



Committee  
on Standards  
in Public  
Life

Dear Candidate,

### **General Election December 2019: Joint Standard of Conduct**

We are writing to you at the time of this General Election to update you on our ongoing work with all political parties in Westminster on the Joint Standard of Conduct, one of the key recommendations of the *Intimidation in Public Life* report published in December 2017.

The *Intimidation in Public Life* report was a direct result of the harassment, abuse and intimidation experienced by candidates from all parties at the 2017 General Election. And we are delighted that the work we are doing is progressing and has been supported across the political spectrum. However, more still needs to be done. As a candidate in this election, you can play an important role.

The Joint Standard seeks to help protect candidates during an election campaign and agree a responsible framework for legitimate public debate, and it will actively promote the seven Nolan Principles. It is a positive, aspirational document that will set out minimum standards of behaviour expected from all political party members, based upon a review of existing codes. Please be assured that it will *not* replace existing party codes of conduct nor does it advantage any party over another.

**Tackling intimidation is a cross-party issue; the abuse and intimidation we are witnessing knows no political boundaries. However this Election is an opportunity for us all to show the country that we can unite in rejecting the toxicity of discourse and debate, and agree to disagree civilly - a powerful message that is sorely needed.**

**We know you are busy campaigning on the doorsteps, but we call upon you to pledge to take three key actions - which come directly from the Joint Standard - as the country goes to the polls. We attach some graphics for you to share on social media to indicate your support for this approach:**

- To take responsibility for setting an appropriate tone when campaigning;
- To lead by example to encourage and foster constructive democratic debate and tolerance of other points of view;

- To promote and defend the dignity of others, including political opponents, treating all with courtesy and respect.

As an example of what can be achieved, today all the candidates standing in Jo's former constituency of Batley and Spen agreed to commit to the attached pledge. The attached press release gives details of their commitment. If and when all or most of the candidates standing in your constituency have agreed the pledge, The Jo Cox Foundation would be happy to issue a similar press release to your local media.

Thank you. Your commitment to the principle of the Joint Standard, and your positive engagement with some of these key behaviours, will send a powerful message of hope to the electorate, and we are grateful for your support.

Yours sincerely,



*Jacqui Smith*

**The Rt Hon. Jacqui Smith, Chair, The Jo Cox Foundation**



*Jonathan Evans*

**Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL, Chair, Committee on Standards in Public Life**