

# Briefing Paper

**Dharmic Ideas & Policy Foundation** has prepared this brief in response to some the media raising questions about charitable organisations playing a part in the GE2019 elections. Particularly on the Q of political campaigning and supporting / endorsing political parties. Below is a short summary of the key areas with a link to the Charity Commission for fuller details.

## Summary Guide for whether Charities can Campaign.

### Basic Questions

**Can charities campaign?** Yes - in support of its charitable purposes.

**Can they campaign for a change in the law or policy?** Yes - again where it supports the charity's purposes.

**If they're engaging in the political arena, what can they do?** Stress their independence and ensure that any involvement with political parties is balanced.

**Can they support a political party or candidate?** No - and they must not fund them either. But a charity can support **specific policies** advocated by political parties if it helps achieve its charitable purposes.

### Things to watch out for

At elections, charities must be, and be seen to be, independent from party politics. To comply with this guidance, you should ensure:

- Your campaigning and political activity supports the delivery of your charitable purposes.
- Your organisation maintains independence from political parties and candidates, and that any involvement with political parties is balanced.
- That any support you give to specific policies advocated by political parties helps your organisation deliver its charitable purposes.
- That if you have a similar policy position to that of a political party, you should stress your independence from the political party and do nothing to encourage support for the party.
- You do not explicitly compare your views with those of political parties or candidates or encourage people to vote for or against parties that support or do not support these views.
- If you publish a manifesto, it must encourage political parties to adopt certain policies or raise the public profile of your issues, not influence voters.
- If you host a public meeting or hustings with candidates, you should try to invite candidates from across the political spectrum.

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- You do not give support or funding to a political party, candidate or politician.

## Useful Links

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/speaking-out-guidance-on-campaigning-and-political-activity-by-charities-cc9>

## Health Warning

Please note that these are the views of DIPF and should not be relied upon. You should rely on your own reading of guidance and if you have any doubt you should contact the Charity Commission or the Electoral Commission and seek guidance from them.