

# HUMANIST PRIORITIES IN THE 2019 UK GENERAL ELECTION



## Briefing from Humanists UK, November 2019

Here are some suggested questions for you to ask your local candidates, along with some detail to help you to do so. You could ask these questions at hustings, on the doorstep, or by writing to your candidates directly. Please find a guide for how to raise issues locally after the questions.

### **Do you support legally recognising humanist marriages in England and Wales?**

- The Government has stalled in giving legal recognition to humanist marriages, despite being given the power to do so by the Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Act 2013.
- In 2015, the number of humanist marriages in Scotland overtook those of the Church of Scotland. Legal recognition was granted there in 2005.
- 90% of responses to a consultation on the matter supported a change in the law.
- We call on MPs to give thousands of non-religious couples in England and Wales the same rights to get married in line with their beliefs as religious couples, as is already the case in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

### **Do you think we should get rid of faith-based religious education in state schools, and instead treat all major religious and non-religious worldviews equally?**

- We believe that RE should become an inclusive, impartial, objective, fair, balanced, and relevant subject allowing pupils to explore a variety of religions and humanism, sitting alongside other humanities subjects in the curriculum and with the same status as them.

### **Do you support legislating for school assemblies to be equally inclusive of all pupils, regardless of religion or belief, rather than being acts of collective worship?**

- The law requires 'broadly Christian' daily worship in schools which discriminates against non-Christian pupils, parents, and staff.
- Schools are diverse communities of all religions and beliefs.
- Inclusive school assemblies would be a more effective way of building shared values, and forwarding the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of all pupils.
- Humanists UK has launched a resource for schools to provide inclusive assemblies, called Assemblies for All.



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## **ENGAGING CANDIDATES ON HUMANIST ISSUES**

During an election, candidates are keen to meet local people and groups. This offers several opportunities to lobby and engage them on humanist issues.

### **Ask your candidates where they stand on our top humanist priorities:**

We've prepared a [draft email](#) you can send to your prospective parliamentary candidates about the key issues that are important to humanists. This action takes less than five minutes to complete.

[Use our draft email to write to your candidates](#)

**Visits:** In the last few weeks of campaigning before the election, look up if candidates are planning any visits to local groups and centres in your area. These will usually be advertised on their websites and social media. Go along to these visits and put your questions to the candidate. Candidates will also be knocking on doors locally to try and drum up support. This is also an opportunity to question them on key humanist issues.

**Attend local hustings:** Often candidates will participate in local hustings, where they will discuss a range of issues. This is an opportunity to raise humanist concerns which would not normally make the agenda. Check local newspapers, community groups publications, and your candidates' social media to see if hustings are being organised near you.

[See our guide to hustings.](#)

**Local press:** Candidates will be particularly sensitive to matters being raised in the local press (print, online, and broadcast) around election time. This presents a good opportunity to raise humanist issues by, for example, writing to your local paper.

**Social media:** A lot of candidates will be using Twitter and Facebook to promote their campaigns. Posting about humanist issues will raise the profile of humanism in the local area and with the candidates. You can also directly tweet candidates to ask them to support humanist causes

Note that from the dissolution of parliament until after the General Election, no constituency officially has an MP. MPs who are hoping to be re-elected will often keep in touch with their former constituents, although they cannot do this in any official capacity and cannot hold surgeries

**For more information contact Rachel Taggart-Ryan by calling 020 7324 3065 or emailing [rachel@humanists.uk](mailto:rachel@humanists.uk)**

