



# 2015

# General elections hustings

## Questions for humanists

### 'Faith' Schools Admissions

#### **'Will your party end religious selection in school admissions?'**

- More than 1.2 million places at state schools are subject to religious selection.
- No other public service is allowed to discriminate on religious grounds.
- Parents fake religiosity and attend church to get their children into schools.
- Faith-based selection fosters social segregation.

### Humanism in RE

#### **'Will your party include Humanism on GCSE and A Level RE syllabuses?'**

- The Government has excluded Humanism from GCSE and A Level RE subject content.
- ...despite opposition from RE teachers, academics, philosophers and subject experts.
- Surveys show that a majority of young people are not religious.
- RE should contribute to an understanding of all major worldviews.

### PSHE and sex and relationships education

#### **'Will your party make high-quality PSHE and SRE part of the statutory school curriculum?'**

- Sex and Relationships Education is vital to helping children make safe choices.
- PSHE and SRE are not on the national curriculum, meaning many children miss out.
- MPs voted against making it statutory in 2013 despite public support.

### School assemblies

#### **'Will your party get rid of the requirement for daily collective worship in schools?'**

- The law requires 'broadly Christian' daily worship in schools.
- This discriminates against non-Christian pupils, parents and staff.
- Schools are diverse communities of all faiths and none.
- Inclusive school assemblies would be an effective way of building shared values.

### Bishops in the House of Lords

#### **'Will your party remove the bishops from the House of Lords?'**

- The UK is the only democracy in the world with reserved seats for religious representatives.
- 26 Church of England bishops have a big say in shaping our law.
- Privileging one religion is unjustifiable in our diverse and increasingly non-religious society.
- The bishops have no special claim to moral or ethical superiority.



## Humanist marriage

### **'Will your party legalise humanist marriages?'**

- The Government recently blocked the introduction of humanist marriages.
- The Government called this a 'fringe issue' – despite huge public support and support in Parliament.
- More than 800 couples a year have humanist weddings – more than many religious groups.
- Thousands of legal humanist marriages take place in Scotland each year.

## Human Rights Act

### **'Will your party commit to retaining the Human Rights Act?'**

- The Human Rights Act protects our basic human rights
- This includes the right to freedom of expression and the right to freedom of religion or belief.
- Repealing the Human Rights Act or pulling out of the European Convention on Human Rights would endanger the basic human rights of millions of people.

## Assisted dying

### **'Will your party legalise assisted dying for people who are terminally ill and people who are permanently and incurably suffering?'**

- A bill currently in the House of Lords would legalise assisted dying for terminally ill people.
- We would want that extended to those who are permanently and incurably suffering like Paul Lamb and the late Tony Nicklinson.
- Being able to die, with dignity, in a manner of our choosing must be understood to be a fundamental human right

## Women's sexual and reproductive rights

### **'Will your party introduce protected 'buffer zones' around abortion clinics?'**

- There has been an upsurge in anti-abortion activity outside clinics in the UK. Women attending pregnancy advice and abortion centres are now regularly exposed to groups of anti-abortion activists standing directly outside.
- They display graphic pictures of dismembered fetuses and accost the women entering.
- The right to protest needs to be balanced with the right of pregnant women to obtain advice and treatment in confidence and free from intimidation. For those who wish to campaign to restrict women's reproductive choices, there are plenty of opportunities and locations in which to do so. The space immediately outside clinics should not be one of them.
- 'Buffer zones' prohibiting protests around abortion clinics protect women from harassment and intimidation.
- The Royal College of Midwives, Mumsnet, and other women's groups support this.