

Engaging with local candidates and spokespeople



New Zealand Council Of
Christian Social Services

Why does your local candidate matter?

You have two votes in the upcoming November 7 Election: a party vote and an electorate vote.

You vote for the political party you want to represent you (party vote) and you vote for the candidate you want to represent the area you live in (electorate vote).

Local candidates are important both as a local representative as well as a conduit to understand the priorities of the party they represent.

To find out who your local candidates are, check your electorate:

<https://vote.nz/maps/find-your-electorate-2026>

Then check the candidates in that electorate:

<https://www.myelectorate.co.nz/>

How can you engage with them?

Local candidates will be out and about in their electorates so there will be plenty of opportunities to engage with them. They might:

- Run local meetings
- Door knock
- Call
- Be at local events
- Participate in candidate debates

Or you can reach out to them by emailing them.

Below are some suggested templates, questions or talking points to let your candidate know that poverty is a key concern for you this election.

Talking points

More specific facts about your region can be found in the [regional snapshots](#)

- New Zealanders everywhere are feeling the impact of the rising cost of living, with too many families struggling to get ahead.
- 1 in 10 people are living in poverty, and a population greater than the size of Christchurch, an estimated 473,000 people, are living in hardship
- New Zealanders are locked into hardship by failing systems
- There are almost 50,000 more children living in hardship now than in 2022
- One in five older New Zealanders (over 65) are unable to afford the doctor or dentist

Engaging with local candidates and spokespeople



New Zealand Council Of
Christian Social Services

Questions for Candidates

General

- What improvements will you/ your party make to the welfare system to reduce poverty and hardship in New Zealand?
- What specific changes are you/ your party committed to in order to lift children out poverty urgently?
- What specific changes will you/ your party introduce to reduce hardship for people aged over 65?

Policy specific

- Are you/ is your party willing to introduce a Poverty Reduction Act to show your commitment to reducing poverty?
- Will you/ your party increase main benefits to reduce income poverty?
- Can you/ your party commit to increasing the accessibility of welfare supports such as Special Needs Grants and the Accommodation Supplement?
- Will you/ your party improve Working for Families to ensure fewer children are in poverty?

Email Template for your local candidates

Kia ora [insert name],

I am writing to you as a constituent based in [insert electorate] to share my concerns about poverty and hardship in our local community.

New Zealanders everywhere are feeling the impact of the rising cost of living, with too many families struggling to get ahead. 1 in 10 people are living in poverty, and a population greater than the size of Christchurch, an estimated 473,000 people, are living in hardship.

[share your story or why you are concerned]

Hardship and poverty are not inevitable. We can make choices to restore dignity and ensure a future where no child or adult goes hungry. I am calling on all local candidates to show justice and compassion to all New Zealanders. You can see policies that will lead to real change that frees New Zealanders from poverty here: <https://nzccss.org.nz/resource/free-from-poverty-election-2026/>

I would like to know how you will reduce poverty and hardship in Aotearoa.

[you can request to meet if you want to discuss this in more detail]

Look forward to hearing from you.

Ngā mihi
[insert name]

Engaging with local candidates and spokespeople



New Zealand Council Of
Christian Social Services

Party Spokespeople

You can also engage with politicians based on what portfolios they hold or are spokespeople for.

Most parties have specific people responsible for key areas including social development, children, housing and so on. There will often be thematic debates where you can ask questions as suggested above.

You can find out party spokespeople using party websites.

You can make your priorities known directly by emailing spokespeople. Below is a template you could use.

Email Template for your local candidates

Kia ora [insert name],

I am writing to you in your role as [insert political party] social development spokesperson to share my concerns about poverty and hardship in New Zealand.

New Zealanders everywhere are feeling the impact of the rising cost of living, with too many families struggling to get ahead. 1 in 10 people are living in poverty, and a population greater than the size of Christchurch, an estimated 473,000 people, are living in hardship.

[share your story or why you are concerned]

Hardship and poverty are not inevitable. We can make choices to restore dignity and ensure a future where no child or adult goes hungry. I am calling on all political parties to show justice and compassion to all New Zealanders. You can see policies that will lead to real change that frees New Zealanders from poverty here: <https://nzccss.org.nz/resource/free-from-poverty-election-2026/>

I would like to know how you will reduce poverty and hardship in Aotearoa.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Ngā mihi
[insert name]

Visit our website for more information on steps we recommend to help free New Zealanders from poverty nzccss.org.nz

