

2026 English local elections campaigner pack

About this campaign pack

On **Thursday 7 May**, there will be 136 council elections taking place across England – making up over a third of the 317 councils in the country, with 4,850 seats up for election.

We want to use this opportunity to drive home the importance of unpaid carers and the need for further support from local councils and services. We have created this toolkit to help you engage with council candidates in your local area, as well as help other unpaid carers to have their voice heard!

As a charity, Carers UK is strictly non-party political and acts within the **Charity Commission guidelines**. This means we remain balanced and do not advocate for a particular political party or candidate. This guidance and the law also affects local charities, and if you are acting on behalf of a charity you must be mindful of this guidance.

First things first – registering to vote and finding your candidates!

You can register to vote by following this [link](#) – **the deadline is 11:59pm on Monday 20 April**. You will be asked for your National Insurance number, but you can still register if you do not have one. If you would then like to apply for a postal vote, you can do so using this [link](#) - **the deadline to apply for a postal vote is 5pm on Tuesday 21 April**. If you are able to, please do also remind other carers, friends, and family to vote, and share this pack and our [manifesto](#) with them!

You can then find out who your candidates are, as well as your closest polling station, [here](#). The list of candidates will be added from **Thursday 9 April** onwards. Keep an eye on that list, as not all will be added at the same time. If you know anyone who is uncertain as to whether there are elections taking place where they live, they can also use that link to find out.

A carers' manifesto: 2026 local elections

We have developed a [manifesto](#) that outlines our key asks of council candidates, including the following:

1. Pledge to support unpaid carers
2. Invest in services to support unpaid carers
3. Deliver a stronger carers strategy
4. Encourage your council to lead by example as a carer friendly employer
5. Support and help to build carer friendly communities

The manifesto includes actions for councilors and councils to take to support unpaid carers, and we would encourage you to share this with candidate you come across, whether on the doorstep or at a local hustings.

Download the manifesto [here](#).

How to engage with candidates

There are a variety of ways you can engage with your local candidates in the run up to the elections.

Speaking to candidates on the doorstep:

We understand that for many carers it can be difficult to attend local events or engage with candidates directly. However, you will likely have candidates knocking on your door over the coming weeks ahead of polling day. Our manifesto can be given to them if you are short of time and unable to have a longer conversation.

You may want to ask them some simple questions like:

- *“What will you do locally to recognise and support unpaid carers?”*
- *“Will you push for more funding for social care from central Government, and how do you intend to raise this with the council if elected?”*
- *“Do you support ring-fencing funding for short-break services in the council budget?”*
- *“What is your position on cuts to adult social care funding locally, and do you understand the domino effect any cuts have on carers?”*
- *“If elected, how will carers be able to raise concerns directly with you?”*
- *“How will you monitor whether the council follows through on support after someone completes a carers assessment?”*
- *“What will you do to make sure carers actually get a carers assessment and support plan?”*
- *“Will you commit to meeting with local carers’ groups regularly, and if so, which?”*

Attend a hustings:

Hustings are organised by candidates or local organisations to facilitate a discussion with candidates and the local community – your local carer service may even organise one. If you are able to, we encourage you to attend these and raise the issues carers are facing and what you expect of candidates if elected. There is no primary guide as to hustings taking place, but you can find information online or you may be contacted by a local candidate or organisation hosting one. You can also reach out to us at policy@carersuk.org if you would like some help to find out about them.

Email your local candidates:

Directly reaching out to your candidates via email means you can get a written set of commitments, as well as information on where they intend to engage with you and other carers. You can find contact details of candidates as they are announced using [this link](#). We would be more than happy to provide you with a template email to use - reach out to

us at policy@carersuk.org.

Further information

We have also developed a [social media pack](#) that you can use to let people know what you want from council candidates, and to encourage other carers to get involved with the campaign.

This campaign leads into this year's Carers Week, with the theme being 'Building Carer Friendly Communities'. With Carers Week taking place just a month after the local elections, we will be asking newly elected councilors how they will deliver on the commitments made to carers.

If there is any other information that would be helpful to you, such as support with engaging with candidates or to learn more about the local elections, please do reach out to us at policy@carersuk.org, or visit www.carersuk.org.