11 tips to stay informed
this general election

1. **Find the source**
   Don’t trust something because it came via a friend or because lots of people are talking about it. Find out where it came from. No source? Be sceptical!

2. **Run a background check**
   Unfamiliar source? Do a background check by searching up one or all of the following:
   a) Name of website / organisation / author + About
   b) Name of website / organisation / author + Wikipedia
   c) Search for the website / organisation / author using the News tab

3. **Read the story – to the end**
   Does the headline match the content? Is it exaggerated or taken out of context? Headlines are often overstated to get more clicks. Read or watch the story/video all the way through for a fuller picture.

4. **Check the facts**
   Add the words “fact check” to a keyword search to see if any reputable fact-checking organisations have already checked a story. Full Fact, BBC Reality Check, Channel 4 FactCheck and Snopes utilise robust checking processes.

5. **Watch your emotions**
   What gets the most reactions, comments and shares online? It’s often posts that trigger outrage – regardless of whether or not they are true. Watch out for alarming words, emotive language, or name-calling. Pause before you share that blood-boiling post. Ask yourself: who is trying to make me feel this way – and why?

6. **Get the other side(s) of the story**
   Compare how the same story is reported by media with different political leanings – and those that strive for impartiality. You’ll see how things can be framed in various ways, as well as gaining a wider perspective.

7. **Avoid biased sources**
   Extreme viewpoints tend to be misleading. A Canadian study* found that “strong partisans” across the political spectrum gave twice as many factually incorrect answers about current events as non-partisans.

8. **More is not always better**
   Don’t read/view indiscriminately and be discerning in your media choices. Consuming news regardless of source makes people more susceptible to being misinformed about the issues.

9. **Know your misleading media**
   Deceptive media isn’t always factually incorrect, sometimes it paints a slanted picture, or makes a false connection. Quickly identify bias, satire, pseudoscience and other misleading sources using Mediabiasfactcheck.org or NewsGuard.

10. **Reverse image search**
    Most misleading images online are NOT digitally doctored or deep fakes: they are real images with false captions. To find the original context, identify the original using TinEye or Google reverse image search.

11. **Make deliberate media choices**
    Don’t rely on what shows up in your feed – algorithms prioritise popularity over accuracy. Find and follow sources that value fairness and accuracy; those genuinely trying to get to the truth of the matter.

*Media, Knowledge and Misinformation report by The Digital Democracy Project (2019)