



Local Elections May 2024 - Volunteer Guide

Welcome! This is a short guide on how to use the period leading up to the local government elections as an opportunity to raise awareness of MND and the challenges people living with MND face.

Where councils in England are having elections this year, it's a great opportunity during the pre-election period for volunteers:

- a) to promote understanding of MND in general
- b) to ask them to pledge their support for local people with or affected by MND by signing the **MND Guarantee**:

“if elected as a councillor for [area name], I will champion the needs of my constituents living with and affected by MND.”



Reaching out to candidates before the election can mean that afterwards councillors are more likely to be receptive to a conversation about specific campaigns or support for local people affected by MND.

This guide includes a template letter for you to send, encouraging candidates to pledge a message of support for people with and affected by MND. It's important to read this together with the guidance for campaign volunteers on [maintaining political neutrality](#) during an election period.

If you have any questions, or for further discussion, please get in touch with us at campaigns@mndassociation.org or 020 3875 8910.

What about the General Election?

We're also asking campaign volunteers to contact candidates in the upcoming General Election asking them to pledge their support for people with and affected by MND. [You can find more information about this here](#). The General Election is our top priority but if you have time we hope you can cover your local elections too.



Are elections happening in my area?

In May 2024 local government elections will be taking place in some areas of England as well as to the Greater London Assembly¹. To find out if elections are taking place in your area you can use [the Electoral Commission website tool](#). Simply enter your postcode and you'll be presented with information about your candidates once they have been officially nominated.

If candidates' contact details are not yet listed on the website, try doing an internet search for a list of election candidates in your area. These details are usually hosted on local party websites. As these are often maintained by volunteers, it may take a little research and patience to find the correct contact details.

We recommend contacting candidates from all political parties who are standing in the **ward or division where you live**. An email/letter template is provided on page 4 of this guide. Do personalise your email as much as possible.

IMPORTANT: Please read [the guidance on political impartiality](#) during the pre-election period before you take action.

After the elections

Whether or not you got in touch with your candidates, you can still reach out to newly elected or re-elected councillors. To find out who has been elected in your local wards/divisions you can visit the Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-councillors>.

The first 100 days (a bit like with the president of the USA) is a key opportunity to raise awareness of MND and the issues in your local area. New councillors will be keen to hear from their constituents and see how they can support you. They will have more time to meet with you too so you could try and set up a meeting (virtual or face-to-face) or attend surgeries to discuss what your councillors can do to improve the situation for people living with MND.

A conversation with your councillor could include:

- Introducing them to MND using the Association's [key messages](#).
- Asking them for their help to get their council to adopt the [MND Charter](#).
- Asking for their help with a local campaign such as [Support MND Carers](#) or [Act to Adapt](#).

¹ Elections are also taking place for the London Mayor and eight regional mayors. With the exception of London and Manchester, these do not have direct influence over health and social care in the area.



If you'd like any support meeting your local candidates please get in touch with your staff point of contact at campaigns@mndassociation.org or 020 3875 891. For example:

- We can brief you on whether the council has adopted the MND Charter, or what we know of its track record on carers' services or housing adaptations.
- We can walk you through the ins and outs of meeting your councillor (this [handy how-to](#) is also a good guide).

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Template email/letter to candidates

Dear <FIRST NAME> <LAST NAME>

I am contacting you as a local constituent and as the <INSERT VOLUNTARY ROLE> for the <INSERT BRANCH/GROUP NAME> of the Motor Neurone Disease Association to congratulate you on being nominated as one of our local election candidates.

I would like to encourage you to join other candidates and commit to championing people living with and affected by motor neurone disease (MND) by signing the **MND Guarantee: if elected as a councillor, I will champion the needs of my constituents living with and affected by MND.**

What is MND?

As you may know, MND is a fatal, rapidly progressing disease that affects the brain and spinal cord. It kills a third of people within a year of diagnosis and more than half within two years. MND leaves people locked in a failing body, unable to move, talk and eventually breathe. 1 in 300 people will develop MND in their lifetime. There is no cure.

My family has been personally affected by MND. We've witnessed how it can wreck lives. <INSERT A FEW LINES ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE OF MND HERE, IF APPLICABLE >

What we do locally

The local <INSERT BRANCH/GROUP NAME> is organised and run entirely by volunteers with the aim of supporting those in our community who are affected by motor neurone disease (MND), be they a patient, carer, family member, friend, or someone bereaved by the disease.

<MENTION HERE IF YOUR COUNCIL HAS SIGNED THE MND CHARTER>

What you can do

Please commit to raising awareness of the disease and supporting the MND community in this area by replying with a message pledging your support, if elected. This small action will help to show that this issue matters to you and our council.

Thank you for considering championing people living with MND by signing the MND Guarantee. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

<FIRST NAME> <LAST NAME>