



Our guide to meeting your local candidates in person this general election

Wondering how you can have the biggest impact this general election? It's meeting your local parliamentary candidates **in person** and telling them why ending the housing emergency must be at the top of their agenda. So, let's get straight to it.

Who are my local candidates and why are they important?

Your parliamentary candidates are the local faces representing the political parties trying to get your support this election. They're the ones who could champion your causes and push for change.

Their grand plans and policies for what will shape the country's future will ultimately be written down in a manifesto. And, in many ways, you hold the pen. Because here's the thing: they need us as much as we need them. They're knocking on our doors, dialing our phones, and even popping up in our email inbox, trying to get our votes.

But it's important that they understand that we've got some demands of our own. Let's tell them loudly and clearly: no votes will be won without a solid promise to rebuild our broken housing system.

As part of our general election campaign - Vote for Home - we're asking you to join us in meeting your local candidates to make our demands clear.

Here's our step-by-step guide on how to do it:

Step 1:

Find out who your local candidates are

Drop our friendly Campaigns teams a line at campaigns@shelter.org.uk and we'll find out for you. We can also help you identify which ones to focus on, as there will be a lot of candidates standing. It's best to concentrate your efforts on just one or two that have the best chance of winning.

Alternatively, you can put your postcode into [this tool](#) to find out.

Step 2:

Arrange the meeting

Once you've picked which candidate(s) you think has the best chance of winning, contact them directly to arrange a meeting.



Top tip: Got a friend or two who also care about housing and support Shelter? Bring them along. The more voters at the meeting, the more likely the candidate will listen.

Here's a template email you can copy and paste and edit as you wish:

Dear <candidate name>,

[DELETE AS APPROPRIATE: We are a group of Shelter campaigners and we'd//I am a Shelter campaigner and I'd] like to meet with you to talk about the housing emergency in [constituency area name] and what you're going to do to fix it if you get elected this coming general election.

Would you please be able to let me know [DELETE AS APPROPRIATE: whether you are holding weekly appointments with voters and how [we//I] can sign up to one?//whether you are available on [insert date, time] to meet with [us//me] for a coffee at [insert location]?// whether you are available on [insert date, time] to meet with [us//me] for a Zoom call? [insert Zoom link].

Best wishes,

<your name(s)>
<your full address(es)>

Top tip: One great way to get the attention of your candidate is to include a local homelessness stat at the beginning of the email. Contact us at campaigns@shelter.org.uk to find out your local stats.

Example. "With X children living in temporary accommodation in [insert constituency], I'd like to talk about what you're going to do to end this, if elected."

To find their contact details, you can either contact us at campaigns@shelter.org.uk with your name and postcode and we'll let you know how to get in touch with them. Or, you can do a Google search with their name and you should be able to find their contact details and website.

You can then call their campaign office in your area or visit their website to find their email address.

The meeting only needs to last around 10-15 minutes. There are a few different ways you can meet them. Choose the one that you feel most comfortable with. You could:

- find out if they are holding weekly appointments with voters in their local campaign office that you could sign up to and meet them there



- suggest meeting them somewhere locally in a public place where you feel safe, such a café
- invite them to a call over Zoom and chat to them from the comfort of your home. Instructions on how to set up a Zoom meeting and be found [here](#).

When you have agreed a definite meeting with your local candidate(s), please don't forget to tell us by emailing campaigns@shelter.org.uk

Step 3:

Prepare

The meeting will go by quickly, so a little preparation will help make sure you can get all your key messages across.

You can:

- **check out our [general election webpage](#) and [manifesto](#)** which explain the country's housing emergency and how we can solve it
- **do some basic research on your candidate(s)** – perhaps they grew up in council housing, worked for a housing association, or maybe you even went to the same local school as you. Understanding how they might come at this issue can help you start the conversation – and maybe find common ground.
- **use your personal experience to bring the issue to life** – maybe you've been homeless before, you're sick of rent rises, or you're getting anxious about your children's prospects of affording their own home. It is also a good idea to practice telling your story concisely beforehand, so that your candidate(s) will remember all the key points.
- **print out our [questions for candidates card](#)** – this will help you with what to say during the meeting,
- **print out our ['leave-behind' document](#)** to give to your candidates when you meet so they have a record of all our key asks.



Step 4:

Have the meeting

Meetings are not very formal, so be confident and don't worry about wearing overly smart clothes. And don't forget that it's in their interest to listen to you, as they will want to get your vote.

Here's a useful structure for your meeting.

You can:

- introduce yourself as a Shelter supporter and say you're there to talk about the need for more social homes and a fairer renting system
- talk about your candidate(s) involvement in housing, if your research has shown something interesting about them
- tell your personal story of housing/homelessness
- ask your candidate(s) to write to their party leader and urge them to make ending the housing emergency a priority in their manifesto
- ask if they have any questions. They don't expect you to be a policy expert, and so don't worry if you don't know something - it's a good reason to follow up with them afterwards.

Top tip: Remember to leave them with our ['leave-behind' document](#) so that they have a record of all Shelter's key messages after you've gone.

Step 5:

Take a photo with your candidate(s) and email it to us – and your candidate(s)!

When you meet your local candidate(s), take a photo of you with them and send it to us at campaigns@shelter.org.uk

Having photos taken with their constituents is something that they are used to doing all the time, and there will usually be a member of their team around who can take the photo for you.



Following up with your candidate(s) is a good way to keep your meeting fresh in their mind – sending them a quick ‘thank you’ email with the photo is a nice way of doing this.

Finally

Good luck! If you have any questions about going to meet your candidates, don't hesitate to get in touch with us at campaigns@shelter.org.uk. And – don't forget – we'd also love to hear how you get on!