



Getting involved during a general election period



Contents

General Election: What Does This Mean?	2
What happens now a general election has been called?	3
Opportunities for you to get involved.....	4
1. Share the Our Scouts' Manifesto with candidates	4
2. Interested in running a Q&A or youth hustings?.....	6
3. Try our 'be an active citizen' activities	13
Recognise a Scouts Changemaker.....	13
Any questions or need support?	14

Who is this pack for?

This pack is a resource for adult volunteers to help guide you through the general election period. It covers what you can and can't do and offers ideas for activities you might want to run.

In March, we launched [Our Scouts Manifesto](#), aimed at urging the government to support young people and volunteers in shaping a brighter future. Our manifesto is directed at Members of Parliament, prospective party candidates, and senior government officials. Leading up to the General Election announcement, our policy and public affairs team, including [youth advocates](#), have been sharing the manifesto with MPs and candidates to build relationships and raise awareness of our goals for the next government.

Your support is crucial to ensuring the government listens, and this is a fantastic opportunity for you to get involved. Whether you're a volunteer or a young person who wants to be a changemaker, you are more than welcome to send the manifesto to your local representatives. However, during the General Election period, we must be extra careful and follow certain rules.

General Election: What Does This Mean?

On May 22, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak called a General Election for **July 4**.

What is a General Election?

The UK is divided into 650 areas, called constituencies. Each area has a person called a Member of Parliament (or MP), who represents it in the House of Commons in London.

When you turn 18, you can vote in a general election to choose who you want to be your MP. So, a general election is really 650 individual elections

that all happen on one day, across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.



Key dates

You can register to vote here: [Register to vote - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) – the deadline for the general election is **Midnight Tuesday 18 June**.

Don't forget, you now need a **photo identification** to be able to vote on 4 July.

The photo identifications accepted can be found here: [Accepted forms of photo ID | Electoral Commission](#).

What happens now a general election has been called?

As of May 30th, Parliament was dissolved, meaning Members of Parliament no longer represent their constituencies and instead become candidates if they wish to stand for re-election or retire.

During this time, our policy and public affairs team has postponed all planned MP visits and emailed their offices to say that if they are re-elected, we would like to reschedule. While you can still get involved during this period, we need to be extra careful, especially when interacting with candidates as part of Scouts. For example, if you want to host a hustings, you need to invite all candidates, not just one.

What Does This Mean for You?

We have updated our [general election guidance](#) to help you navigate this potentially confusing and overwhelming period. The webpage is divided into sections for easier understanding.

If you need extra support or have any questions, please contact the [support centre](#), where a member of the policy team will assist you.

Opportunities for you to get involved

The good news is that there are opportunities for you to be active citizens and help our young people develop skills in democratic education and political literacy.

1. Share the Our Scouts' Manifesto with candidates

One of the easiest ways to engage candidates is by directly sharing the manifesto with them via email. It's a simple and quick method to share the campaign and begin building a relationship.

Once you've sent the email, a member of their team will read it and inform the candidate. You may not receive a response as it's a busy time for candidates but if the candidate wins the seat for your constituency, you can follow up once they are a Member of Parliament and invite them to visit your group.

Who are your candidates and how do you contact them?

You can find candidates standing for election using this useful resource by the [Democracy Club](#).

Simply search using your group's postcode or town and copy the emails for each available.



Reminder: it is important to send the manifesto to all candidates so that we don't show political bias.

How to write to your candidates:

Please see below a suggested email template

Dear [Candidate's Name],

I hope this email finds you well.

My name is [Your Name], and I live in [Enter Constituency]. I am a [Volunteer Title] at [Enter Name of Group] Scouts. I'm excited to share our Scouts' manifesto: "Building Brighter Tomorrows."

Scouts play a crucial role in [Enter Your Constituency], equipping young people as young as 4 with skills for life. However, the harsh reality is that across the UK, nearly 100,000 young people are on a waiting list. In our constituency, there are [Insert Number of Young People on the Waiting List] due to a shortage of volunteers.

Created with young Scouts and volunteers across the United Kingdom, this manifesto is a call to action and a blueprint for a brighter future for young people, volunteers, and civil society.

Why should you care? By supporting what we're asking for, you're showing that you care about young people and want to make our community better for everyone.

Please see the attached manifesto and consider how you can support our nine policy asks.

I look forward to hearing from you and seeing how you can help Scouts in our community.

What to do if candidates respond:

If candidates respond, that's great news! They may ask to visit your group. However, during the general election period, we need to be careful about how we invite and interact with candidates.

If a candidate wants to visit your group, please invite the other candidates you contacted and arrange for them to visit. This could be a simple Q&A session with all the candidates, or if you have time, you might want to organise a youth hustings.

If you don't feel comfortable or don't have much time, that's also okay. You can wait to get back in touch with the candidate that is elected once the election is over after 4 July.



You might want to say: "Thank you for your interest in visiting (Scouts group name) and supporting Scouts. Since a general election has been called, we prefer to reschedule the visit if (candidate name) is re-elected. We will be in touch after the election."

2. Interested in running a Q&A or youth hustings?

What is a hustings?

A hustings is a meeting where election candidates or parties debate policies and answer questions from the audience. Hustings provide an opportunity to hear the views of candidates or parties.

When all candidates or parties standing are invited, a hustings does not promote any candidate or party because they all can speak and be questioned.

You can read our [political campaigning](#) and general election guidance here for support.

Why should you organise a youth hustings?

There are many benefits for hosting a hustings:

- **Democratic education:** Hosting a youth hustings helps educate young people about how politics works, getting them more involved and informed about what's happening in their community.
- **Representation:** It ensures that young people's voices are heard and included in political decisions, making sure everyone's perspective is considered in democratic discussions
- **Dialogue:** Youth hustings spark conversations between young people, political candidates, and elected officials, helping everyone understand different policies and viewpoints better.
- **Policy Influence:** By organising a youth hustings, you can give young people a platform to influence political agendas and policies, empowering them to make a real difference in their community.

How do you organise a hustings?

1. Choose a format.

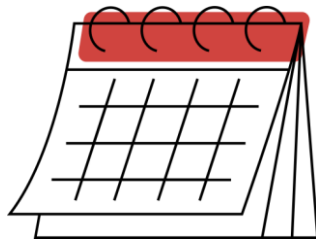


A popular choice is to opt for a 'Question Time' style event, with a panel of candidates and an audience made up of young people.

You should give each candidate a couple of minutes to introduce themselves and why they are standing before you move onto questions (**top tip is to set a timer so that it is fair for all candidates!**).

How long it will last will depend on how many candidates you have, but most will last between **one to two hours**. You could invite them to then engage in a Scout activity afterwards to show them how we develop skills for life!

2. Select a Date



When arranging these events, we recommend planning at least three months in advance to ensure smooth organisation and plenty of notice for everyone involved. However, as the election is soon, you may opt for simple Q&A style event rather than a larger hustings.

It's crucial to choose a date that accommodates both the availability of young participants and candidates, ensuring fair representation across political parties.

3. Decide on the venue



We recommend using your local Scout headquarters as the venue for hosting the hustings. This choice offers familiarity to the young people and provides

candidates with a first-hand experience of a hustings within the heart of the Scout community.

If you share your HQ with another organisation, school, or local authority, make sure you have permission to hold the event!

4. Invite candidates

Identifying candidates:



This year marks a general election, offering a diverse pool of candidates for your hustings event. Both new and existing candidates have been selected to stand for election, providing an excellent opportunity for engagement.

[The Democracy Club](#) provides a valuable resource for identifying prospective party candidates for the upcoming election. Their comprehensive spreadsheet allows you to locate your constituency and easily contact each candidate.

This resource streamlines the process of reaching out to candidates and ensures thorough representation at your event.

5. Writing to candidates and MPs



In the invitation to candidates, you should be clear about what the format of the event is, who the audience of the hustings will be and the type of

questions that candidates may expect to be asked. Especially important is making sure the date, time and location of the hustings are on the invitation and ensuring that the location of the hustings is within the constituency that the candidates are standing for.

Please find below a suggested email format:

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Scouts Youth Hustings Event

Dear [Candidate],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is [Your Name] and I am a volunteer at [Location of Scouts or Name of Scouts Group] in your constituency.

At Scouts, we support and empower young people to be active citizens. We are excited to announce that [name of group] will be hosting a youth hustings event. This event aims to provide our young people with a better understanding of our democratic process and an opportunity to engage directly with decision-makers like yourself.

One of the highlights of the event will be the opportunity for our Scouts to share with you Our Scouts' Manifesto. This manifesto, collaboratively created by young people and volunteers nationwide, outlines our nine policy asks for the next government. Our Scouts are keen to discuss with you how these asks can be translated into actionable policies that will benefit their communities and build brighter futures.

Please see below the details of the event:

Time and date

Location

Please note we will extend invitations to prospective party candidates from all parties.

Thank you for considering our invitation. Once confirmed we will send more details about how the session will run. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to welcome you to our youth hustings event.

6. Plan questions



In preparation for the event, it would be ideal if you could run a session with the young people giving them opportunities to think about what they'd like to ask the invitees.

You'll also need to consider time of how long each candidate answers the questions for, especially if you want to show the invitees an activity before or after the hustings!

Do you have a young person that would like to be the moderator? Make sure that they are briefed well in advance and have a script to help guide them!

If you want to help raise awareness about [Our Scouts' Manifesto](#), consider using the manifesto's policy asks as a reference when formulating questions or run a session with young people about what they would want to ask their MPs and candidates!

7. Coordinate event



Once you've finalised your candidates, secured a moderator, and arranged a venue, it's time to spread the word about your event among your Scout groups and prepare for the big day.

Remember to send the questions to the candidates well in advance, allowing them ample time to prepare their responses. Additionally, if your young moderator needs to practice, encourage them to do so.

8. The Big Day!



All your hard work has paid off, this will be a great opportunity for our young people to learn about their local representatives and why their voice matters.



Reminder:

If you plan to take pictures during the event and wish to share them with Scouts HQ or local newspapers, it's essential to ensure

you have **obtained photo consent** from every young person present. This not only respects their privacy but also ensures compliance with legal requirements regarding the use of images of minors.

Additionally, please take a photo of all candidates together to demonstrate that you have taken necessary steps to ensure a fair, impartial event.

3. Try our ‘be an active citizen’ activities

We have plenty of activities for you to choose from on our [Scouts’ activity finder](#).

Our Scouts' activity finder has a wide range of activities to pick from.

You can search by the skill you wish to help young people gain; for example, select 'be an engaged citizen' to get a variety of activities to choose from.

In the following weeks, we will add new activities to help young people learn and get involved in the general election. We will update this pack when they are uploaded.

Recognise a Scouts Changemaker



We want our young people to feel empowered, learn new skills, and be recognized for their contributions as changemakers in their communities.

Changemakers are people who bring new ideas and work passionately to create lasting positive change.

In the Scouts, this could be a young person inviting candidates or MPs to visit their group, writing to them about an important issue, or developing a project to help Scouts and their community, like finding new ways to recruit volunteers.

You can encourage your young people to support Our Scouts' Manifesto pledge by purchasing the Changemaker Blanket Badge for your group or by acknowledging their positive contributions and recognising them as changemakers.

Do you know a young person with a changemaker story to tell? We would love to recognise changemakers across the UK who are making a difference in their communities. They can share their [story here](#).

How is the changemaker badge different from community impact badges?

The changemaker badge is a blanket badge so it can be purchased by anyone and it is not achieved through a particular activity or Scouts programme. The changemaker badge was created alongside Our Scouts' Manifesto.

Community impact badges are part of staged activities in our scouts' programmes focused on encouraging scouts to take practical action in the service of others, for example, [taking part in better mental health for all postcard activity](#) or [making a kindness pledge](#).

Any questions or need support?

Please contact the Support Centre, and someone from our policy and public affairs team will respond as soon as possible. We also have a FAQ section on our general election campaigning webpage for common questions.

If you have success stories to share, like a youth hustings event or young people participating in an active citizenship session using the new activities,

please send these to the Support Centre as well. We would love to share your photos or stories about how you are supporting the young people in your community to be changemakers.

Thank you for helping us to build brighter tomorrows for all young people, volunteers and wider civil society.