

GAMESLEY COMMUNITY GROUP (“GCG”)

Charitable Incorporated organisation

(“CIO”)

Guidance on the rules surrounding campaigning and political activity

The board will have absolute power to determine any campaign or political activity at any time. The purpose of such, the extent of such, the manner and control of such a campaign (including literature and actions) and shall always act in accordance with relevant legislation, regulatory guidance.

The board will also remain mindful of the need to maintain the highest reputational standing of GCG specifically and the charity sector generally.

The following guidance will always be observed.

1. Can charities take part in campaigning/political activity?

Yes!

- Campaigning and political activity is a legitimate and valuable activity for charities to help achieve their charitable purposes.
- Charities can campaign for a change in the law, policy or decisions where such change would support the charity’s purposes. Charities can also campaign to ensure that existing laws are observed.
- However, any campaigning or political activity should be compliant with both charity and lobbying legislation.
- Political campaigning, or political activity, must be undertaken by a charity **only in the context of supporting the delivery of its charitable purposes**. Unlike other forms of campaigning, it must not be the continuing and sole activity.

2. What are the rules around political campaigning?

There is a range of specific guidance which has been produced to help charities ensure they are compliant with both charity and lobbying legislation:

Charity campaigning in a general election period - GOV.UK

Charities, Elections and Referendums - GOV.UK (England and Wales)

OSCR | Updated guidance for Scottish charities on campaigning about political issues

Charities must be seen to be neutral and impartial at all times. In the political arena, a charity must stress its independence and ensure that any involvement it has with political

parties is balanced. A charity must not give, **nor be seen to be giving**, support or funding to a political party, nor to a candidate or politician.

Charities must also apply this against the activities of their staff/trustees, particularly if they are high-profile figures (e.g. CEO, regular spokespeople, active on social media for work purposes).

Charities should be mindful of the tone of their messaging, particularly on social media. The Charity Commission said that messages should be “Responsible and measured”.

The Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union

Administration Act 2014, otherwise known as the ‘Lobbying Act’, restricts and regulates how ‘non-party campaigners’ spend money on public campaigns during election times.

This is unlikely to cause an issue for local carer organisations because the legislation requires an organisation to have spent more than £10,000 on campaigning since 4 July 2023 to be considered a ‘non-party campaigner’.

What if a political party advocates for policies you are calling for?

A charity may give its support to specific policies advocated by political parties if it would help achieve its charitable purposes.

If a party (or candidate) adopts a policy which aligns with a longstanding policy ask of your organisation/Carers Trust, you can welcome that support and call on other parties to adopt the same stance.

You are also able to set out different party positions on a particular policy area but you cannot encourage people to vote for a particular candidate/party as a result.

Engaging with Prospective Parliamentary Candidates

- If you wish to engage with any Prospective Parliamentary Candidates, then you must seek to engage with them all, or at least all of the main political parties/candidates.
- If you are inviting candidates to hustings, or asking their views on specific matters, then this opportunity should be made available to all (unless there is a specific reason for not engaging – e.g. police advice, limit on spaces so limiting to main parties)
- Candidates who have previously engaged with you/carers you support (e.g. MPs who are re-standing) may try to highlight their previous association with you/the carers you support. You must not engage with this.

- Candidates may also seek to use your standing in the community to boost their election chances through a photo opportunity/visit – if you are making this available to one candidate, then it should also be equally available for all candidates. It would be safest not to make these opportunities available for individual candidates.