



GENERAL ELECTION TOOLKIT



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Hi! I'm Georgia,

I was diagnosed with lymphoma in 2022. and like many children and young people with cancer, I experienced challenges navigating a system that isn't often built for younger cancer patients.

My experience made me want to campaign with Young Lives vs Cancer to help make changes to the system for children and young people like me.

There's been lots of talk recently about the General Election, but what's all the fuss about?

Well, we'll see our future Members of Parliament (MPs) elected to UK Parliament. They'll have the power to make decisions and changes.

So this Election is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for all political parties, our future MPs and the next UK Government, to commit to the changes children and young people with cancer, and their families, need to see.

In this toolkit I'll share some ways you can use your voice to help make sure election candidates, and the next UK Government, understand the important issues for young cancer patients and how they can improve them.

I'm excited to see what changes we can make when we work together.

Thank you for supporting children and young people with cancer.

Georgia

This is me at the
#RunningOnEmpty
petition hand in!



A MANIFESTO FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH CANCER

YOUNG LIVES
vs CANCER

First up, here's a summary of the top five priorities in our manifesto. We want all political parties to commit to these, because children and young people with cancer, and their families, tell us they need to change



A Children and Young People's Cancer Plan to ensure young cancer patients are not left behind



A Young Cancer Patient Travel Fund to help children and young people get to cancer treatment



Improve welfare and benefits so they are quicker, and easier to access for young cancer patients and families



Mental health support for young cancer patients and their families, when and where they need it

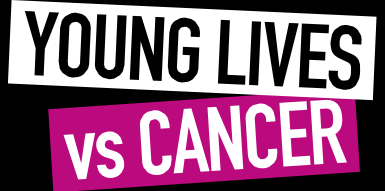


Improved experience of diagnosis and post-treatment support

The full version of our manifesto is available [on our website](#). It's got more detail about each of our top five priorities and why they are important.



HOW CAN I HELP?



There's lots of ways you can help raise the voices of children and young people with cancer. Here's a few!

Share our manifesto far and wide

Download [our social media assets](#), or share the posts from our Young Lives vs Cancer social media accounts, to spread the word about our manifesto. We want everyone to know about the issues that are important to children and young people with cancer.



Speak to campaigners who knock on your door

Candidates and campaign teams often knock on doors during the election campaign period. This is a great opportunity to talk to them about our manifesto and the issues that are important to young cancer patients, so they understand them and can support them.

Go to hustings or local events

Attend events happening in your local area, like hustings or debates, where you can ask your local candidates questions about supporting our manifesto and the needs of children and young people with cancer.



Write to your local candidates

Your local candidates might publish details on how you can get in touch with them, such as an email address. You could get in touch to share our manifesto and why you think they should support it. After 7 June, you can find a [full list of your candidates here](#).

Sign up to receive our campaigns updates

[Sign up to hear the latest updates](#) on Young Lives vs Cancer's campaigns and how you can get involved. And after the General Election, we'll have lots more ways that you can support our campaigning. We'd love to have you on our team!



“ This manifesto is a vital tool in getting the changes we need as children and young people with cancer. The more awareness we spread, the more our future government will be able to improve the system for us, and be accountable for making change happen. ”

-Georgia

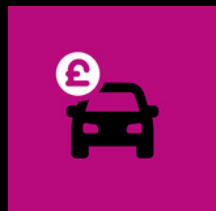
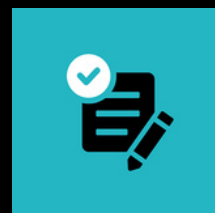
DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT

YOUNG LIVES
vs CANCER

Here's what children, young people and families have to say about why our top five manifesto priorities matter to them



I'm Farid and I was diagnosed with sarcoma when I was 22. Being diagnosed effected lots of different parts of my life that maybe wouldn't affect older adults. I was at uni at the time and also had to think about my fertility and the cost of travelling to treatment. Cancer affects young people differently - we need a system that truly supports the holistic wellbeing of children, young people, and their families facing the challenges of cancer at a young age, and a plan that addresses their unique needs.



I'm Vic, and I was diagnosed with lymphoma when I was 21. I live on the Isle of Wight and my closest treatment centre is in Southampton. It's a long way. On top of my usual expenses it was a lot of stress. At peak times, a ferry is £200 return, plus the taxi fares and parking. That's over £200 often several times a week. The costs got so bad I even considered giving up treatment. We need a Young Cancer Patient Travel Fund to help children and young people like me with the cost of travelling to their vital treatment.



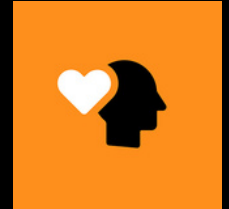
Hi I'm Holly and when I was 23 and working as an actor I was diagnosed with bowel cancer. I loved my job but I had to give it up because of my treatment which was really difficult. I applied for Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment but they both took 4 months to come through. That left me with very little income, even though my outgoings like heating bills were getting more expensive because of my diagnosis. Young people and families need quicker, easier access to financial support like benefits as soon as they are diagnosed.



YOUNG LIVES vs CANCER



I'm Abi, and I was diagnosed with sarcoma when I was 17 after a delayed diagnosis. I struggled with my mental health, especially once my treatment ended. I think remission is when the hard part starts, because as soon as I heard "good news, you're cancer free!" everything stopped - the phone calls, the hospital appointments, the emails and the letters. My mental health really did spiral and it's really made me realise that more support needs to be given to children and young people with cancer, both during and after treatment.



My wonderful son Bradley was diagnosed with bowel cancer when he was just 22 years old. In his first year at uni he said 'my tummy's been playing me up', and after going to the doctors, was told it could be stress, anxiety, or irritable bowel. It never went away, and after getting worse, he went back to the doctors a year later, and again the following year when his pain got worse and he developed bleeding. This time he had blood tests and a colonoscopy, and we were told the devastating news it was stage four bowel cancer. He never wanted to cause any fuss, but I wish we had questioned more over those two years. Bradley sadly died at home after a year of treatment. Young people, like Bradley, need a better experience of being diagnosed with cancer, quickly and avoiding multiple appointments.

- Bradley's Mum Caroline

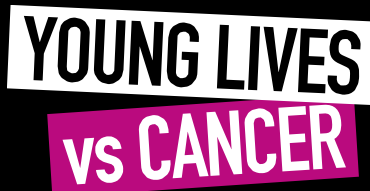


Georgia's top tip!

Using examples can help explain why our manifesto priorities are important. You might want to pick one or two areas that you think are most important, and explain why when talking to your local candidates



YOU NEED TO KNOW



The General Election is on 4 July 2024. To vote, you need to be 18 or over, and have to register by 18 June.

You need ID to vote in person. If you don't have ID, you can apply for a free voter ID by Wednesday 26 June.

AN IMPORTANT WORD ABOUT YOUNG LIVES VS CANCER

Young Lives vs Cancer campaigns on issues which are important to children and young people with cancer and their families. This is part of our charity's aims to improve experiences and outcomes for young cancer patients.

We campaign during the pre-election period to amplify the needs of children and young people with cancer to the people who will become our future MPs and next UK Government.



It isn't about politicising our charity. It's about raising the voices and needs of young cancer patients to the highest levels of decision making across the UK.

This means we'll contact political parties and candidates, but we are politically neutral - we don't support or favour any political parties or candidates. We want all political parties, and the next UK Government, to stand up for children and young people with cancer and support our manifesto calls.

Please keep this in mind when using this toolkit and talking about our manifesto.

FINALLY, A BIG THANK YOU!

From me, and everyone at Young Lives vs Cancer, thank you for helping us amplify the voices of children and young people with cancer, and their families, this General Election.

If you have any questions or need any more information about this toolkit or campaigning during the General Election, get in touch with the Young Lives vs Cancer Campaigns Team campaigns@younglivesvscancer.org.uk.

If you want to join us and get involved in future campaigning, and hear all the latest campaigns updates from Young Lives vs Cancer, sign up below.

Thank you,
Georgia



Stay up to date with our
latest campaigning news

Young Lives vs Cancer want to thank Georgia, Farid, Vic, Holly, Abi, and Bradley's Mum Caroline for sharing their stories in this toolkit and using their voices to campaign for change for children and young people with cancer.

If you'd like to share your story, to raise awareness or be involved in our campaigns, please get in touch using the email address on this page.

