

LOCAL DEMOCRACY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

April 2022

Connect



BACKGROUND

Later Life Ambitions (LLA) is determined to ensure that the voice of British pensioners is heard in local government. We're asking that you get in touch with your local councillor or council candidate to ask them to consider the needs of those in later life.

Some areas are having local elections this May. If your local area is not having an election, you can still get in touch with your local Councillor to ask them to support the ambitions of those in later life.

We are asking that you ask your current or potential councillor three simple questions:

WILL YOU ENSURE THAT COUNCIL SERVICES, INCLUDING SUPPORT, ARE ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE BOTH ON AND OFFLINE, SO THAT OLDER PEOPLE AND THOSE LESS COMFORTABLE USING TECHNOLOGY ARE NOT EXCLUDED?

WILL YOU ENSURE THAT COUNCIL SERVICES AND POLICIES ARE SET UP IN A WAY THAT CONSIDERS THE NEEDS OF THOSE IN LATER LIFE?

Later Life Ambitions wants all candidates to help change the terms of the debate to focus on the ambitions of pensioners rather than the perceived 'costs' to the rest of society. We therefore encourage our members to personally contact your local candidates and ask them to commit to giving older people the best chance to live fulfilling later lives.

This toolkit has been created by Later Life Ambitions to support members to engage with local candidates in the election, including guidance on how to find out who your local candidates are, how to contact them and what to say. It has been designed to be as simple as possible because it is important for everyone to have their voice heard, regardless of experience or ability.

HOW TO ASK YOUR LOCAL CANDIDATES OR COUNCLLORS TO SUPPORT OLDER PEOPLES' AMBITIONS

Are there local elections in your area? Find out who is up for election and what elections are being held by entering your postcode here: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information/

I. IF YOU HAVE ELECTIONS IN YOUR AREA

Full lists of candidates for the local elections can be found on the following website:

www.whocanivotefor.co.uk/

You can also use the following website to find details of your local council and their elections and voting teams: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information/

It is important to write and engage with all candidates in your ward, even if you feel that a particular candidate is likely to be more supportive.

Email addresses for candidates can usually be found on local party websites. Please note that it is not possible to find contact details for every candidate, as some choose not to share this information publicly.

If there are no direct contact details available, you can try to contact them through social media. You can also contact candidates through their party's local branch. You can find these by ringing the main telephone line for the political party and asking for further details:

- Labour Party: 0345 092 2299
- Conservative Party: 020 7222 9000
- Liberal Democrats: 020 7022 0988
- The Scottish National Party: 0800 633 5432
- The Green Party: 02036919400
- Plaid Cymru: 029 2047 2272
- The Brexit Party: 0800 414 8525
- The Electoral Commission: 0333 103 1928

TEMPLATE LETTER

The following template letter has been designed to be sent to all candidates in your ward. The sections highlighted in yellow should be filled in with your constituency's details.

Subject: **Will you enable older people to live an ambitious and fulfilling later life?**

Dear **[insert name of candidate]**,

I live in the **[name]** ward and am writing to request the needs of older people are at the forefront of your political agenda.

I am a member of Later Life Ambitions (LLA). LLA is a campaigning organisation which brings together the collective voices of over 250,000 pensioners through three organisations – the National Federation of Occupational Pensioners, the Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance and the National Association of Retired Police Officers. We campaign nationally, regionally and locally on a wide range of issues to improve the lives of older people. We have ambitious aspirations for pensioners.

From fair pensions to safe and sustainable care services, accessible housing to regular bus services which promote independence, we require bold and forward-looking action from our political leaders.

With your support, I want to see a change in the terms of the debate to focus on the ambitions of pensioners rather than the perceived 'costs' to the rest of society. So, we urge you to recognise the

value of pensioners, and work towards providing an aspirational, ambitious future for those in later life.

My primary concern is the need ensure that older people, many of whom are less comfortable using technology, are not excluded from accessing council services if they are not comfortable doing so online.

As my prospective councillor, I would like you to answer the following questions:

- Will you ensure that council services, including support, are accessible to people both on and offline, so that older people and those less comfortable using technology are not excluded?
- Will you ensure that council services and policies are set up in a way that considers the needs of those in later life?

For example, such measures could include taking steps to make town centres and public spaces accessible will help older people to get out and about. This will benefit their mental health after isolation and lockdown and mean that they can play their part in helping the recovery of our local economy.

I hope you share my desire to keep our local society open and accessible to those in later life. I look forward to your response on these issues.

Name
Address

II. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ELECTIONS IN YOUR AREA

If your area does not have elections coming up, you can find details of your local councillor(s) by visiting: www.writetothem.com

You can use this website to write to your councillor(s). You can copy and paste our template letter below and send it with your details added in automatically.

In some areas, you might be represented by more than one councillor.

Your local council website will also have contact details for your local councillor, including a telephone number and postal address.

If you do not have access to the internet, you can find out who your local councillor is by calling your local council's switchboard. Your council's phone number will be accessible in your local phonebook or on any letters you have received from the council. They will be able to provide you with a postal address to write to.

TEMPLATE LETTER

The following template letter has been designed to be sent to councillor(s) in your ward. The sections highlighted in yellow should be filled in with your details.

Subject: **Will you enable older people to live an ambitious and fulfilling later life?**

Dear **[insert name of councillor]**,

I live in the **[name]** ward and am writing to request that the needs of older people are at the forefront of your political agenda.

I am a member of Later Life Ambitions (LLA). LLA is a campaigning organisation which brings together the collective voices of over 250,000 pensioners through three organisations – the National Federation of Occupational Pensioners, the Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance and the National Association of Retired Police Officers. We campaign nationally, regionally and locally on a wide range of issues to improve the lives of older people. We have ambitious aspirations for pensioners.

From fair pensions to safe and sustainable care services, accessible housing to regular bus services promoting independence, we require bold and forward-looking action from our political leaders. With your support, I want to see a change in the terms of the debate to focus on the ambitions of pensioners rather than the perceived 'costs' to the rest of society. So, we urge you to recognise the value of pensioners, and provide an aspirational, ambitious future for those in later life.

My primary concern is the need ensure that older people, many of whom are less comfortable using technology, are not excluded from accessing council services if they are not comfortable doing so online.

As my councillor, I would like you to answer the following questions:

- How are you ensuring that council services, including support, are accessible to people both on and offline, so that older people and those less comfortable using technology are not excluded?
- How are you ensuring that council services and policies are set up in a way that considers the needs of those in later life?

For example, such measures could include taking steps to make town centres and public spaces accessible will help older people to get out and about. This will benefit their mental health after isolation and lockdown and mean that they can play their part in helping the recovery of our local economy.

I hope you share my desire to keep our local society open and accessible to those in later life. I look forward to your response on these issues.

Name
Address

III. INFORM CONNECT ABOUT ANY INTERACTION YOU HAVE WITH ANY CANDIDATE OR COUNCILLOR

Please contact Connect, Later Life Ambitions' Westminster based team, to let them know about any contact that you have had with any of your local candidates or councillors as part of this campaign. We would love for you to share your photos with candidates, if you do meet with them, for us to use on our website and in future publications. The email address is laterlife@connectpa.co.uk or you can call the team on 020 7592 9592.

Connect can then use this information to follow up with any elected candidate or current councillor.

IV. SEEK A MEETING TO TALK TO CANDIDATES AND COUNCILLORS ABOUT ENSURING OLDER PEOPLE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE AMBITIOUS LATER LIVES.

In addition to writing to your candidates and councillors, Later Life Ambitions is encouraging members to seek face-to-face meetings with them as it is more likely to have an impact.

If you secure a meeting, the most important thing is to speak about your personal story and how LLA's asks will ensure yourself and other older people can have fulfilling, aspirational later lives.

You should also tell them what they can do to help. It is important to come to the meeting with 'actions' in mind, for example:

- Print off a copy of Later Life Ambitions' policy positions (available on our website) and take it with you to the meeting.
- Get a picture with them, if you are on social media, you can then share this to your page. Remember to tag **@LaterLives** so that we can see the work you are doing for the campaign.
- Ask them to champion the rights of local older people to ensure they can live fulfilling later lives within their local area.

Follow up after the meeting by writing a short email or letter. Thank the person you met for their time and thoughts, and for their support, if appropriate.

V. SEND A PRESS RELEASE TO YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER, RADIO STATION OR NEWSLETTER

Your local BBC radio station or regular local newspaper will be grateful for you providing them with a well-written press release and thoughts on your own personal circumstances. They might run it completely unedited, and you might also be asked for a comment or to appear on the air. The Later Life Ambitions team can help you to prepare if you are asked to appear.

You can find the contact details for your local media on their website, email laterlives@connectpa.co.uk or call 020 7592 9592 and the team can help you.

Older residents in **insert your area** fight for services for all in local elections

With the local elections on the horizon, a group of older people in **your area** have written to their local **council candidate/councillors** to ask them to keep council services accessible to older people offline and to consider the needs of the ageing population when making policy.

With 2 in 5 people in later life not confident using the internet, the fast pace of change can leave some people feeling left behind. It's incredibly important that vital local services remain accessible to all, no matter how they choose to access them. This includes council services. As some of the most engaged and regular voters, older people are particularly aware of these challenges and are ready to support those who hear their concerns.

Members of national campaigning organisation, Later Life Ambitions have been writing to council candidates in **your area** to make sure that the services people use in their day to day lives, from bins to buses and parking to planning remain open to all. This is particularly important now considering the cost-of-living crisis and the disproportionate impact this has on older people, many of whom are on fixed incomes. As we face an ageing population, making sure services consider older people is even more important.

Local resident and **CSPA/NARPO/NFOP** member **your name here** said:

PROVIDE QUOTE HERE – AN EXAMPLE IS GIVEN BELOW

***“[Insert name of council] needs to take into account the views and experiences of all members of our community. As we approach the elections on May 5th, we want to remind them of the views of many older people.*”**

Many people in later life do not have access to the internet and we want to make sure that they are not cut off from local services. As we move more online – in part because of the pandemic - councils can't forget those who might not be fully digital.”

Notes for Editors

Later Life Ambitions (LLA) brings together the collective voices of over a quarter of a million pensioners through three organisations - the National Federation of Occupational Pensioners, the Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance, and the National Association of Retired Police Officers. We campaign nationally, regionally, and locally on a wide range of issues to improve the lives of our members, and older people more generally.

For more information, please contact **Your Name** on **Your Contact Details**.

More information on the national campaign is available at laterlife@connectpa.co.uk, visit @laterlives on Twitter or visit our website at www.laterlifeambitions.co.uk.

FURTHER INFORMATION

More information about LLA can be found on our website: www.laterlifeambitions.co.uk

If you have any further questions, please contact Connect, Later Life Ambition's Westminster based team, on laterlife@connectpa.co.uk.