

Having great conversations on the doorstep

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This webinar is due to start at 5pm. You won't hear any sound until the session starts!

This session will be recorded and the slides placed on-line – visit <https://labour.org.uk/members/activist-area/training>

To get in touch with the team if you have any questions please email training@labour.org.uk

Aim

To discuss why we campaign on the doorstep and to help you have better, deeper and more effective doorstep conversations with potential Labour voters.

What we'll be covering

- ✓ What door knocking is and isn't
- ✓ Why do we door knock?
- ✓ Who do we speak to?
- ✓ Active listening
- ✓ Uncovering the issues
- ✓ Top tips
- ✓ Safety tips
- ✓ Doorstep app



Outcome

To give you the skills and confidence to speak to key voters across the country and uncover the issues that matter to them.



Q: who today has been out door knocking before?

How did you find it ?

Do you want to share good and bad experiences?

If you haven't been before, what's stopping you?
What would encourage you to go out door knocking?

What door knocking is....

- Opportunity to demonstrate that we are **active** and seeking local opinions in those local communities we wish to represent
- Opportunity to talk about Labour's **achievements** in their local community
- Demonstrating that we are aiming to represent communities better - **we're the Labour Party!**
- Opportunity **to identify and discuss** issues that mobilise, inspire and persuade voters
- To make voters more likely to vote for us - **as they've met and spoken to us**
- We can **talk about, identify and test** key local campaigns & issues and establish which ones are important to electors
- Demonstrate the **size, strength and support** of the Labour Party within an area.



What does it help us achieve?

- Identify and take action on those **local issues** that are important
- Counters the belief that we are **only seen** at election time
- We can **target** different types of electors with specific messages through direct mail & leaflets
- We can **identify** key people for the candidate(s) to speak to such as undecided and swing voters
- Identify Labour supporters so that we can **get out the vote** effectively (GOTV) in marginal constituencies - where there might be a few hundred votes in it, it can make all the difference

What door knocking is not....

- Opportunity to meet up with your friends for **a chat**
- Opportunity to **take your frustrations** out on the electorate
- Opportunity **debate policy** with voters who are never likely to vote Labour
- Opportunity to tell people **they are wrong**
- Opportunity to tell people **they've made a mistake**
- Opportunity for you to spend 30 mins **demonstrating your knowledge of the manifesto** to someone you have just woken up

Understanding who we speak to

Many campaigns can be **limited by available resources** (time, money and volunteers). To speak to every elector in a constituency would take a long time and lots of resources....

Some electors are **more important for us to talk to** than others in the run up to an election as:

- Those that are more likely to be persuaded to vote Labour
- Those Labour voters who have a higher propensity to turnout to vote
- Those Labour voters who need more encouragement to turn out to vote

Factors will include **how many months away** the elections are. Decisions must be taken as to **which electors to contact and prioritise** during a campaign.



Getting started on the doorstep...

- **Introduce yourself** – say where you are from, that you're out with the Labour team and are speaking with residents about the upcoming elections and the issues that are important to them
- **Don't apologise** for being on the doorstep or ask if they have a few minutes to chat
- Don't say *'the last time you told us'* or *'we have you down as'*....
- Remember, this is the **start of a conversation** with a potential Labour voter – we will follow up with further conversations, direct mail, email etc.
- **Don't get into long debates** especially with those unlikely to vote Labour anyway!
- Think about **how many conversations** you can have within a two hour period

Having better conversations



Who's Persuadable?

- Are you persuadable?
- In abstract- lots of people
- In reality- not many people
- Being undecided is not the same as being willing to change your mind

Developing your Labour stories

- Why are you on the doorstep today?
- What makes you angry and why?
- Ask and genuinely listen
- Why this matters to you
- Why it might matter to them
- What brought you into politics?
- What policy are you most passionate about?
- You can have more than one story
- Give something of yourself



Your conversation

- **Introduction** - first impression, smile, friendly greeting, let the voter know who you are: a community member and candidate, do not just introduce yourself as from the Labour Party.
- Build **trust and establish rapport**. One off conversations will not change minds
- Handle objections **honestly and positively**. Acknowledge their point - all concerns are valid. We do not want to reject anyone's concern, no matter how far-fetched or unethical you consider it to be
- Dialogue not monologue. Speak for only 25% of the time. Use silence and pause – **no one wants to be lectured or told off**
- Ask **open questions**: *"Tell me about.....What issues are important to you locally?....Why is that issue important to you?....How does this issue make you feel?"*
- Challenging: ***"What makes you angry.....? "What would you be prepared to do?"***
- *"What local issues do you care about?", "what do you see as the biggest national issue?" or "how will you be voting in the upcoming election?"* (in the run up to an election).

Your conversation

Open questions allow the respondent to **think and reflect**. They will give you opinions and feelings.

- We want to ideally find the key issue that matters to a person the most so we can focus the conversation and use our best talking points to address this person's concern.
- It is important to **stay on message** in this section, as the temptation can be to branch out and detail all the policy points of your candidate. Focus your message and tailor it to this persons concerns!
- Summarising and paraphrasing to show understanding: ***"So what you're saying is...."***
- Nonverbal cues which show understanding such as nodding, eye contact and leaning forward
- Brief verbal affirmations like ***"I see....I know....Sure....Thank you..."*** or ***"I understand..."***
- Negotiating the next steps: Always ask for help and support. ***"Will you join us...."***
- Think about if we want voters to vote for something or vote against something – Labour has a positive message.
- Always get back to them on issues raised

Your conversation

Ask - you don't get anything you don't ask for. After addressing the person's concern, ask for support or gauge what they are now thinking.

"That being said, can I count on your support on election day?" "Will you register to vote?", " or "Would you like to hear more from our candidate?"

Thank them for their time/support and say 'Our candidate will represent the whole of this community, I will just leave you this card so that you can get in touch with them if you have any issues you would like to raise'

Don't forget this is the start of a journey

- Other parties and people are trying to persuade them as well
- People and context change
- Repeated contact through multiple channels
- Face-to-face is best

During the session

Materials you should expect:

- ✓ A one pager on **local issues** that might come up (for their reference, but not to give to electors!)
- ✓ A sheet which can be used to record **casework** or to make a note of difficult questions
- ✓ Voter **registration** forms, **postal vote** forms and **membership** forms
- ✓ Posters, pen, clipboard, **Vote Labour** stickers
- ✓ Leaflets, outcards and **calling cards**
- ✓ Map of the **local area**
- ✓ Contact **details** of the person leading the session

Remember to ask Labour voters:

- ✓ **To sign up for a postal vote:** have forms and pens ready
- ✓ **Give them a voter registration card** if they (or anyone in their household) need to register to vote
- ✓ **If they'd put up a posters:** provide blu tac & get these up straight away!
- ✓ **If they'd like to sign up to become a member:** have membership forms ready

Feeding back your conversations

- Don't assume anything or embellish the answers you were given
- Don't presume all people in the same household vote the same way. If the data we collect is not accurate then our targeting will be compromised
- If useful, write down the answers you are given on a clipboard
- For every Labour voter you identify on the doorstep, make sure you also ask for a Postal Vote
- Tell the person running the board who you spoke to
- Tell them exactly what the voter(s) told you – check what you wrote down
- Refer to the Voter ID codes and script.
- Pass casework or any follow up issues to councillors or MPs



Labour	L
Conservative	T
Lib Dem	S
Against	A
Won't Say	X
Don't Know	D
Non Voter	Z
Independent	I
Plaid Cymru	P
SNP	N
UKIP	B
Socialist Labour	R
Green	G
BNP	V
Other Party	J

Don't be afraid

- People do expect us to knock on their door
- Vast majority of people are polite
- Ease yourself in gently. The first few times you should be paired up with an experienced canvasser
- We do not encourage anyone to go canvassing on their own. Being part of a team is good for safety and makes canvassing more fun
- You don't need to know the answer to every question an elector might have – it's fine to make a note of it and for us to get back to them
- It will take several visits in order to change the minds of many electors, they don't need to do this in one go! This is the beginning of a relationship



Safety tips

- ✓ Stay aware and be vigilant. Do not argue
- ✓ Look out for dogs - your safety is more important than one leaflet, never put your fingers through any letterbox and never accept an owner's word that a dog is safe
- ✓ Don't go inside - never go inside a house, even when invited. Always stay on the doorstep
- ✓ Canvass blocks of flats in teams. Make sure all the team is accounted for before moving on to the next block
- ✓ Trust your gut. Don't knock on a door or enter a garden that you feel uneasy about
- ✓ If you are running the session make sure you know who is canvassing & where they are. Count them out & count them back in
- ✓ Always have a phone. Canvassers should always carry a mobile phone with them and know who to call for help
- ✓ Travel light. Only the essentials should be taken with you when canvassing. Leave any valuables locked in your car or at home
- ✓ And last but certainly not least, it's always a best practice to go canvassing as part of a group and have each individual stay within sight of each other

Useful contacts and sites to visit

Training Team - training@labour.org.uk

<https://labour.org.uk/training>

<https://achieve.labour.org.uk>

Labour Membership - labourmembership@labour.org.uk

Call 0345 092 22 99 Option 5

Monday – Thursday 9am–5pm, Friday 9am–4:30pm

<https://labour.org.uk/members/about-my-membership/>
<https://labour.org.uk/new-members/>



Thank you!

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