

May 2017

## **UNISON Equality briefing for members Talking to your parliamentary candidates**

A general election is taking place on Thursday 8 June 2017, and over the coming weeks parliamentary candidates will be out and about in their constituencies trying to secure your vote, so don't miss this unique opportunity to tell them about issues that are affecting you.

If you attend a hustings, phone in to a radio show to talk to a candidate or if one knocks on your door, remember you don't have to just listen to their campaign promises, seize the opportunity to talk to them about issues that matter to YOU.

### **Equality issues you may want to raise**

Listed below are some examples of topics you may want to raise. Think about which of these affect you, and where possible share your personal experience.

- Is your candidate committed to an end to the age discrimination built into the minimum wage?
- Is your candidate committed to replacing the Work Capability Assessment and sanctions regime for people claiming benefits?
- Does your candidate support a central funding stream dedicated to ending violence against women and supporting women victims of rape and domestic abuse?
- Is your candidate committed to guaranteeing a triple lock on state pensions?

### **Public Service Champions**

Will your candidate support proper resourcing of public services? Public sector cuts have particularly hit minority and specialist services, which is a false economy, leaving marginalised groups without vital services. You may want to raise any particular local issues with them from an equality perspective. For more on UNISON's Public Service Champions campaign, see

<https://champions.unison.org.uk/>

## **Fighting racism and discrimination**

Hate crime against Black, LGBT and Disabled people is on the rise in the UK and yet discrimination has fallen off the political agenda. Do you have direct experience or have you witnessed discrimination related to one of the following –age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity?

Will your candidate

- Endorse a zero tolerance on hate crimes and swift judicial action taken against perpetrators?
- Ensure that hate crime legislation is strengthened?
- Work to tackle far-right extremism?
- Work to scrap employment tribunal fees?

## **Safeguard all existing EU equality law protections:**

There are many EU laws that strengthen our employment and equality rights. For example:

- A substantial part of UK maternity and parental rights are grounded in EU law
- EU law provides workers with the right to a minimum of 20 days paid holiday
- EU law ensures that disabled people are given assistance when travelling by rail, plane, ship or coach throughout the EU

Will your candidate commit to ensuring that all employment and equality protections are maintained?

For further information on UNISON's general election campaign plan and how to get involved, see the general election campaign guide at <http://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/05/24371.pdf>

## **Don't forget....**

- to register to vote. You can do so at [gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://gov.uk/register-to-vote) by 22 May if you are not already registered.
- by engaging with your candidate now you are sowing the seeds for future engagement with your local MP