

## James Groves

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## National Policy Forum elections 2012 North West Region

It would be an honour to be elected as a National Policy Forum member for our region. My greatest passion is education and I believe I could make a significant contribution to our policy 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. I'm proud to have been nominated by CLPs from across the North West.

### My priorities

**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 local accountability. Schools should be encouraged to innovate whilst remaining under local authority control. We should advocate equality of treatment for mature learners.

**Undergraduate tuition fees must 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.

**Defend employment rights.** The Beecroft Report's proposal to bring in "no-fault" sackings is just the latest in a series of assaults on workers' rights by this government. Labour and the unions must take the lead here - we can't just rely on Vince Cable to stand up for us.

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;
- A fully elected House of Lords.

### My experience

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

- Secretary of Lancaster & Wyre CLP (2004 to 2006) and Lancaster & Fleetwood CLP (2006 to date);
- Previously Youth & Student Officer of Cambridge CLP and Lancaster & Wyre CLP;
- 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;
- Member of SERA (Labour's Environment Campaign), 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 initiatives to widen access to mathematics at university.

***I am supported by the Centre-Left Grassroots Alliance and hope you will also support Elaine Jones, Rhiannon Lowton, John Wiseman and Joe O'Neill (youth representative).***