

## Joint statement on conduct of political party members

1. Representative democracy is a central and valued characteristic of our national life. We believe it is in the interests of us all for Parliament to reflect the diverse population it serves so that decisions that impact the public reflect the realities of life in the UK. In recent years, intimidation (see **Annex A**) experienced by Parliamentary candidates and others in public life has increased and has threatened the diversity, integrity, and vibrancy of our democracy.
2. The statement on conduct of party members (the Statement) sets out the minimum standards of behaviour we expect from our party members at all times.
3. The Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles) - selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership - have long been the basis for ensuring high standards in public life. This is the context for the behaviours set out below.
4. Our party members will aspire to:
  - a. take responsibility for setting an appropriate tone for campaigning and communication;
  - b. lead by example to encourage and foster constructive democratic debate and tolerance of other points of view; and
  - c. promote and defend the dignity of others, including political opponents, treating all people with courtesy and respect.
5. As a minimum, our party members will not engage in intimidation by:
  - a. using or threatening violence or other unlawful force;
  - b. damaging property or making threats to damage property;
  - c. engaging in bullying, harassment or victimisation, or unlawfully discriminating against another person or group;
  - d. using abusive or threatening words or behaviour, including the use of hateful or sexualised language or imagery;
  - e. making vexatious or malicious allegations of illegal or improper conduct or;
  - f. using violent metaphors or allusions to violence.

6. Our party members are expected to challenge unacceptable behaviour wherever it occurs.
7. Behaviour that falls within the unacceptable behaviour listed in the Statement will be dealt with under our party disciplinary processes.
8. In some cases, including but not limited to offences against the person and damage to property, as well as credible threats of violence, the behaviour may be illegal. We will refer any breach of the Statement which appears to break the criminal law to the police.

## What is intimidatory behaviour?

The 2017 Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, [Intimidation in Public Life](#), interpreted intimidatory behaviour as: *'words and/or behaviour intended or likely to block or deter participation, which could reasonably lead to an individual wanting to withdraw from public life.'*

1. Intimidation can include physical violence, threats of violence, damage to property, and abusive online and offline communications, amongst other behaviour. Sometimes, the collective impact of a number of individual actions can also be intimidatory, for example, co-ordinated social media attacks. A clear finding of *Intimidation in Public Life* is that intimidation is disproportionately likely to be directed towards women, those from ethnic and religious minorities, and LGBT candidates.
2. Robust political disagreement is part of the democratic process; highly personalised attacks are not. Intimidatory actions are not a way to apply legitimate political pressure. Instead, they are intended and likely to cause an individual to withdraw from a public space, including social media, public events, or from public life altogether. This can have the effect of limiting freedom of expression.