

UK YOUTH

# Youth Organisation Briefing Pack



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The election is being held on **Thursday, July 4.**

The run-up will see political parties release their manifesto commitments and campaign across the country to drum up support.



How much, or how little, you get involved in the election is up to you and your workload, but please encourage young people to make their voices heard and highlight the issues they care about.

**In this briefing pack, we have provided:**



What you can do as a youth organisation depending on the time you have available



Key dates for your diary and important information



A summary of rules about charity political campaigning in this election period

## Sign up to our briefing for youth organisations

We will be hosting a webinar briefing for youth organisations on the General Election on **Wednesday, June 5, from 1-2pm**, covering:

- ➔ What happens next and some key dates for your diary;
- ➔ What we want to see from the next Government to support young people;
- ➔ How your youth organisation can help advocate for change;
- ➔ How your youth organisation can engage with young people around the election;
- ➔ Resources, programmes and tools to support your work until election day.



There will also be an opportunity for questions, to address any queries you may have. You can register for this briefing session [here](#).

## Get involved

There are lots of ways you and the young people you work with can get involved in the election. We have suggested a range of activities and resources that will work in youth organisation settings. Please do let us know if you come across any other great resources we should share.



### I have five minutes

If you only have a short amount of time, you could share on social media what youth services want to see from the general election.

You could take five minutes at the end of your youth setting activity or meeting to encourage those aged over 16 to register to vote and those over 18 to go out and vote.



### I have an hour

If you have more time, you could email your local candidates – or encourage your young people to email them about the issues they care about. We have provided an example email template, advocating for the importance of youth services [here](#).

Alternatively, these [template emails](#) can be used to help young people register to vote and feel confident voting in the General Election.



### I have a day

If you have a fair amount of time available, we suggest getting more involved in a youth democracy programme:

#### FOR THOSE OVER 18

[#GiveAnX](#) is a youth-led, non-partisan youth voter registration campaign designed to get every single young person registered to vote and into polling booths for the next election. Founded by My Life My Say, the #iwill movement and Shape History, the campaign is easy to get involved in – and they are looking for young people to share in their own communities.

#### FOR THOSE UNDER 18

[Our Generation. Our Vote.](#) is a political literacy education programme culminating in a mass-scale election for young people under 18. It will take place across England and Wales in the lead up to the general election, through a partnership of organisations across the youth democracy and education sectors. Sign up to get involved [here](#).



## I have a week

If you are dedicating a lot of time to getting involved in the general election, we suggest arranging a hustings in your youth organisation. This is a great way to engage both your young people and the local community with the election candidates.



A hustings is a meeting where election candidates or parties debate policies and answer questions from the audience. They provide voters with an opportunity to hear the views of candidates or parties. There is more [information](#) about holding a hustings on the Electoral Commission website.

We encourage you to host what the commission calls a 'non-selective' hustings. This means the event "cannot be reasonably regarded as intended to promote any parties or candidates over any others". Spending on non-selective hustings is not regulated and does not need to be reported by anyone, which will make things easier and ensure you are acting impartially. The commission consider hustings to be non-selective if: a. you have invited all the candidates or parties known to be standing in the constituency, region or other electoral area, or b. have impartial reasons for not inviting certain candidates or parties.

The Association of Colleges have also shared some useful [guidance](#) on running hustings. There may be hustings being run already by youth organisations in your area. For example, [NI Youth Forum](#) has organised a hustings event which will allow young people to come together to put their questions directly to candidates seeking election. This is being held at 68 Berry Street, Belfast on Thursday, June 27, from 5.30-8.30pm. People can sign up [here](#).

The Politics Project is collating a list of hustings to share with our networks which you will be able to browse on an [interactive hustings map](#). If you are planning to run a hustings, or know of one happening in your area, please let us know by completing [this form](#) or emailing Harriet Andrews at [harriet@thepoliticsproject.org.uk](mailto:harriet@thepoliticsproject.org.uk).

Get in touch with us if you are organising a hustings event, we would love to know what is discussed and how much engagement you get from candidates!

## Key dates

click icon to add to your calendar!



Deadline to register to vote



Deadline to apply for a postal vote



Deadline to apply for a proxy vote



Deadline to apply for a Voter ID Certificate



Election Day

## Policy asks

UK Youth has set out some clear messaging for prospective party candidates and the next Government that highlights what the youth sector believes, and needs to see:

### Youth work is life-changing, and even lifesaving.

Youth workers are an essential resource to help solve the problems facing young people: improving their mental health and wellbeing; enhancing skills and employment prospects; and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

**Evidence** shows that youth work reduces pressure on public services in the short term. It **also** shows that young people who receive youth work become happier, healthier and wealthier adults compared to those who didn't receive support.

The next Government cannot afford to ignore young people and youth work. During this election, all parties need to commit to:

- ➔ Deliver the long-term leadership and investment needed to unlock youth work for all young people;
- ➔ Prioritise youth workers as essential roles – alongside teachers, social workers, and therapists - for implementing effective policies for young people;
- ➔ Listen to young people by embedding youth voice into policy-making.

## Important information

### WHO CAN VOTE?

Young people aged over 18 can vote in the election. Voters need to be registered to take part - applying only takes five minutes at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) and must be done by June 18. Voters can choose whether to vote at a polling station, by post or by proxy.

If a young person is due to be out of the country, they can apply for a proxy or postal vote. Students can sign up to vote at both their home address and university address, but can only cast their vote in one of these locations.

### WHAT IF A YOUNG PERSON DOES NOT HAVE PHOTO ID?

For the first time at a UK general election, those voting at a polling station will need to show photo ID. Voters should check now if they have an accepted form of ID and, if not, apply for free ID, called the **Voter Authority Certificate**. Alternatively **CitizenCard** proof of age & ID cards are available for any UK resident. Young people can now apply for a free card if they do not have Voter ID for the election with the code 'DEMOCRACY'. The deadline for a free card is Thursday, June 20.

## WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

The Electoral Commission has lots of [resources](#) for young people, including who is responsible for different aspects of policy, what their vote is and how it can be used, how to campaign and what the rules on campaigning are.

You can also access Democracy Classroom's [Election Countdown](#) programme. These resources can be used in youth sessions to inform young people on a variety of topics. They will be updated as the election progresses.

You can find an [FAQ section](#) on the Democracy Classroom website on voter registration, voter ID, and candidates/political parties.

## WHO IS ALLOWED TO VOTE?

Many communities in the UK are unaware they have voting rights in Britain and Northern Ireland. At the last census, there were a million Commonwealth citizens and 3.5m EU citizens living in the UK. Many of these citizens are eligible to vote and are missing from the electoral register. This [Can I Vote? tool](#) helps migrants learn their voting rights in the UK. It is translated into Arabic, Portuguese and Romanian. It takes 30 seconds to find out your rights and break down what can be quite complicated eligibility rules.

## WOULD YOU LIKE A FREE VOTER REGISTRATION POSTER?

Please complete this [form](#) to request free physical voter registration posters. The deadline for the initial post run is Friday, May 31, at 3pm. They are designed initially for schools and colleges but can be used at youth organisations too.

## WHO ARE THE CANDIDATES IN MY CONSTITUENCY?

You can find out who your candidates are [here](#). Please note, not all candidates have been announced yet.

## Campaigning and political activity

### AM I ALLOWED TO CAMPAIGN DURING THE ELECTION PERIOD?

The usual rules on political campaigning as a charity apply, which you can read more about on the [Charity Commission website](#). You must remain neutral and non-party political when it comes to your work as usual, and specifically for the election period. Charities can state support for, or opposition to, a party's policy if this remains in line with their purpose and long-standing asks, but you should consider how this is perceived.

However, you need to be aware that during the pre-election period charities may be under more scrutiny than usual. This is to ensure elections are democratic, unbiased and free from interference. This means that during an election period, you need to be even more careful that your activities align with charity law. You can read more about the responsibilities of charities on the Charity Commission website [here](#).

The Charity Commission has also shared some [useful information](#) on the key questions that may come up for charities in this period.



## CAN A YOUTH ORGANISATION SUPPORT A CANDIDATE OR PARTY?

You must remain neutral and cannot be seen to be supporting any candidate or party. You can support or oppose party policy, if a policy position aligns with your purpose as an organisation.

## CAN I CONTACT CANDIDATES?

You are allowed to contact candidates or parties, but must be seen to be neutral. For example, you could offer one party candidate a chance to meet some of your young people, but you must make the same offer to a range of parties and not show preferential treatment. You can invite candidates to your youth setting, but you should consider inviting a balance of candidates from different political parties. You could also host a hustling at your youth club or other meeting place.

## DO I HAVE TO GET INVOLVED IN THE ELECTION?

You are not required to be involved or make any public statements on the election. We would encourage you to advocate for youth work and youth services by contacting the candidates in your local area and to encourage the young people you work with to be involved. We have provided an example email template, advocating for the importance of youth services [here](#).

## WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN I DO AROUND THE GENERAL ELECTION?

We have listed a range of ways you can get involved above and shared some resources to get young people engaged. You are welcome to use these, or to develop your own activities.

## CAN I RUN SESSIONS ON POLITICS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Yes. Youth organisations play a large role in supporting young people to engage with democracy and become active citizens. However, it is vital you remain impartial and do not promote your own personal political views.

## CAN POLITICAL PARTIES USE MY YOUTH ORGANISATION'S FACILITIES?

There is nothing in charity law that prevents you from renting out your facilities. However, you should not let parties use your premises as a favour if you have a personal link, as this could be seen as political bias. Many youth organisation facilities may be used as polling stations, so you may need to rearrange your activities on this day. This could be a great way to engage with your young people about the general election.

## Further information

If you have any further questions, or would like more information, please contact Kate Roberts, UK Youth policy manager, at [kate.roberts@ukyouth.org](mailto:kate.roberts@ukyouth.org)