

A guide for Christian Aid supporters on the UK general election 2017

As Christians, we have a shared responsibility to steward God's creation and help create a world in which all God's people can flourish. The UK general election, on 8 June 2017, is an opportunity for us to do just that.

As our Chairman, Dr Rowan Williams, says: 'As we enter the election period and debate the terms of Brexit, Britain's political and social landscape is in flux. We face great choices about the soul and future of our nation... all of us as individuals can play a vital role in shaping the nation we want to be.'

In the weeks ahead, parliamentary candidates will be out on doorsteps sharing their party's policies and seeking your vote. This is also the time when they get to hear what issues matter to you – such as the role you want the UK to play in ending global poverty.

What has this election got to do with poverty?

We live in an interconnected world where our decisions and actions here in the UK affect millions worldwide. Britain has a proud record in looking outwards, and in working with others to tackle poverty.

Whichever party wins the election, the new government must put Britain at the heart of global efforts to address the causes of poverty and enable all our sisters and brothers near and far to live life in all its fullness.

This short guide offers advice for influencing and questioning your candidates on the issues that matter most to the world's poorest.

What questions should I ask my candidates?

Christian Aid has produced its own proposals for the next UK government (caid.org.uk/ge2017manifesto) containing our priority issues for the world's poor and outlining what we are calling on all parties and candidates to do if elected.

Questions are best if they are personal to you, so please look at the proposals and draft your own question(s). Alternatively, we have some suggestions as follows:

Climate change

'Climate change has been caused largely by developed countries. Its impacts are being felt the world over and in the UK, but mainly by the poorest and most vulnerable communities in developing countries. If you are elected as our MP, would you support clean energy generation efforts locally and work to persuade the UK Government to produce an ambitious plan that transforms the economy in line with the Climate Change Act?'

UK aid

'I am proud of the UK Government's aid budget, and believe UK aid is critically important, especially when around 20 million people in South Sudan, Yemen and elsewhere are currently facing starvation, according to the UN. Do you support our aid budget? And how do you think we can best spend the money to tackle both the symptoms of poverty like starvation, but also the root causes?'

Displaced people

'Around the world more than 65 million people have been forced from their homes. Around two-thirds of them are on the move within their own country, and receive very little support from the international community. A majority of people who leave their country tend to move to neighbouring countries, which frequently lack the resources to cope. Many countries are cracking down on the rights of people on the move. What will you do to make sure the UK protects refugees and displaced people not just here but around the world?'

Tax dodging

'Developing countries lose around \$200bn every year due to tax avoidance and evasion by multinational companies. Do you agree that the UK Government should take a lead on tax transparency to ensure citizens both here and overseas know which companies are paying their taxes? Following the Panama Papers will you work to ensure the whole UK – including our overseas territories – have the same transparency standards by the end of this Parliament?'



We believe in life before death

How can I get involved?

There are many ways to get involved in this election, including:

- attending or arranging a hustings meeting
- speaking to candidates on your doorstep
- writing to your candidates.

We've included information on these below.

How do I attend or arrange a hustings?

Hustings usually occur in specific 'seats' or constituencies when an organisation, such as a church, invites local candidates to a public meeting. An audience of voters listens to the debate, and puts questions to the candidates.

Hustings are a great opportunity for candidates of all parties to hear your views. International development and global poverty rarely rate highly among issues that affect voters' decisions at elections. So if you can get involved in local hustings, this will demonstrate to the candidates that many of their constituents really do care about these issues.

Find out if a hustings is happening in your area by looking at:

- Local churches' websites and social media feeds
- Your local candidates' websites – find details of your candidates at whocanivotefor.co.uk
- The Churches Together Britain and Ireland (CTBI) website: churcheselection.org.uk

Perhaps you can invite some friends too?! The more people who come along to hustings, the better.

If you have searched for an event and can't find anything local to you, you may want to consider setting up your own hustings event. These take a considerable amount of time to organise, but can be hugely rewarding. If you would like any further help with your hustings, please email us at GE2017@christianaid.org.uk or ring **0207 523 2264**.

While you are at a hustings, it would be great to ask a question about poverty and development. Check with the organisers whether you need to submit a question in advance or whether you can just turn up and ask your question there and then. See the 'What questions should I ask my candidates' section overleaf for advice and suggestions.

Should I write to my candidates?

If you can't find a hustings in your area, you could write or email your candidates with your chosen question(s). Find details of your candidates at: whocanivotefor.co.uk

What should I say on the doorstep?

If candidates and/or their volunteers knock on your door, please take this opportunity to ask them questions about tackling global poverty and inequality. See our suggested questions overleaf and also our election proposals (caid.org.uk/ge2017manifesto) for help with this.

Tell us how you get on!

If you attend a hustings or get a response from your candidates to your question(s) or any of the questions we suggested, we would love to hear from you! Please let us know the response you get by emailing GE2017@christian-aid.org or ringing **0207 523 2264**.



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