



Northamptonshire Local Resilience Forum

Changes to legislation for canvassing as of 8th March for the 6th May elections and elections / by elections thereafter

A change to the covid legislation is to be made to allow door to door campaigning activity.

It represents a proportionate approach which effectively balances the importance of effective elections with the need to protect public health.

Who

Anyone who has been asked by a candidate, party or campaign organiser to participate. Those in charge of campaigns will have to ensure that campaigners are aware of the guidance and of their responsibilities to follow the lockdown rules.

When

These provisions will be applicable from 8 March to ensure that all electors can be contacted and ensure there is equality of access to information so that electors are able to make informed choices about who and what they vote for. This will also ensure there is equality of opportunity for candidates to put forward their policies and arguments to their electorates.

What changes from 8th March

All activity will still need to adhere to rules regarding social distancing and limits on gatherings.

1. Deliver leaflets - People who are campaigning in support of the electoral success (or against the electoral success) of candidates or political parties, or relating to a referendum outcome, will be allowed to deliver leaflets
2. The number of campaigners operating together should be kept to an absolute minimum and a minimum 2 metres distance should be maintained between them at all times.
3. Campaigners should not enter a private home except entering as a shared hallway in a block of flats, where absolutely necessary to reach individual homes served by communal areas. Unless it is unsafe to do so, canvassing from within shared internal areas should be carried out by a single campaigner
4. Campaigners may speak to electors on their doorsteps, maintaining at least 2 metres distance at all times.
5. They should ensure that all necessary mitigations are applied including the wearing of face coverings, keeping socially distanced at 2 metres, and sanitising hands between visiting different households.
6. They should not meet with other campaigners indoors. It is safer to meet outdoors but 2 metre social distancing should still be maintained.
7. Operational collection and delivery of campaign literature should be handled on a click and drop or doorstep drop procedure. Only rarely will two people be required indoors at the same location to manage bulk delivery handling.
8. Meetings to organise and plan campaigns should be held online or over the phone. They should not take place in person. Where campaigners must attend in person, for example to collect printed materials, this should be organised on a one by one basis.

9. Hustings and public meetings must take place remotely.
10. Prior to any campaigning, participants should undertake a risk assessment.
11. Wear a face covering when meeting anybody they do not live with, whether electors or other campaigners

Campaigning safely from 29 March

The provision for six people or two households to meet outdoors may support organisational work by campaigners and the holding of meetings outdoors. At this stage, there will be no change to the rules on meeting others indoors. This means that the rules on doorstep campaigning will not change.

All campaigning activity will need to follow the relevant rules on gatherings and social distancing. If it is necessary to meet electors, campaigners should continue to do so outdoors, for example on the doorstep, and should not enter people's homes.