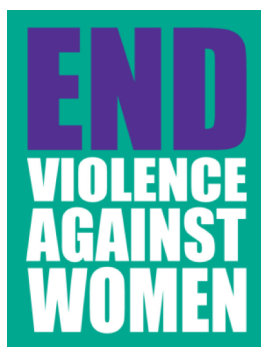


Police & Crime Commissioner Elections

England and Wales, 5 May 2016

Ask your Police & Crime Commissioner candidates to make a priority of ending violence against women & girls



Briefing & Guide to locating and contacting candidates

Summary and purpose of this document

The End Violence Against Women Coalition is a UK-wide campaigning coalition of women's organisations working to end violence against women and girls in all its forms including domestic and sexual violence, stalking, trafficking, forced marriage, FGM, online abuse and child sexual abuse and exploitation.

We aim to make violence against women and girls (VAWG) a priority issue in all elections by reaching out to our members and to activists and encouraging you to contact election candidates, ask them to make specific pledges related to eradicating violence against women and girls, and holding them to account if and when they are elected.

On 5 May, most of England and Wales will vote to elect new Police and Crime Commissioners for the second time only – these relatively new people, who oversee our police forces, were created and first elected in late 2012.

This document explains how to locate and approach the candidates in your area and suggests what you could ask them to commit to. It includes a template letter/email on the last page. The EAW Coalition would like to keep a record on our website of any pledges you receive from candidates – again, see the section on this at the end of this document.

There are also [local elections](#) taking place in many parts of England and [national elections](#) in Wales on 5 May. We have not produced specific lobbying materials for these this year but if you wanted to lobby your local elections candidates –you could use similar [questions](#) to those we have put to the London Mayor candidates. All the candidates should be listed with contact details on your local council website. If you're not sure what council ward or borough you live in you can look it up with your postcode [here](#).

When and where are Police & Crime Commissioner elections being held?

PCC elections are being held in every part of England and Wales on 5 May 2016 except London and Greater Manchester. [London - This is because London's Mayor, who will be elected on 5 May, is London's Police and Crime Commissioner; EAW and our partner Imkaan have a broader [manifesto](#) related to the London Mayor's powers for you to use in lobbying London Mayor candidates. Manchester - will elect its first ever directly elected Mayor in 2017 and this person will assume PCC powers.]

Everywhere else in England and Wales you should by now have received a polling card alerting you to the election of a new PCC in your area on 5 May.

Police and Crime Commissioners are elected by police force area – 40 of them will

be elected on 5 May. You can search for your police force and candidates [here](#). There is a list and more information about individual police forces [here](#).

What are Police and Crime Commissioners and what are their [powers](#)? What could they do to help end violence against women and girls?

Police and Crime Commissioners are the key link between the public and local police forces. They are elected so that voters may have a way of holding the police to account – once elected the Police and Crime Commissioner should go on to draw up policing and crime plans and budgets with their chief constable and other senior police leaders. They are also expected to be a public face of policing and to be engaging with the public and ensuring local community policing needs are met.

They have enormous power and potential to influence and change the way the police in England and Wales respond to the many different forms of violence against women and girls.

1. A Police and Crime Commissioner could insist that a specific, strategic priority is made of tackling these crimes, which could lead to better police training, more joined up working with other agencies (including courts, health, social work, schools) and a drive to raise public awareness.
2. Police and Crime Commissioners also receive money from national government to spend on local victim support services, which must include specialist support for victims of the most serious crimes.
3. In addition, the Police and Crime Commissioner is supposed to be a public figure and as such they can choose to speak up on violence against women and girls and to champion victims' needs and the prevention of abuse before it happens.

In the template letter below, we suggest that with these powers in mind you make up to five key asks of your candidates.

If you are looking for inspiration or more background on what is possible – [here](#) is the comprehensive Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, [here](#) is the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner's Plan for Tackling violence Against Women and Girls, and [here](#) is how the London Mayor (who is London's PCC) has set out work in the capital.

How do I locate the PCC candidates in the area where I live? And how do I contact them?

[Here](#) is an easy to use website full of information about Police and Crime Commissioners, their powers and these elections. On this website you can search for the candidates in your area easily (by postcode) and then see any manifesto they have published (many of them have) and find contact details for them.

For example, searching with a Cumbria postcode or just the county name takes you

to this page:

<https://www.choosemypcc.org.uk/area/cumbria>

This page shows you the five candidates in Cumbria, where you can click on a page for each of them, and a combined [manifesto](#) where they each have a two-page set of pledges.

The vast majority of these pages and manifestos have contact details for the candidates, usually either an email address or a campaign website from where you can submit an online email. Our template letter below is designed for easy cut paste into emails in this way.

What could I ask my PCC candidates to commit to?

EVAW has produced a template letter (below) which you could use to ask your local candidates to make specific pledges. This could be sent in the post (although the elections are very soon now), or it could be cut and paste into an email, which most candidates make available on their information pages.

Broadcasting your activity - You could also tweet at them and leave Facebook messages for them. Look out for last minute local hustings events or online webchats. Tweet and email the local media and let them know you want to know what candidates will do on these issues.

Let us know if you get a reply!

The EVAW Coalition wants to try and keep track of Police and Crime Commissioners' pledges and would be delighted to put anything you receive on our [website](#). Tweet, email, call us at EVAW (details below) and let us know about any candidates who tell you they will take action on violence against women and girls if elected.

Contact: Sarah Green or Annie Ruddlesden at the EVAW Coalition are available during the day on 020 7096 2067 and some evenings on 07984 717 817 if you have any questions or want more advice. You can also email us sarah.green@evaw.org.uk or tweet us @EVAWuk

Template letter to Police and Crime Commissioner candidates

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER ELECTIONS 2016

INSERT NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON STANDING FOR ELECTION

INSERT DATE

Dear INSERT NAME

If elected, what will you do to protect women and girls from violence?

I write as a local resident in advance of the Police and Crime Commissioner elections on 5 May to draw your attention to the scale of violence against women and girls in our community, and to ask you to pledge that if elected you will make a key priority of tackling violence against women and girls – including domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking, forced marriage, FGM, trafficking and child sexual abuse and exploitation.

The scale of violence against women and girls

Sadly there are very high levels of violence against women and girls in our society. Each year across the UK, more than a million women experience domestic violence, more than 400,000 women are sexually assaulted, and around 70,000 women are raped. Our society is waking up to the scale of child sexual abuse and exploitation. These crimes are a considerable proportion of all police emergency calls and everyday police business. And, as well as the human impact of these crimes, which is felt by whole families, these crimes are very costly to our health service, our criminal justice system and our wider economy.

What will you do as our local Police and Crime Commissioner

If elected as our next Police and Crime Commissioner will you take specific action in the following ways?

- 1. Develop a specific Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy or Action Plan** - make a strategic priority of tackling violence against women and girls by drawing up a plan with with measurable aims and targets set for your period of office. This should commit your office and our local police force work to addressing abuse of women and girls in ALL its forms, promote the best multi-agency working, involve local specialist women's support services, and truly aim to prevent as well as respond to abuse.
- 2. Improve police performance** – hold your chief constable and police force to account for their performance in responding to crimes of violence against women and girls, by ensuring there is adequate training and supervision relating to these crimes, and that both frontline officers and police leaders understand the specific problems leading to low reporting rates and best practice in responding to for violence against women and girls.
- 3. Use your commissioning power** - when you decide how victims' services money should be spent, ensure that specialist women's support services, including refuges, Rape Crisis Centres, and specialist black and minority ethnic women's services, are consulted, are treated fairly during commissioning processes, and are enabled to survive. These services are truly a "fourth emergency service" and in many cases are life savers.
- 4. Be cautious in use of 'Restorative Justice'** – which sees offenders meeting with victims to discuss the offence and what can be done to repair the harm or damage, is promoted as an innovative, effective and economical way of dealing with offenders and the consequences of their crimes. If your police force area considers restorative justice as a solution during your term of

office, it is absolutely critical that no blanket assumption is made that it can work for all crimes. Crimes of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, rape, and forced marriage, which involve considerable imbalances of power, and can also feature third parties urging a victim to accept a restorative justice encounter which they may not truly want, should not be presumed suitable. Survivors of abuse and women's support organisations should be consulted.

- 5. Tackle prostitution** - The policing of prostitution related offences varies widely in England and Wales and is often left to considerable chief constable discretion. Women in prostitution are often survivors of abuse, and may be disadvantaged in a number of other ways – mental health problems, problematic drink and drug use, homelessness and destitution. Exiting services which can address these multiple needs and help women get out of prostitution are few and far between. Too often the police response has pursued vulnerable women for soliciting and loitering offences, while doing little if anything to tackle the 'punters' who create the demand, and who are also often committing criminal offences. If elected, would you take an approach to prostitution which both supported specialist exiting services and shifted the police response from those 'selling' to those 'buying' sex?

I look forward to hearing from you about your commitments in this area. I may share any response from you with the End Violence Against Women Coalition who will put it on their website alongside other Police and Crime Commissioner candidates' pledges.

Yours sincerely,

YOUR NAME
YOUR ADDRESS