

later life ambitions



General Election 2017

Making your voice heard



Make sure your local parliamentary candidates commit to support older people if they are elected on 8 June

Dear member

Later Life Ambitions campaigns on issues to ensure that older people can lead an ambitious later life.

A general election is an important time for us to raise issues and make requests on politicians for policies that we feel can make a huge, positive difference to the lives of millions of older people.

This is why, ahead of the general election on 8 June 2017, we are asking members to write to their local parliamentary candidates to ask them to make commitments to support the following issues:

- **Urgently establish a cross-party solution to the long term funding of social care**
- **Maintain the pensions triple-lock**
- **Maintain universal pensioner benefits**
- **Stand up for pensioners during the Brexit process**

To secure the policy commitments we are seeking, we need MPs to advocate and campaign on these issues in the new parliament – and the ideal opportunity to do that is now whilst they are campaigning to secure your vote.

This toolkit explains how you can write to your local candidates to put forward our policy proposals and ask them to commit to representing your views in parliament should they be elected. A version of this letter is also available at www.laterlifeambitions.co.uk.

Please contact your candidates by:

1. Use the toolkit to find out more about Later Life Ambitions policy.
2. We have created a template email for you to send to your local candidates, available [online here](#) and on page 5. Please feel free to edit this if you would like.
3. The best website for finding your local candidates and their contact details is [Who Can I Vote For](http://WhocanIvotefor.co.uk) (whocanivotefor.co.uk). This website is being updated with candidate details all the time, so please check back regularly if not all of your candidates details are available.
4. Please forward any responses you receive to laterlife@connectpa.co.uk so we can keep track of what local candidates are saying.

Later Life Ambitions is a non-party political campaign. We do not campaign on behalf of, or endorse, any of the political parties and are not seeking to influence voters to vote for or against political parties or categories of candidates, including those who support or do not support particular policies or issues.

If you would like any more information about contacting your local candidates, please contact Fenella Nance on laterlife@connectpa.co.uk or call Fenella on 020 7592 9592.

We hope you will support Later Life Ambitions in building support for older people during this general election, and into the next parliament.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Duggan
General Secretary
Civil Service
Pensioners' Alliance



Steve Edwards
Chief Executive
National Association of
Retired Police Officers



Malcolm Booth
CEO
National Federation of
Occupational Pensioners

How to engage in the election

We want to get Later Life Ambitions' messages to candidates standing to become MPs in the 2017 general election. You can help with this by contacting your local candidates and asking them to support our policies for older people.

You can find contact details for your local parliamentary candidates by clicking [here](#) and entering your postcode.

Once you have their contact details, use the template email on page 5 to send individual messages to each candidate. You can also tweet your candidates if their social media details are listed online. Make sure you tag your candidate's twitter name in the tweet, as well as @laterlives so the campaign can see your message.

Suggested tweets include:

Hi [\[@candidate\]](#) will you support @laterlives and campaign on issues that matter most to pensioners?

I'm calling on my local candidate [\[@candidate\]](#) to stand up for older voters by supporting the @laterlives campaign

Hi [\[@candidate\]](#) will you support @laterlives in finding a solution to the social care funding crisis?

We need the pensions triple-lock, I am asking my local candidate [\[@candidate\]](#) to protect it @laterlives

On the doorstep

During the election campaign, you may be canvassed by local candidates who ask for your vote, either in the street or on your doorstep. These are useful opportunities to ask local candidates whether they support Later Life Ambitions policy. Please see page 4 for more information on the policies that Later Life Ambitions supports.

Local newspapers or other local organisations sometimes organise 'hustings' or community meetings where members of the public can put their questions directly to candidates.

If you are canvassed by a local candidate or if you attend a local hustings event, some suggested questions to ask your local candidates are:

- What are your plans to tackle the social care funding crisis?
- Will you commit to protect the pensions triple-lock?
- With 1.6 million pensioners living in poverty, will you commit to protect age-related universal benefits including free prescriptions, bus passes and free TV licences?
- Will you commit to stand up for pensioners during the Brexit process?

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Policy briefing

Later Life Ambitions campaign on a wide range of policy issues that affect older people. At this election, we are concentrating our campaigning on four main policy issues: social care, the pensions triple-lock, universal benefits and Brexit. More information about these policies is set out below:

SOCIAL CARE

As the population aged over 65 grows from 8.5 million in 2010 to nearly 13 million by 2030, the need for better care in later life will become increasingly acute. The next government must take bold steps to reform the social care system. Later Life Ambitions is campaigning for the next government to:

- Develop long-term, sustainable funding for a social care system that meets the needs of those who require it.
- Immediately introduce the Dilnot Report recommendations: a cap on lifetime care costs, a cap on residential care fees, more access to local authority deferred payment schemes and additional funding for social care budgets.
- Take steps to promote closer working between health and social care services to relieve pressure on the NHS and improve hospital discharge rates.

PENSIONS 'TRIPLE-LOCK'

The triple-lock is a guarantee to increase the state pension every year by the higher of the following measures: inflation, average earnings or a minimum of 2.5%. The lock ensures that pensioner income is not eroded by the gradual increase in the costs of living.

The triple-lock was introduced to make up for the many years in which the value of the state pension was eroded, which left many pensioners struggling to cope with the cost of living. Only now after several years of the triple-lock are many pensioners provided with the means to live financially secure lives as they get older.

Removing the triple-lock risks un-doing all this good work by the government. It may also cost the Treasury more money in the long run through rises in health and social care costs if pensioners are pushed further back into poverty.

UNIVERSAL BENEFITS

There are 1.6 million pensioners living in poverty and a further 1.1 million have incomes just above the poverty line. The typical income in the first year of retirement is around £11,000 – less than the new national living wage. Over half of all pensioners do not receive enough income to pay income tax and only 4% pay higher or additional rate of tax.

Age-related benefits which are available to all pensioners, such as free prescriptions, concessionary bus passes and free TV licences therefore play a vital role in reducing pensioner poverty and ensuring that older people are able to play an active part in society.

Overall universal benefits comprise only a tiny proportion of the Department for Work and Pensions' budget – just 1.5%, and help lift poorer pensioners out of poverty.

BREXIT

As the UK exits the European Union, it is vital that the Government stands up for the interests of pensioners. There are a number of areas where pensioners' needs must be protected after Britain leaves the European Union. These include:

- Maintaining the 'uprating' of the state pension for British citizens living in EU countries.
- Maintaining the European Health Insurance Card.
- Protecting the rights of EU citizens living in the UK, particularly because so many EU nationals work in the health and social care services, and protecting the rights of UK citizens living in other EU member states.

Template letter to local candidates

Feel free to amend this letter to personalise it to your local area. You can also find a version of this letter online at www.laterlifeambitions.co.uk.

Dear [insert name of candidate]

As my parliamentary candidate, will you support Later Life Ambitions?

As one of my parliamentary candidates in the [name] constituency at the general election, I would like to know if you will pledge your support for the following policies that would enable older people to lead an ambitious later life:

1. Urgently establish a cross-party solution to the long term funding of social care: Funding for adult social care is a national issue, and requires a national solution. We need real, cross-party leadership from all parties to identify how we can fund adult social care in the long term. This must include:

- long-term, sustainable funding for a social care system that meets the needs of those who require it
- the immediate introduction of the Dilnot Report recommendations
- steps to promote closer working between health and social care services to relieve pressure on the NHS and improve hospital discharge rates

2. Commit to maintain the pensions triple-lock: The pensions triple-lock was introduced to make up for the many years in which the value of the state pension was eroded and left many pensioners struggling to cope with the cost of living. Only now, after several years of the triple-lock, are many pensioners provided with the means to live more financially secure lives as they get older, but there are still too many who need this protection to continue. This is why the triple-lock must remain in place.

3. Commit to maintaining universal pensioner benefits: There are 1.6 million pensioners living in poverty and a further 1.1 million have incomes that are only just above the poverty line. This means that age-related benefits such as free prescriptions, concessionary bus passes and free TV licences play a vital role in reducing pensioner poverty and ensuring that older people are able to play an active part in society.

4. Stand up for pensioners during the Brexit process: There are a number of areas where pensioners' needs must be protected after Britain leaves the European Union. These include:

- Maintaining the 'uprating' of the state pension for British citizens living in EU countries.
- Maintaining the European Health Insurance Card.
- Protect the rights of EU citizens living in the UK, particularly because so many EU nationals work in the health and social care services, and protect the rights of UK citizens living in other EU member states.

As one of my local parliamentary candidates, I would be interested in hearing your thoughts on these issues. I would also like to know if you will pledge, should you be elected, to work to give older people an ambitious later life.

Yours sincerely

[Your name]

[Yours home address, including postcode]