

Migrant Voice guide to making your voice heard at this election
12 December 2019



An election is a great time to get the issues heard that you care about – and to get those issues onto the agenda for the next five years (or however long this Parliament lasts). This could be about the hostile environment, the rights of EU nationals, the minimum income requirement for spouses, indefinite detention, the right to work for asylum seekers, or any other issue you care about.

If you are eligible and have registered to vote, make sure you go to your local polling station between 7am and 10pm on Thursday 12 December. You should have received a “polling card” through the post which tells you where the polling station is.

In most areas of the country (called “constituencies”) the major political parties – Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Green Party, Brexit Party – will have candidates who people can vote for on 12 December. The person in your constituency who gets the most votes will become an MP – the representative of your area in Parliament.

There are several ways to contact your local candidates (feel free to do them all!):

1. Write an email. This is an easy way to get in touch with them. Make sure you include your name and postcode in the first line of the email so they know you live in their constituency. Explain the issue you are writing about in a paragraph or two (e.g. “I’m worried about the lack of safe, legal routes to the UK for refugees...”) and ask if they agree with you and will take action if they are elected (e.g. “Do you agree that this is unfair and will you take action on this if you’re elected?”). If you have a personal connection to the issue and you’re happy to write about that, do include it. Most importantly, be polite! **You can find most candidates’ email addresses here:** <https://democraticdashboard.com/>

2. Tweet at them. This is another easy way to contact them, but remember that it’s public. Again, be polite!! Explain the issue in one sentence, say that you’re a constituent and ask if they will take action if they are elected. Use the hashtag #GE2019. **Find the names of your local candidates here:** <https://democraticdashboard.com/>
Find their Twitter handle here: <https://www.mpsontwitter.co.uk/>

3. Go to local election events. The major parties (especially Labour and the Liberal Democrats) are doing lots of campaigning. They will often put a stall in your local high street on Saturdays, for example. **Search for these events online** (e.g. “Labour stall East Ham general election”), go along and talk to the campaigners there – you might even meet the local candidate if you’re lucky.

4. Go to your local hustings. These are public meetings where the local candidates (usually) attend and members of the public can ask questions. Sometimes you have to submit questions in advance. Other times you simply go along and put your hand up and hope to be picked. It’s best to have a fairly general question (e.g. about the hostile environment or detention), rather than a very specific point (e.g. the international students wrongly accused of cheating and stripped of their visas), as this means your question is more likely to be chosen. All of the candidates then have to respond.

Remember:

- *Simply reminding/informing your local candidates about the issue is very helpful – whoever wins will go into Parliament knowing about it, and hopefully inspired to do something.*
- *If you do this publicly (tweeting, at hustings etc.), lots of other local people will hear about the issue too, and how the candidates respond might influence their vote. So speaking up is worth it!*

If you have any questions, or would like help finding information, writing an email or honing your question, get in touch: Judith@migrantvoice.org.