Voters will be heading to polling stations across the country on 7 May to decide who will represent them in parliament for the next five years. At the time of writing, there is no consensus on what the likely outcome will be. Pollsters and pundits are guessing at anything from a narrow Conservative majority to a narrow Labour majority, or any number of possible coalitions – involving one or more of the Liberal Democrats, the Scottish Nationalists, UKIP, and the Greens.

We will be producing and distributing a manifesto to candidates, setting out what we want them to do should they be elected, for example supporting the independent NHS Pay Review Body (PRB) system for setting pay in the health service.

Unlike some other unions, the RCM is neutral in party politics. We work with politicians from any mainstream party who can assist us in making the case for more midwives and for better maternity care. For that reason, we won’t urge you to vote this way or that, but we do encourage you to use every opportunity to challenge and quiz candidates on where they stand on the issues that are important to you.

If you live in England, you may want to ask them what they would do to help eliminate the shortage of midwives. MPs only have a say over the NHS in England, as health policy in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is decided by the administrations in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast, but members outside England still have issues they will want to raise. The PRB makes recommendations for the whole of the UK, for example, so whichever part of the UK you live in, you may want to challenge them on pay and whether they will support the independent system for setting pay. When we were meeting MPs about the pay dispute, we found supportive politicians from every party, so you can’t assume what a candidate thinks just from their party label; it is always worth asking them directly.

Many organisations and voters will be trying to grab the attention of candidates, especially those most likely to win, so help us to make sure that those who will be representing you in parliament in the coming five years hear the voices of midwives and MSWs. Whether it is asking questions if candidates knock on your door or call you, attending a hustings event – where candidates come together at an event to answer questions – or whether it’s writing to a local newspaper or calling in to a local radio phone-in, the more you can do to raise the issues important to midwives and MSWs, the better. And let us know what candidates have to say about maternity care by emailing me at stuart.bonar@rcm.org.uk.

We are not able to predict which party or parties will be in power after polling day, but it is worth asking all of them where they stand on the issues most important to you.