’ chapter in Citizens UK’s [General Election Manifesto](https://www.citizensuk.org/campaigns/citizens-manifesto/)
   4. Explore [election resources](https://welcomechurches.org/election) from Welcome Church
4. **Peace & conflict**
   1. Explore Christian Aid’s [general election ‘the need for peace’ crib sheet](https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-03/general-election-campaign-peace-crib-sheet.pdf)

**Additional resources:**

* For more info and resources (including on running hustings) see the [general election webpage](https://oxford.anglican.org/general-election-resources).
* See the [guide to ‘Break bread with your future MP’](https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/general-election-landing-page-campaigns) from Christian Aid
* [Arise’s General Election blog](https://www.ariseuk.org/blog/weekly-blog-26-may-2024-july-election) (including their manifesto)