



## Clean Air Parents' Network: General Election 2019 Toolkit

### Introduction: Use your voice to make clean air an election issue

Despite what you may have read and heard, this is not a single issue General Election. This means that between now and the 12<sup>th</sup> December, you have a powerful opportunity to make sure that clean air is a key election issue in your constituency.

In as many places as possible, we want to make sure that candidates from each of the political parties know how important it is that the next government takes urgent action at both a local and national level to clean up our air and protect children's health.

Regardless of where you live and who might be your next MP, we want to help you make your voice heard. From action to protect children from dirty air where they live, learn and play, to Clean Air Zones and ambitious new clean air laws, we need as many of you as possible to call for these vital changes, so that we can tackle this public health crisis once and for all.

This guide provides you with all the help and advice you might need to get going, so that together we can make this a clean air election. If you have any questions or need any extra support, you can find our contact details at the end of the guide.

If you are unable to get involved at this point, but are still keen to campaign for clean air for children, we will be in touch again in the New Year with a whole range of exciting plans for 2020!

### General Election 2019

**When:** 7am-10pm, Thursday 12 December 2019

**Where:** All constituencies in the UK. The address of your polling station will be on your polling card, but you do not need your polling card to vote. To find out which constituency you live in, enter your postcode [here](#).

**Register to vote:** the deadline is Tuesday 26 November 2019. You can register to vote [here](#). If you are unable to vote in person, you can register for a postal or proxy vote.

**Candidates:** you can find out who the candidates are for each political party in your constituency by entering your postcode [here](#). This information is provided by a third party organisation, so it may not be fully up to date or accurate. If you cannot find the relevant information about who your candidates are, please contact your local council.

**Manifestos:** political parties are expected to publish their manifestos from 18 November onwards. We will send round a summary of their commitments on clean air once published.

## Clean Air: what are we calling for?

In this election, the Clean Air Parents' Network has a clean air pledge that we are calling on candidates to commit to. The pledge is:

If elected, I pledge to push for urgent and ambitious action to protect young lungs from illegal and harmful air pollution. This needs to happen through:

1. Urgent action to protect our children's health by tackling dirty air where they live, learn and play.
2. Getting the most polluting vehicles out of our towns and cities quickly through Clean Air Zones and providing practical help and support for people and businesses to move on to cleaner forms of transport.
3. Adopting ambitious new clean air laws that include a binding commitment to meet World Health Organization guideline levels for particulate matter pollution by 2030.

## Air pollution: the facts

If you get the chance to talk to any of the candidates in your area, the most powerful thing you can do is talk about why this issue matters to you personally and how it affects you, your family and friends.

You do not need to be an expert to talk to candidates about air pollution, but in case it is useful, we have provided some of the key facts about air pollution below.

- Air pollution has caused a public health crisis in the UK, with most towns and cities suffering from illegal and harmful levels of nitrogen dioxide. The government has been breaking the law on air pollution since 2010, which is why ClientEarth has had to take successive governments to court on three separate occasions to force them to take action.
- Many towns and cities also have levels of harmful particulate matter pollution over the recommended level set by the World Health Organisation.
- Air pollution harms everyone's health but it is particularly dangerous for children, older people and those living with pre-existing health conditions like asthma and COPD.
- People living in the most disadvantaged areas of our towns and cities are often those exposed to the highest levels of air pollution.
- The main source of illegal and harmful levels of air pollution in our towns and cities is road transport, in particular diesel vehicles. Road transport emits nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter, both of which are very harmful to human health.
- We are calling on the government to introduce Clean Air Zones in the most polluted towns and cities to tackle the high levels of emissions from road transport. Clean Air Zones are designated areas in which certain vehicles (e.g.

heavy goods vehicles and diesel buses) must either pay to enter or are banned from entering if they do not meet certain emissions standards.

- It is clear that our current levels of air pollution constitute a public health crisis that must be acted upon urgently by all levels of government.

## How you can make sure young lungs are a priority for your local candidates

This election provides members of the Clean Air Parents' Network with a powerful opportunity to make sure that all the candidates in their constituency commit to tackling this public health crisis if they are elected.

There are lots of ways you can get involved with campaigning in your constituency to make sure that air pollution is on the agenda and that your local candidates understand what an urgent issue this is.

### Ground rules for campaigners

Before you get started, please have a read of our ground rules for campaigners.

The Clean Air Parents' Network is a non-partisan network, whose aim is to campaign for urgent action to tackle the air pollution crisis. The network is independent of any political party, and we ask our members to bear this in mind when campaigning for clean air. Here are some tips on how to be an independent campaigner:

- Our messaging and our aims are not party political.
- Make sure you stick to the facts about air pollution and the measures needed to tackle this crisis.
- Regardless of the politics where you live, try and make sure that you are reaching all the candidates when calling for action on this issue.
- Don't wear party-political clothing or mix Clean Air Parents' Network campaign materials with party-political campaign materials when you are representing the Clean Air Parents' Network.

### Email your candidates

You may want to email all the candidates in your constituency and ask them to take the clean air pledge set out above and find out what else they plan to do about air pollution if and when they are elected. You can find a template email to candidates [here](#).

Candidates will receive thousands of emails from voters during the election, so the more of your friends and family you can get to send the [template email](#), then the more impact it will have, and the more likely it is that you will get a response.

### Ask your candidates to pledge to fight for #cleanairforchildren

We have developed a pledge for all candidates fighting this election, so they can show their support for tackling air pollution. You can find the pledge card [here](#) where you can download it and print it off for use as a campaigning tool.

If you meet candidates standing in your constituency, you can ask them to have their photo taken with the [pledge card](#). The photo will be great to use on social media.

If you don't get the opportunity to meet any of the candidates in your constituency, you can still ask them to support our [clean air pledge](#) on social media, and ask them what they will do to tackle air pollution at a local and national level if they are elected.

Below are some tips for social media as well as some template tweets and Facebook posts for you to use, to help you raise awareness of the issue and call on each of the candidates to support our [clean air pledge](#).

### Social media tips

- Keep your tone positive and respectful even if you are being challenging or critical.
- Use the hashtags #cleanairforchildren, #cleanair, and #airpollution in your posts.
- Include hashtags for your town/city to get local support, e.g. #GreaterManchester, #Liverpool, #Birmingham.
- Add images/photos of you and your children (if you feel comfortable doing this) or your local pollution hotspots so your tweets and posts have more impact.
- Make sure others can see the tweets you direct at candidates by putting a full-stop before their Twitter handle at the start of the tweet e.g. ".@[candidate] will you...".
- If posting on Facebook, focusing on your 'personal pollution story' could win more likes and shares – write about how dirty air in your area affects you, your children and your community and why this has led you to call for action.
- Keep an eye on other people using the #cleanairforchildren and like and retweet if you are supportive of what they say. This will help spread the message and give you more material to share.
- Share Facebook posts with the Clean Air Parents' Network Facebook group and your own groups and networks.

### Sample Tweets

**#cleanairforchildren @lunguk @ClientEarth**

- ✓ .@[name of candidate] Will you pledge to push for urgent and ambitious action to protect young lungs from illegal and harmful #airpollution in [insert name of constituency]? #cleanairforchildren @lunguk @ClientEarth

- ✓ .@[name of candidate] Will you pledge to push for urgent action to protect our children's health by tackling #airpollution where they live, learn and play in [insert name of constituency]? #cleanairforchildren @lunguk @ClientEarth
- ✓ .@[name of candidate] If elected, what action will you take to protect children and other vulnerable people from harmful and illegal levels of #airpollution in [insert name of constituency] #cleanairforchildren @lunguk @ClientEarth
- ✓ .@[name of candidate] Will you pledge to get the most polluting vehicles out of our towns and cities quickly through Clean Air Zones? #cleanairforchildren @lunguk @ClientEarth
- ✓ @[name of candidate] Will you pledge to push for practical help and support for people and businesses to move on to cleaner forms of transport? #cleanairforchildren @lunguk @ClientEarth
- ✓ .@[name of candidate] Will you pledge to push for ambitious new clean air laws that include a binding commitment to meet World Health Organization guideline levels for particulate matter pollution by 2030? #cleanairforchildren @lunguk @ClientEarth
- ✓ .@[name of candidate] If elected, what will you do to make sure that local people and businesses are provided with help and support to get rid of their older polluting vehicles, so they can switch to cleaner forms of transport? #cleanairforchildren @lunguk @ClientEarth

### Template Facebook Post

*[Insert as appropriate or add your own text: As a parent/carer/grandparent]*, I need to know that my MP will fight for the urgent action needed to clean up our air and save our children's lungs. To this end, I am asking you to make the following pledge:

If elected, I pledge to push for urgent and ambitious action to protect young lungs from illegal and harmful air pollution. This needs to happen through:

1. Urgent action to protect our children's health by tackling dirty air where they live, learn and play.
2. Getting the most polluting vehicles out of our towns and cities quickly through Clean Air Zones and providing practical help and support for people and businesses to move on to cleaner forms of transport.
3. Adopting ambitious new clean air laws that include a binding commitment to meet World Health Organization guideline levels for particulate matter pollution by 2030.

This is one of the issues that will determine who I vote for on 12 December. I look forward to your confirmation that you will make the above pledge to ensure children in **[insert name of constituency]** can breathe cleaner air where they live, learn and play.

### Hustings

During the election campaign, hustings may be held in your constituency or wider area. Hustings give the public an opportunity to put questions to each of the candidates and find out what they will do if they are elected to be the constituency's MP.

Keep an eye out for local information about when the hustings will take place in your area, or [check here](#) to see if your hustings are included on the list compiled by Healthy Air Campaign partners.

It would be really helpful if you can [let us know](#) when and where the hustings are taking place where you live, so we can let other people know who live in the area and care about clean air.

If you are able to attend a hustings, below are some questions you may wish to put to each of the candidates:

1. We have had illegal levels of air pollution for almost a decade. Do you support the introduction of a Clean Air Zone in **[insert name of constituency]** as the most effective way to reduce the illegal and harmful levels of air pollution we are all exposed to?
2. If elected, what will you do to make sure that local people, low income households and small businesses are provided with help and support to get rid of their older polluting vehicles, so they can switch to cleaner forms of transport?
3. The World Health Organization recommends that levels of particulate matter pollution should be half of what our existing legal limits allow. Will you support ambitious new clean air laws that include a binding target to meet these stricter levels by 2030 at the latest?
4. If elected, what local action will you take to protect children and other vulnerable people from harmful and illegal levels of air pollution in **[insert name of constituency]**, alongside national action?

### Canvassing

Throughout the campaign, candidates will be out speaking to voters, whether they're knocking on doors, attending local community events or running street stalls.

If you get the chance to speak to any candidates on the doorstep, at an event or at a street stall, then this is a great opportunity to explain how important this issue is and to find out how the candidate will tackle this problem if elected.



You might want to ask some of the questions listed above and explain why this issue is so important to you. This is also a great opportunity to get candidates to support the clean air pledge, and ask them to have their photo taken with our [pledge card](#).

### Events

Candidates will be keen to speak to as many voters as possible during the election campaign. If you run or attend a community event on a regular basis, you could ask the candidates in your constituency to attend so that members of your group can speak to them about air pollution and find out their plans for tackling this public health crisis.

### Raising awareness

Raising awareness and getting people calling for action in your community is a really powerful thing to do. If the candidates in your constituency know that lots of voters want their next MP to tackle air pollution, then it is more likely they will commit to taking action. So do share this guide as well as our emails and tools with your family, friends and neighbours and encourage them to talk to the candidates too!

### Contact details

If you have any questions or would like more support with campaigning in your area, feel free to contact the Clean Air Parents' Network coordinators:

**Sue Huyton:** [sue.huyton@blf.org.uk](mailto:sue.huyton@blf.org.uk) (if you live in Greater Manchester, Merseyside or the West Midlands)

**Catherine Maguire:** [cmaguire@clientearth.org](mailto:cmaguire@clientearth.org) (if you live in London and the rest of the UK)



*The Clean Air Parents' Network is supported by the British Lung Foundation and ClientEarth. We are calling on all levels of government to take action to tackle illegal and harmful levels of air pollution to protect the health of people across the UK [www.cleanairparents.org.uk](http://www.cleanairparents.org.uk)*