General Election 2019 Toolkit

Questions you could ask your Prospective Parliamentary Candidate (PPCs)

Your campaign action

Engage with your Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs) on CRUK priorities by attending hustings and other local events.

Context of a General Election

What is a General Election?

- General elections are normally held every five years under the Fixed Term Parliament Act.
- A snap election is an election that is called earlier than scheduled (earlier than 5 years).
- The election on 12 December will decide a new government for the UK
- Parliament was dissolved on Wednesday 6 November to make way for election campaigning and during this time, MPs cannot represent their constituents.

What is the Lobbying Act?

- The Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act (the Lobbying Bill) came into force in 2014
- This Act limits what charities can say about Government leading up to a General Election.

What does political neutrality mean during an election?

- Here at CRUK, we are always politically neutral.
- During an election it is important to ensure that our activities do not influence voter behaviour.
- We cannot encourage or be seen to encourage any specific party or candidate.
- We cannot compare our views with those of any party or candidate and we must give each party or candidate an equal opportunity to participate and respond to our policies.
- As a Campaigns Ambassador, this means that you should give each candidate equal opportunity to engage with you. So, for example, asking a question directed to all candidates at a husting.

Why engaging with PPCs is important?

- As we don’t know who the new government will be, it is important to engage with all Prospective Parliamentary Candidates equally, and to tell all political parties what a new Government and Parliament must do to help us beat cancer.

Why aren’t we asking PPCS to make a pledge?

- In previous elections, we’ve encouraged you to ask your PPC to make a pledge to support CRUK if they were elected. This time, we’re encouraging you to engage with PPCs on issues you feel strongly about. There are specific questions and commitments that you can follow up with them should they be elected.
Top priorities for GE2019:

WORKFORCE

Diagnosing cancer at an early stage is critical to improving survival for people affected by cancer. But UK cancer survival continues to lag behind other comparable health systems. In order to achieve earlier diagnosis, it is vital that we have a workforce able to do so. So, in England, we are asking the new Government to stand shoulder to shoulder with our NHS. They should:

- Train and employ more NHS staff to diagnose cancer earlier.

Questions related to workforce that you could ask PPCs:

- If elected, how will you make sure we reach the current NHS target to diagnose 75% of cancer patients early (at stages 1 & 2) by 2028?

OBESITY

Obesity is the biggest preventable cause of cancer after smoking in the UK and causes around 22,800 cases of cancer each year. A child who is obese is five times more likely to be so as an adult, so acting early can protect them from a lifetime of avoidable ill-health and disease. There is also strong evidence that obesity is linked to lower socio-economic backgrounds, so tackling the causes of obesity also helps us tackle health inequalities. We want children to be given a better chance to eat healthily, stay a healthy weight and avoid cancer in later life. So, we are asking the next government to agree to:

- Commit to halving childhood obesity by 2030.
- Implement a comprehensive 9pm watershed on adverts for junk food products.
- Ensure that all multi-buy price promotions on food and drink are on healthier products.
- Support the efforts to reduce high levels of sugar and fat in our food, by getting tougher on companies not meeting the sugar and calorie reduction targets.

Questions related to obesity that you could ask PPCs:

- If elected, will you help children live healthier lifestyles by making sure junk food ads aren’t shown on TV and online before 9pm?
- If elected, will you commit to helping to halve childhood obesity by 2030?

TOBACCO

After decades of successful action on tobacco control, only 14.7% of UK adults were smokers in 2018. Yet smoking continues remains the number one preventable cause of cancer, so we are asking the new government to:

- Uphold the current government’s commitment to becoming a smoke-free in England by 2030, in Scotland by 2034 and to develop a timeline for the rest of the UK. This will be achieved when less than 5% of the population smoke across all socio-economic groups.
- Introduce a ‘Tobacco Control Fund’, in line with the Health Act 2006, paid for by the Tobacco industry to provide the funds needed to achieve a smoke-free nation; this is particularly vital in the absence of sustainable public health funding and as the producers of such a harmful product, tobacco manufacturers should be required to pay the costs for the damage they cause.

Questions related to tobacco that you could ask PPCs:

- If elected, what changes would you make to ensure the UK becomes a smoke-free nation?
- If elected, would you work to help introduce a Tobacco Control Fund?
Cancer research, like all medical research, is inherently international and close UK-EU collaboration on research has driven vital progress for patients here and across the continent. At latest estimate, CRUK researchers were partnering with more than 400 different organisations in the EU27. We are asking the new government to ensure that such essential collaboration can continue by:

- Ensuring that cooperation with the EU on clinical trials continues and that the UK aligns as closely as possible to the forthcoming clinical trial regulation. Such trials are particularly important when conducting research into rare and children’s cancers, as single countries may not have large enough patient populations to run trials on their own.
- Securing swift access to the newest medicines for patients by maintaining a close working relationship between the UK’s Medicines and healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA).
- Ensuring the mobility of researchers for both short and long-term scientific collaborations.

Questions related to Brexit you could ask PPCs:

- If elected, how do you plan to ensure that the UK remains a leader in scientific research?
- If elected, will you work to make sure a new immigration system helps the UK to keep attracting global talent to help with our life-saving research?

Further Actions

- Ask your candidate for a photo. If the meeting has gone well, ask if they’d like to take a picture with you and post it on social media.
- Ask the candidate to support us on social media: you could suggest that they check out our CRUK manifesto on the @cruk_policy page.
- Provide a suggested tweet: if your candidate is keen, ask them to tweet about their engagement with CRUK. You could suggest they tweet something like: “I'm a candidate in X, and should I be elected, I will work with @cruk_policy to make the UK a world leader in cancer prevention diagnosis and care! #GeneralElection2019”.

Your impact

By being part of this campaign, you’ll have helped make sure that the new Government focusses on policies that benefit cancer patients and cancer research in the coming months and years.

Thank you for helping Cancer Research UK protect cancer patients and our cancer research. Good Luck!

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