

James Groves
1 Cobble Court Yard
Carr House Lane
Lancaster
LA1 1SW
07890 565385
james.groves@zen.co.uk



National Policy Forum elections 2012 North West Region

I'd be honoured to be chosen as a National Policy Forum member for the North West. I have a particular passion for education and believe I could make a significant contribution to our work in this area. I'm also interested in the welfare state, transport, constitutional reform and foreign affairs. I'm a committed party activist and trade unionist. My CLP is Lancaster and Fleetwood and my membership number is A641980.

My priorities

The NPF needs to become more relevant. At present the NPF meets just once or twice a year and deals solely with long-term policy. It could be working more closely with our front bench to draft rapid and effective counter-proposals to the Tories' cuts. The NPF should conduct the majority of its business online, making it easier to debate and agree positions quickly. Shadow ministers should never be lost for words when asked the obvious question - "So what would *you* do?"

Labour needs to stand up for community comprehensive education. I oppose academies and free schools - the Tories are using these to destroy national pay bargaining and remove accountability within the education sector. Schools should be encouraged to innovate whilst remaining under local authority control. We should also advocate equality of treatment for mature learners.

Undergraduate tuition fees need to be reduced. Average fees in England are the third highest in the developed world, according to OECD; soon they'll be even higher. We need to follow the lead of Wales' Labour Government and keep higher education affordable to all.

People need access to affordable credit. The banks must be persuaded - or obliged - to lend once again. We must tackle the unaccountable powers of the credit reference agencies.

My other policies include:

- Action on fuel poverty - renationalise National Grid and legislate to reduce utility prices;
- Support the right of same-sex couples to marry;
- Justice for the Chagos Islanders - betrayed, sadly, by our Labour government;
- A fully elected House of Lords.

My experience

I joined the Labour Party as a first year undergraduate in 1992 and have been involved ever since:

- Secretary of Lancaster & Wyre CLP (2004 to 2006) and Lancaster & Fleetwood CLP (2006 to date);
- Previously Youth & Student Officer of Cambridge CLP (1994 to 1995) and Lancaster & Wyre CLP (1998 to 2001);
- Agent in two parliamentary elections (2005 and 2010) and seven sets of local elections;
- A member of Lancaster University and College Union's branch executive since 2006;
- Also a member of SERA (Labour's Environment Campaign), the Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform and CND.

I work as a Teaching Associate in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Lancaster, specialising in schools outreach initiatives.