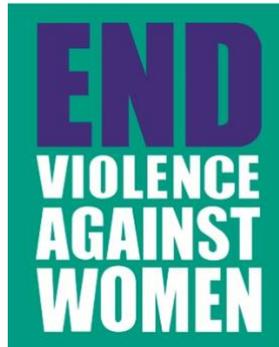


# England Local Elections, May 2018 - Activist Guide



## When are the elections?

3 May 2018

## Where are they happening?

There is a full list of where elections are happening [here](#). The elections are all in England and include all of London, a lot of the North-West, parts of the midlands and many other urban areas. **It's not too late to register to vote!** - Follow the links [here](#) where there is also more information on local councils' powers.

## What power do local councils have?

Local councils have enormous power over the basic services we all depend on. As well as bins, libraries, roads and parks, local councils have considerable influence over local schools, and they influence policing and some parts of health. Local councils often fund the specialist services for women and girls who need crisis help or long-term support after rape, forced marriage, abusive relationships and more.

Once elected many councils are run by a 'cabinet' where a set of perhaps six or eight individual councillors from the biggest party are appointed to key positions including for example schools and community safety. Some of these people will oversee multi-million pound budgets which will or will not be used to fund violence against women services and initiatives to prevent abuse.

Spend a few minutes browsing your local council website – it will tell you a bit more about its structure and key people – check out the 'your council' or 'council and democracy' section to see who has been a local councillor recently and what party they belong to.

## How do I find and contact my local candidates?

If you are not sure what council area or what council ward you live in you can find it [here](#).

A full list of election candidates should be on your local council website by early April. It will list them by ward and give their home address. You can write them an old fashioned letter!

If you use Twitter and Facebook you will find a lot of local election activity there, both from the individual candidates and the local parties pages. Send them messages as a local voter asking them to commit to the following pledges below.

You might also be able to find email addresses for candidates on any campaign website or page they have set up. Many invite email communication.

Any response you receive through any of these channels is absolutely 'on the record' and they can be held to it if elected.

### **What should I ask election candidates?**

You can keep it really simple and ask them to make this simple pledge:

***"I will take action on sexual harassment in public places. I will ensure there is help for domestic and sexual violence. I will speak out whenever these issues arise."***

If you want to ask them to make a more detailed commitment, you could ask them to answer the following:

If elected, will you work to ensure that sexual harassment in public spaces is not be tolerated? For example – will you talk to local businesses about ensuring customers and staff do not face sexual harassment, and ensure your licensing practices factor in women's safety?

If elected, will you push for the council to draw up an 'ending violence against women and girls plan'? As part of this, will you work to ensure the council funds support services for women and girls facing domestic violence, rape, forced marriage, FGM, and sexual exploitation?

If elected, will you survey the needs of different women in our area – by age, ethnicity, LGBT status, social background – and ensure the plans to combat abuse and provide support are responsive to all women's needs?

If elected, will you communicate with all schools in our area and ask them to make a priority of delivering the best Relationships and Sex Education [will be compulsory from September 2019] by ensuring all teachers are trained and confident in the issues, and by ensuring they have connected to local women's organisations who can sometimes deliver classes and can also help if children or parents disclose abuse?

### **Let us know about any pledges**

If you want to have any promises or pledges made to you recorded – [let us know](#) and we will add the candidate's name and promise to this page which you can then share. **Good luck!**