



#DebateNotHate

Guidance

Outline of presentation

- Current available guidance and sources of information
- LGA guidance on handling intimidation
- NPCC guidance on candidate safety
- EHRC guidance on pre-election period
- Other guidance
- Future guidance



Handling intimidation

Local Government Association

Log in

Search the site



Home

About ▾

Our support ▾

Case studies

Parliament ▾

Topics ▾

Publications

Events ▾

Councillors' guide to handling intimidation

Practical steps that you and your council can undertake to protect yourself as a person in a public position.



#DebateNotHate

S.H.I.E.L.D principles

- **Safeguard** –protect yourself online and in person
- **Help** – in any situation ensure you are safe before you take further action and get help if needed
- **Inform** – you can inform the individual or group that you consider their communication or action as intimidating, threatening or abusive. There is a growing movement of ‘digital citizenship’, which encourages the labelling of poor online conduct as a way of challenging such behaviour.
- **Evidence** – if you consider that a communication or action is intimidatory, threatening or abusive, gather evidence.
- **Let people know** – report the incident to your social media platform/officers/party contact/lead member/the police; depending on the nature and severity of the incident(s).
- **Decide** – determine whether you want to continue receiving communications or approaches



#DebateNotHate

<https://www.local.gov.uk/councillors-guide-handling-intimidation>

Key points

- Keep a record of any abuse
- Carefully consider how and whether to respond to inaccurate or defamatory social media comments
- Report any abuse to the social media companies for its deletion or to raise concerns about an account

- ✓ 1. Introduction
- ✓ 2. Keep a record
- ✓ 3. Tackling abuse on social media
- ✓ 4. Twitter: muting or blocking accounts
- ✓ 5. Twitter: reporting abuse
- ✓ 6. Facebook: tackling abuse
- ✓ 7. Blogs: tackling abuse

www.local.gov.uk/personal-safety the Welsh LGA for the reproduction of their **guide** in the development of this

Councillors' guide to handling intimidation

General advice on handling intimidation

Personal safety

Councillors and social media

#DebateNotHate

Key points

- Threats to kill, rape, serious violence, stalking and property damage are all criminal offences
- Intimidating behaviour that is face-to-face or by letter, telephone call or online is a criminal offence
- Councillors are encouraged to make a record of these incidents and report them. Even if it does not result in a criminal investigation or conviction, it is important that the collective scale of the issue is reported

[Download detailed information on related legislation](#)

∨ 1. Legal background

∨ 2. Summary of offences and corresponding legislation

∨ 3. Balancing freedom of speech and its limitations

∨ 4. Severity of intimidation

Councillors' guide to handling intimidation

General advice on handling intimidation

Personal safety

Councillors and social media

#DebateNotHate

National Police Chief's Council - Candidate safety

The screenshot shows the NPCC website with a navigation menu and a main article. The article title is "Security guidance issued to help candidates stay safe on the campaign trail" dated 15 Nov 2019. A large teal box contains the text "Intimidation of election candidates has serious implications for democracy". Below this are logos for NPCC, The Electoral Commission, CPS, and the College of Policing. A footer line reads: "All election candidates are today being issued with guidance to help them respond if they experience intimidatory behaviour or..."

Events | Vacancies |

NPCC
National Police Chiefs' Council

Home | About Us | Our work | NPoCC | National police units | Latest News | Publications | Contact us

Contact Us

For media enquiries call
020 3276 3803
or 07803 903686 for urgent out of hours enquiries.

You can also email the press office.
Follow us on @policechiefs

15 Nov 2019

6

Intimidation of election candidates has serious implications for democracy

All election candidates are today being issued with guidance to help them respond if they experience intimidatory behaviour or...

Police Chiefs' Blog

- ▶ Drones and the police
- ▶ Chief Superintendent Nik Adams discusses Prevent
- ▶ Police Chiefs' Blog: Martin Hewitt - Chief Constables Council October 2019

Tweets by @PoliceChiefs

#DebateNotHate

Candidates are advised to:

- engage with their single point of contact within their local force for candidate security
- take active steps around personal safety to keep themselves safe
- not to canvass alone and make sure someone knows where they are
- keep records of any intimidating behaviour or abuse
- conduct an online health check to ensure sensitive personal information is not widely available
- report intimidation or abuse to internet service providers and social media platforms



#DebateNotHate

When should I contact the Police?

- Communications, on or offline, which contain abusive or threatening language.
- Repeated unwanted contact may constitute harassment or stalking.
- Racial, homophobic or other discriminatory abuse or threats.
- Fixation on you or an issue associated with your campaign.



#DebateNotHate

“Red flags”

The following indicators (‘red flags’) may signal an escalation and should be brought to the immediate attention of your local police (dial 999):

- Threat of imminent violence.
- Fixated ideas – if someone seems set on a certain course of action or is making a very specific type of threat or reference to a plan.
- If you become aware that the individual has access to weapons or has weapons skills.
- If the person releases personal information about you not already in the public domain.

#DebateNotHate

Candidate safety guidance

<https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/security-guidance-issued-to-help-candidates-stay-safe-on-the-campaign-trail>

Be aware of potential signals that behaviour could be escalating – threats of imminent violence, fixated ideas or release of personal information not already in the public domain – and to immediately call 999 in an emergency



Equalities and Human Rights Commission

- “The law permits people to say things that offend others during election periods and at other times. It is entirely proper that there should be vigorous debates about controversial matters, and this is particularly important during elections periods”.
- “However, it is also important to note that the right to freedom of expression does not justify incitement to racial or religious violence or hatred, or other unlawful conduct. The right to freedom of expression cannot be at the expense of the rights and freedoms of others”.



#DebateNotHate

Equalities and Human Rights Commission

- Freedom of expression and free and fair elections
- Guidance for political parties and candidates
- Guidance for local authorities
- Restrictions on freedom of expression prescribed by law
- How to complain and the role of regulators
- <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/equality-and-human-rights-law-during-election-period-guidance-local-authorities>

#DebateNotHate

Other sources of information

- LGIU guidance on personal safety
- Suzy Lamplugh Trust
- Cabinet Office ‘defending democracy’ programme – anticipated resources
- WLGA guidance on social media



Future resources

- Statement for websites and social media on 'rules of engagement'
- Informal duty of care and support resources for councils
- Public facing campaign
- Pan-UK statement
- Gathering of information and evidence

