



General Election Guide 2019

The UK is set to go to the polls on **12 December, 2019**. #MEAction UK has prepared this guide ahead of the General Election with information on how to register for voting, different ways of voting (postal, proxy, etc), information about candidates and tips on raising awareness about myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) with candidates. **Make your voice heard by voting.**

Contents

About voting	2
Who can vote?	2
Deadline for registering to vote in the General Election	2
How to register to vote	2
Get help registering	3
How to get a postal vote	3
How to vote by proxy	3
Find your candidates	4
Commitments about ME you can ask from all candidates	4
Parity of research funding	4
Suspend GET and CBT treatments	4
Update professional training	5
Stop unjustified child protection proceedings	5
More information and leaflets	5
Ask your candidates to make statements on social media	6
Template messages	6
Email	6
Twitter	7
Facebook and Instagram	7
Graphics you can use on social media	8
Facebook	8
Twitter	9
Instagram	10

About voting

Who can vote?

You can vote if you're both:

- aged 18 or over
- a UK citizen (or an Irish, EU or Commonwealth citizen with a permanent UK address)

Deadline for registering to vote in the General Election

Register by midnight on 26 November to vote in person in the General Election on 12 December. If you want to apply to [vote by post](#), register before:

- 5pm on 26 November if you live in England, Scotland or Wales
- 5pm on 21 November if you live in Northern Ireland

If you're going to be abroad on election day, you can apply to [vote by proxy](#) after you've registered.

How to register to vote

You need to be on the electoral register to vote in the General Election. If you are not sure whether you are already registered or if you wish to update your details or voting preferences, continue to register now.

You can register online or submit a paper form. You'll be asked for your National Insurance number (but you can still register if you do not have one). After you've registered, your name and address will appear on the electoral register.

a) Registering online

[Register here](#) to get your name on the electoral register.

b) Registering with a paper form

You can:

- [register using a paper form in England, Wales and Scotland](#)
- [register using a paper form in Northern Ireland](#)

c) Other ways to apply

There's a different process to [register anonymously](#), for example if you're concerned about your safety.

Get help registering

You can get help registering from your local [Electoral Registration Office](#).

There's an [easy read guide about registering to vote](#) for people with a learning disability.

How to get a postal vote

If you want to [apply to vote by post](#) in the General Election, apply by 5pm on 26 November to receive your postal voting pack. Your postal vote must then arrive at your Electoral Office in the UK by 10pm on 12 December.

There's a different form to [apply to vote by post in Northern Ireland](#). Apply by 5pm on 21 November.

How to vote by proxy

If you're unable to vote in person you can ask someone to vote on your behalf. This is called a proxy vote. You can only apply for a proxy vote under certain circumstances, including:

- being away on polling day
- having a medical issue or disability
- Not being able to vote in person because of work or military service

Apply for a proxy vote using a paper form. You need to send it to your local Electoral Registration Office.

- you need to apply by 5pm on 4 December to vote by proxy in the General Election in England, Scotland or Wales. Find the forms [here](#).
- There's a different form to apply to vote by proxy in Northern Ireland. Apply by 5pm on 21 November. Find the forms [here](#).

If you need further information about voting, please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/voting-in-the-uk#overview>

On polling day, 12 December, polls will be open from 7am until 10pm. If you do not know where to go to vote, you can find more information here: <https://wheredoivote.co.uk/>

Find your candidates

The list of candidates who are standing in your constituency will be available after 14 November on your local authority website and on local notice boards. Information on the candidates standing will also be made available at Who can I vote for?

<https://whocanivotefor.co.uk> - this includes, most of the time, their social media accounts and email addresses.

You can find official election information for your area via the Electoral Commission website by typing in your postcode [here](#) (note that polling station information will be available approximately two weeks before the election).

Commitments about ME you can ask from all candidates

You can make candidates aware of the issues that people with ME face and let them know of urgent needs such as suspending dangerous and outdated treatment recommendations from the NICE guidelines (GET and CBT), the need for biomedical research, updating healthcare professional training and stopping unjustified child protection proceedings.

You can ask candidates for their commitment to the following demands. There are links below for you to print out or email further information about ME to the candidates.

Parity of research funding

The government must urgently invest in biomedical research after decades of neglecting people with ME. Funding for research must reflect the severity of ME and its prevalence in the UK.

Suspend GET and CBT treatments

Graded Exercise Therapy (GET) and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) are the main

treatments recommended in the NHS. GET is harming people with ME and CBT is ineffective and must be suspended immediately.

Update professional training

GPs and healthcare professionals receive little to no training about ME. Current continuing professional development courses are outdated and inaccurate and need to be updated urgently.

Stop unjustified child protection proceedings

There are an estimated 25,000 children with ME in the UK. ME is the leading cause of long-term school sickness absence in the UK. 1 in 5 families of children with ME are subjected to unjustified child protection proceedings. These unjustified proceedings against families of children with ME must be stopped.

More information and leaflets

You can email or download these to pass on to candidates:

- ❖ ME UK Factsheet:
<http://www.meaction.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/MEAction-UK-Factsheet.pdf>
- ❖ #MillionsMissing 2019 UK leaflet:
<http://www.meaction.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/UK-leaflet-2019.pdf>
- ❖ Your Experience of ME Services in the UK - survey report by #MEAction UK:
<http://www.meaction.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Your-experience-of-ME-services-Survey-report-by-MEAction-UK.pdf>
- ❖ GET & CBT are not safe for ME:
<https://www.meaction.net/2019/04/03/get-and-cbt-are-not-safe-for-me-summary-of-survey-results/>
- ❖ January 2019 ME Debate Parliamentary Briefing:
http://www.meaction.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/MEAction_UK_Parliament_Briefing_Full_Jan19.pdf

Ask your candidates to make statements on social media

Social media is a great tool to use, you can either contact your candidates by email or through social media asking them to commit to fighting for people with ME.

Ask your candidates to tweet or retweet their support, or share a post on Facebook or Instagram.

Template messages

Find below an email you can send to candidates as well as sample language you can use to post on social media. You'll also find graphics you can use below.

Email

Dear *[insert candidates name]*,

As a constituent in your area, I want to know which candidates will commit to fighting for people with ME if elected.

ME is a debilitating disease affecting 250,000 people in the UK - that's about 400 people in your constituency, of whom 25% will be housebound or bedbound. Average quality of life for people with ME is lower than other common illnesses, including cancer, diabetes, lupus, stroke, heart disease and chronic renal failure.

This is a deeply isolating illness, compounded by stigma from all parts of society.

Our country and health systems are not fit for purpose for this severely disabled population, and you could make a difference in parliament on this cross-party issue.

[Insert a paragraph about your experience with ME, or that of a family member or friend]

Will you commit to supporting people with ME in parliament?

Please post your support on social media. You could say: "I will support people with ME in parliament, and fight on behalf of constituents for parity of research funding, an end to harmful treatments, updated training for healthcare professionals and to stop unjustified child protection proceedings. #MyalgicE #GE2019 #MEAction"

If you need further information about ME, please check #MEAction UK's Factsheet: <http://www.meaction.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/MEAction-UK-Factsheet.pdf>

Kind regards,

[Your name and address (including postcode)]

Twitter

- a) #MyalgicEncephalomyelitis (ME) is a severely debilitating disease. You could make a difference in parliament. *[insert candidates twitter handle]* please retweet to commit to demanding research funding to find effective treatments for this debilitating disease. #GE2019 #MEAction
- b) People with ME #pwME are often subjected to ineffective and harmful treatments. Will you support this severely disabled population in parliament? *[insert candidates twitter handle]* retweet to show the constituents with ME in your area that you will fight for them as their MP. #GE2019 #MEAction

Facebook and Instagram

- a) #MyalgicEncephalomyelitis (ME) is a severely debilitating disease. You could make a difference in parliament. *[insert candidates Facebook or Instagram handle]* please commit to demanding research funding to find effective treatments for this debilitating disease. #GE2019 #MEAction
- b) People with ME #pwME are often subjected to ineffective and harmful treatments. Will you support this severely disabled population in parliament? *[insert candidates Facebook or Instagram handle]* show the constituents with ME in your area that you will fight for them as their MP. These four key areas need urgent change:
 - Parity of research funding
 - Suspending ineffective and harmful treatments
 - Updating healthcare professional training
 - Stopping unjustified child protection proceedings against families of children with ME#GE2019 #MEAction

Graphics you can use on social media (you can also download them [here](#))

Facebook



Twitter

COMMIT TO

**SUPPORT
PEOPLE
WITH ME
IN PARLIAMENT**

GENERAL ELECTION 2019 | #GE2019

FUND RESEARCH FOR
YOUR CONSTITUENTS

**#ME
ACTION**

COMMIT TO

**FIGHT FOR
PEOPLE
WITH ME
AS THEIR MP**

GENERAL ELECTION 2019 | #GE2019

FUND RESEARCH FOR
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**#ME
ACTION**

Instagram

