

CND

General Election

Campaign 2024



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The threat of nuclear weapons use is ever present, and more so in times of conflict across the globe. The terrible consequences of nuclear war weigh heavy on us all.

For decades now, successive UK governments have told us there is no magic money tree when it comes to investing in education, housing, health care and the entire welfare state. Instead, they have made the political choice to spend £billions of taxpayers' money on building weapons of mass destruction that do not keep us safe. And this comes at a time when so many are at the sharpest end of the cost-of-living crisis.

It is incumbent on all of us to vote for candidates in this general election who will invest in a better future for us all; who will work for genuine human security over risk and uncertainty, and peace over conflict. In short, life over death.

Our aims

- To ensure that the vital issue of Britain's nuclear weapon is not forgotten in the 2024 General Election campaign.
- To make sure all candidates know that their views on nuclear disarmament can affect voter choices.
- To raise awareness amongst potential MPs of public opposition to nuclear weapons.
- To engage with candidates and help shape their views on Trident and nuclear weapons.
- To ensure candidates support ceasefire in Gaza and Ukraine.
- To gather information on candidates' views that can help future campaigning.

Finding out candidates' views

The centrepiece of our campaign is to find out the views of all candidates on key issues of peace and nuclear disarmament. We will collate the information that you gather for us and make it publicly available to inform voter choices.

The individual approach

To make it easy for local activists to find out candidates' views on nuclear weapons, we have set up an online lobbying system. You can lobby your candidates via our website, where we have a model letter with questions prepared, for you to email your candidates. Feel free to amend the letter as you see fit. Please let us know any answers that you receive.

What CND Groups can do

Many local groups are in contact with local candidates already. The priority now is to build on that and contact all party candidates in your constituency and find out their views on questions we have identified:

1. If elected, will you pledge to prioritise funding for essential services like the NHS, education and housing over investing billions in nuclear weapons?
2. Will you urge the UK government to fulfil its obligations on nuclear disarmament under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty? Additionally, would you promote UK support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons?
3. Diplomacy and dialogue are key in bringing about peaceful resolutions to war. Will you support the call for a ceasefire in Ukraine and Gaza?
4. Will you back the ending of nuclear energy production, considering its environmental impact, high costs, and safety concerns?
5. Will you oppose the return of US nuclear weapons to the UK, expected to be sited at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk?

Many candidates will only have a limited grasp of the issues, so engaging with them and helping shape their views is very important.



If they share our views, thank them and keep in touch with them. If they support nuclear weapons, engage in a lobbying process to shift their opinions. Even if they aren't elected to parliament, they may well be active local politicians.

CND local activists have a powerful role in being able to influence local candidates, as MPs care most about what their constituents think.

UK party policies on Britain's nuclear weapons

CONSERVATIVE policy remains in support of the maintenance and replacement of the UK's nuclear weapons.

"We will maintain our Trident nuclear deterrent, which guarantees our security".

The **GREEN PARTY** believes that the UK should join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and following this action the UK should "immediately begin the process of dismantling our nuclear weapons, cancel the Trident programme and remove any foreign nuclear weapons from the UK, ban the export of nuclear weapons related material, ban nuclear armed ships from UK territorial waters, and open the country to the appropriate international inspection agencies."

LABOUR policy is to "maintain an unshakeable commitment to NATO and our nuclear deterrent."

New **LIBERAL DEMOCRAT** policy, passed in March 2023 by Liberal Democrat members calls on the UK Government to:

- Maintain a minimum, credible nuclear deterrent.
- Maintain the Continuous At-Sea Deterrent stance.
- Remain committed to multilateral disarmament.

PLAID CYMRU "would work to prevent the renewal of weapons of mass destruction, such as Trident, and would refuse to allow them to be located in Wales or Welsh waters."

If Scotland became independent, the **SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY** (SNP), would remove Trident nuclear weapons from Scottish territory and would "advocate for the withdrawal of nuclear weapons as soon as can safely be undertaken."

Other election campaign initiatives you can undertake:

Lobbying candidates online

To make it easy for local activists to find out candidates' views on nuclear weapons, we have set up an online lobbying system. You can lobby your candidates via our website, where we have a model letter with questions prepared, for you to email your candidates. Feel free to amend the letter as you see fit.

Holding a local constituency hustings

We are urging CND groups and supporters to organise nuclear weapons-focused hustings events to engage with party candidates and find out their views on Britain's nuclear weapons and disarmament, and other crucial peace issues, reporting them back to us. We will make the findings publicly available. This work will help inform voter choices, raise awareness around key issues, and support our campaigning work in the future. This will be another opportunity to ask the questions that we are putting via online lobbying and individual discussion:

1. If elected, will you pledge to prioritise funding for essential services like the NHS, education and housing over investing billions in nuclear weapons?
2. Will you urge the UK government to fulfil its obligations on nuclear disarmament under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty? Additionally, would you promote UK support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons?



3. Diplomacy and dialogue are key in bringing about peaceful resolutions to war. Will you support the call for a ceasefire in Ukraine and Gaza?
4. Will you back the ending of nuclear energy production, considering its environmental impact, high costs, and safety concerns?
5. Will you oppose the return of US nuclear weapons to the UK, expected to be sited at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk?

What to do with candidates' answers

Please email any answers you receive to CNDGeneralElection@gmail.com so we can post them on our website as we receive them.

- You can also make the information available in your local media to help other voters decide who to vote for.
- Publish a press release both in advance and in reporting the results afterwards – to maximise your coverage.

ACTION: How to hold a local constituency hustings

A hustings is an opportunity to put questions to all your local candidates. You can organise one entirely on peace issues or you can work with other organisations on a range of social and political issues. Make sure questions about nuclear weapons are put to all candidates and any answers recorded.

Preparation

Working with others

Invite other local organisations to sponsor the event and try and have a wider audience than the local peace activists – invite your trades council and union branches, faith organisations, anti-cuts campaign groups, climate activists. They may be able to share any costs.

Inviting candidates

Invite all candidates and if you live in a town or area with multiple seats, ensure all parties are invited to send one representative. Give them as much notice as possible so their diaries are free. The candidates or local party branches should all have websites, or you could ask at your town hall.

Accessible venue

Ensure you have an attractive and accessible central venue for your meeting – this may be a town hall, college lecture theatre or faith hall. Check it has disabled access.

Time to mobilise

Give yourself time to publicise and mobilise for the event so people are aware of it.

Publicity

Use all means of publicity – your own email list, ask co-sponsor organisations to email their members, social media such as a facebook event and use of twitter, face-to-face leafleting from a stall, outside the supermarket, or deliveries door-to-door near the venue.

Advertising

Advertise in the local newspaper – if you can afford a small advert this will put it on the agenda of local candidates and other political activists who read local media. The paper may be more likely to report on it if you have discussed your advert with them.



Press Release

Press release the event – make sure local media, both traditional print and any local news websites or blogs are aware of the event and offer to send them a follow-up report and photos.

Here are two examples of model press releases for local use: the first has a main focus on Trident and the second on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

1.

People in [TOWN/CONSTITUENCY] grill election candidates on nuclear weapons spending

'At a time when we are seeing increased poverty and huge cuts to the public sector, people are quite rightly questioning why over £205bn of our money should be spent on a new nuclear weapons system to replace Trident.

'This is tax payers' money that would be better spent on the National Health Service, jobs and education and housing.

'Now we are heading into a general election, we want our elected representatives to use their influence, and engage in the process of cancelling Trident and its replacement.'

The hustings will take place at [VENUE] at [TIME] on [DATE], and is organised by members of [GROUP NAME]. Parliamentary candidates attending to discuss their position on Trident replacement include [NAME (PARTY); NAME (PARTY); NAME (PARTY) etc.].

2.

People in [TOWN/CONSTITUENCY] grill election candidates on nuclear weapons possession

On [DATE], residents of [TOWN/CONSTITUENCY] are to hold a hustings of parliamentary candidates ahead of the general election in [INSERT MONTH] 2024: to debate Britain's possession of nuclear weapons.

[NAME], spokesperson for [GROUP], said:

'As a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, it is not good enough that the British government claims to support global nuclear disarmament whilst at the same time still possessing deadly nuclear weapons.

'It's time for the UK to support the UN's Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons – to ensure the abolition of all nuclear weapons worldwide.

'As we head towards the general election, parliamentary candidates have to know that scrapping Trident is a vote winner.'

Event details

[NAME]

[DATE]

[VENUE]

[SPEAKERS]

For further information, please contact [NAME] on [MOBILE/EMAIL].

