

WHOSE VOTE ARE YOU MISSING?

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE IN THE LIBERAL
DEMOCRATS



**Building an inclusive party where diversity is celebrated and
difference is embraced**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

03

Introduction

20

Engaging Disabled
People

04

Using this booklet

25

Engaging Young
People

05

Engaging BAME
Communities

29

Engaging People from
Lower Socio-Economic
Backgrounds

10

Engaging Women

33

Summary & Next
Steps

15

Engaging the LGBT+
Community

34

Useful Contacts

Introduction



The Liberal Democrats are a Party of community, kindness and of course, liberal values. We believe in a modern Britain of genuine openness and equality. We champion a society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect regardless of their background, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or whether they have a disability.

Our goal is to build an effective liberal movement, that represents the full spectrum of diversity and in order to do that, we need to ensure that diversity is at the heart of everything we do. That means proactively building diverse teams at every level.

Diversity on its own isn't enough, we need to be inclusive. That means taking deliberate action to create an environment where everyone can freely thrive and succeed within our party. Inclusion is involvement and empowerment; it's about creating an environment where people feel they can make meaningful contributions to our party and know that all parts of their identity will be recognised and celebrated. This isn't about being tokenistic, it's about seeing the value that difference brings to our organisation. It's been proven that diversity gives organisations a competitive edge; diverse teams perform better, they're more flexible and creative- in short **diversity and inclusion are strategies for success.**

But we won't get there overnight. Real change requires sustained and proactive efforts at all levels of our organisation.

We hope that this booklet will help guide your thinking on the part you can play in making sure the Liberal Democrats are a true reflection of the communities we represent. This booklet is focused on six areas: BAME communities, women, disabled people, the LGBT+ community, young people and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

But this is just the start of the conversation, please keep developing new ideas in your local parties and wider teams.

Let's all work together to build a party where diversity is celebrated and difference is embraced.

Using This Booklet



Who is the toolkit for?

This toolkit is aimed at any member looking for information on how to design and implement programmes to enhance diversity and inclusion of underrepresented groups in the Liberal Democrats. This includes, but is not limited to, local party officers, Regional Diversity Champions, campaigners and activists.

Where is the information from?

We have used lessons drawn from the past, best practice, together with more general and academic research to offer some useful hints and tips.

Are we expected to do everything outlined?

We're all human, no one is expecting you or anyone else to become an expert overnight. The only thing we ask is that everyone does their best to learn and grow. By doing so, we can truly live out our party's values. What is set out here is purely guidance. We hope that you use the information provided but please be aware that these are only a few ideas to get you thinking and the lists and ideas provided are by no means exhaustive.

Before you start reading...

The booklet is divided into six sections, but please remember that many of the ideas discussed in relation to one community will also be relevant to another.

It's also important to remember the concept of intersectionality. Intersectionality is the idea that an individual's overlapping identities such as ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status all contribute to the discrimination and prejudices a person may face. This theory helps us to understand that identity markers don't exist independently of each other but are interconnected, resulting in compounding forms of discrimination. So we need to recognise an individual as a whole and not view them from one perspective. For example, a lesbian, BAME woman, will likely have experience of structural racism, sexism and homophobia. Keeping this idea in mind, will help us to broaden our understanding of diversity and equality.

BAME BRITAIN: KEY FACTS



Following the 2019 General Election, only **65 MPs** out of 650 are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds

According to the combined 2011 censuses for England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland **13%** of people in the UK indicated that they belonged to a Black, Asian, Mixed or "Other" ethnic group



Figures from Ipsos-Mori show that the Lib Dems received **12%** of ethnic minority votes in the last election. Labour received the lion's share at 64% & the Conservatives got 20%

During the 2019 election, Operation Black Vote compiled a list of **100 seats** where the number of ethnic minority voters was larger than the majority held in each constituency

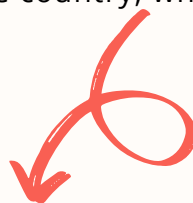




TIPS ON ENGAGING BAME COMMUNITIES

We live in one of the most ethnically diverse countries in Europe and the rich diversity of our country is something to be celebrated. Yet, BAME representation in politics remains woefully low.

As a political party we have a duty to ensure that our party is a true reflection of the communities we hope to represent, and we can only make a realistic case to represent the country, when the country is represented in us.



What do we mean by BAME?

BAME refers to people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups. The use of the term has been debated; whilst some people are comfortable with the term, others don't feel it is an accurate description. For now, this is the term we use in the party.

BAME communities are not a homogeneous bloc, there is a huge amount of diversity within every group, so be careful not to generalise and don't assume that everyone within a community will take the same view. People are individuals and should be treated as such.

Additionally, be careful not to tokenise people, when a BAME person joins your local party, don't assume that the only role they'll be interested in is Diversity Officer!

Know your area

Census and demographic data are easily accessible online through the House of Commons Library and the Office of National Statistics. The Membership Team at HQ can also provide data on the diversity of your local party members. Gathering this data will give you a clear idea of the communities in your area and will help to ensure that you don't overlook anyone when you begin formulating your plan for engagement.

Once you have identified the groups in your area, do some research. This doesn't need to be anything complicated, you can begin by asking yourself a few questions:

- Are there particular spaces that these groups use? e.g. community centres
- Are there particular issues that these groups are campaigning for or against?
- Are there any community leaders? If so, how can you start a dialogue with them?

Take an Interest

Taking a genuine interest in a community goes a long way.

One of the best things you can do is simply have a conversation with someone in that community. You can also make use of the Party's [diversity calendar](#) and briefings produced by the Diversity Team to find out about major holidays and festivals. If there are going to be any local events around these dates, why not attend?

Every local area will have various faith groups and places of worship, these could include Churches (for Christians), Synagogues (for Jewish people) Mosques (for Muslim people) and perhaps even a Gurdwara (for Sikhs), Mandir (for Hindus), Vihara (for Buddhists) or other places of worship.

Try contacting the faith leader at the place of worship to ask for a meeting and discuss any concerns they may have and highlight where the Liberal Democrats could help them work for change.

Remember that these places of worship often act as community and education centres for members of their community. You can also take advantage of initiatives such as Visit Your Mosque Day, a project facilitated by the Muslim Council of Britain, which encourages people of all faiths to visit their local mosque.

Top Campaign Tips

Literature

Printing literature in different languages can be very effective. Ask someone local to translate a simple phrase such as "Liberal Democrats, winning here". This is especially useful in areas where English might not be the first language.

Canvass in mixed groups

Hopefully you will have people from different communities involved in the local party, so make efforts to go canvassing in mixed groups to engage with the widest group of people. You want to make sure that your team reflects your constituency wherever possible.

Send Cards

Send out cards around religious festivals to ensure that you are keeping in touch with the community. This shows you are acknowledging and celebrating the cultural and religious heritage of people in your area.



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**"WE CAN ONLY MAKE A REALISTIC CASE TO
REPRESENT THE COUNTRY, WHEN THE COUNTRY IS
REPRESENTED IN US"**

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Learn a few words in another language

If you have a high proportion of people who speak a second language, why not learn a few useful phrases - it immediately reduces barriers and shows that you really want to communicate. For example if you have a large Nigerian community in your area why not learn a few words in Igbo or Yoruba?

Be creative and flexible

Make sure that all your campaigning activities, meetings and social events are as inclusive as possible. Perhaps ask BAME members if they have ideas about how to get other people interested and involved.

Candidates and other party roles

If you meet someone who you think would make a good activist, executive member, councillor or MP, encourage them! Given the lack of diversity across politics as a whole, taking up a more formal party role might be something that someone has not even considered. Asking them to stand and recognising their skills and talents might be the very thing to inspire them to get more involved in the Party. But this needs to happen continually and should be embedded in our culture. Some of the most diverse and successful local parties are the result of continual, proactive approach by local parties to identify talented individuals and get them involved.



Attend events

Research has shown that events organised by community groups are usually more successful and better attended than those organised by political parties, so do accept as many invitations to speak or attend events as you can. If you are organising an event, try to collaborate with or seek help from a local organisation or business. If you are lucky enough to have a cultural or religious festival or parade in your area, go along! Talk to people, learn about other people's beliefs and culture and have fun at the same time. It might be worth having one person within the group who is responsible for drawing up a list of these events and ensuring that the Liberal Democrats are represented there. If you're hosting your own events remember that some communities may feel uncomfortable in places that serve alcohol and try to have halal, kosher and vegetarian options available.

Build Networks

Attending meetings with senior community, faith and business leaders can be very insightful. Small round table discussions provide a good cross section of opinions. Often these individuals are very influential within particular groups and can give you a good idea of the issues and concerns that exist within particular communities.

However, do bear in mind that community leaders may not represent the interests of everyone in the community - there is no substitute for speaking to people on the doorstep.

LIB DEM POLICIES



Tackle the rise in hate crimes by making them all aggravated offences



Develop a government-wide plan to tackle BAME inequalities



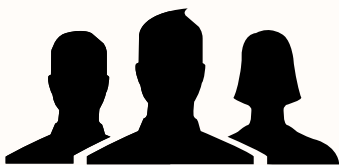
Extend the Equality Act to all large companies with more than 250 employees, requiring them to monitor and publish data on gender, BAME and LGBT+ employment levels and pay gaps

WOMEN IN BRITAIN: KEY FACTS



Despite women making up over half of the UK population, only **34%** of MPs are female. Nearly two-thirds of seats are still represented by men

43% of women voted Conservative, 34% voted Labour and **12%** voted Lib Dem at the 2019 election



According to the House of Commons, 47% of Members of the National Assembly for Wales are women, as are 36% of Members of the Scottish Parliament & 34% of Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly

Figures from The Fawcett Society in 2019 show that women only make up **35%** of councillors across England



TIPS ON ENGAGING WOMEN

What do we mean by women?

As a party we use the inclusive definition of women and female. We believe trans women are women and welcome anyone who self identifies as female.

Does gender equality still matter?

In short, yes! Whilst we have made some progress, we are far from achieving true equality.

Gender equality is not a women's issue, it affects all of us, we all lose out when women are not given the room to fulfil their potential.

In 2019, the highest number of women were elected to parliament on record. There are now 220 female MPs, up from 208 in 2017. Within our own party, 64% of our MPs are female and in 2019 Jo Swinson made history by becoming the first woman to lead the Lib Dems. Yet despite this progress and despite making up over half of the population, women are still heavily underrepresented in politics. Gender bias, discrimination and outdated attitudes, amongst other things, are significant barriers in achieving true gender equality. This is not good enough. So how do we redress the balance?

Encouraging more women to stand

We need more women in public office; having more women at the decision making table increases the likelihood that policies and debates will include women's views and experiences.

Research has shown that women are less likely to stand for public office without being asked and they will often need to be asked several times. Numerous studies have shown that even highly successful and skilled women are likely to doubt their abilities and won't even consider running for elected office until someone suggests it.

Research by [Dr Jennifer Lawless and Dr Richard Fox](#) found that 67% of women who had been asked by a party leader, an elected official, or a political activist would consider standing and for those who hadn't been asked only 33% would consider it. Furthermore, in their paper, [*Informal Influences in Selecting Female Political Candidates*](#) Dr Christine Cheng and Margit Tavits (2009) outline the importance of gatekeepers (those in influential positions) in candidate selection.



The number of women elected in each party at the 2019 General Election

Their study suggests that having women party gatekeepers will lead to recruiting more women candidates, and further, that the same may also be true in recruiting BAME candidates. More information on this on Dr Cheng's [twitter thread](#) and in her [TedX talk](#) on the same subject.

We all need to be more vigilant in spotting and encouraging talent when we see it. There are small things you can do - you can encourage a woman to submit her candidate application forms, or encourage someone within your local party to apply for programmes such as our Future Women MPs Weekend and ALDC's Kickstart.

When selecting candidates we should also be mindful of negative attitudes towards female candidates. A lot of the time women candidates are asked questions that their male counterparts would never be asked e.g. Do you have children? Can you do it all? What will happen if you have children in the future? How will you juggle being a candidate with being a parent?

As a party, we have been vocal about making sure that politics and parliament are flexible for parents and we need to ensure that we are staying true to those values on every level. We need to push back on the assumptions that motherhood makes women less competent and less committed candidates.

Events

Making your events as accessible as possible is a great way of ensuring that your local party is inclusive. For example, although more women have careers today, the bulk of childcare still falls on women and this can often impact women's political participation. So, having events where parents can bring young children is a great idea. You might also want to think about the timing of your events, e.g. not making them too late for those who need to put their children to bed. And if you're having a local party meeting, you can ensure that there's a conference/video call facility so people can join remotely.

You can also organise events around key dates in the diversity calendar such as International Women's Day. International Women's Day is a global celebration of the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women across the globe. In the past, local parties have organised talks or training events for women in their local area. Events like this are a great way of reaching people without a political home, and can help to highlight the different ways women can get involved in politics.

You might also think about using some of the existing formats for events such as Inspiration Days, these are informal events, designed to give female members, especially new members, the opportunity to develop their skills and learn more about becoming active in the Party. You can find out more about these by contacting the Diversity Team or the Campaign for Gender Balance.

Some other things to think about when putting events together:

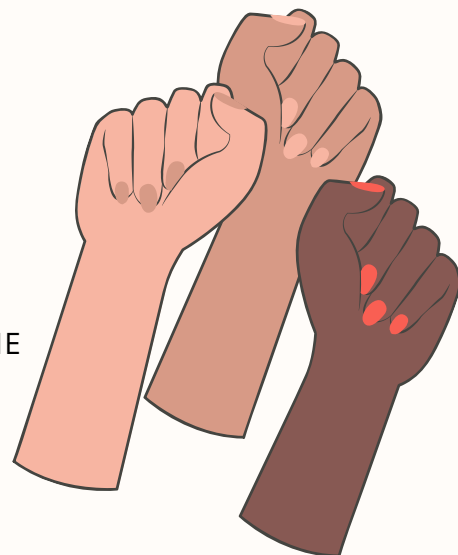
- Have you created a safe place where everyone can share opinions and ideas and everyone's opinion is valid and important?
- Breastfeeding and baby changing facilities (changing facilities should be there for events with men too!)



- If you have a speaking panel, is it gender balanced?
- Are you making sure that women are being heard equally in meetings?

Recognise that all women are different

It's important to recognise that everyone is an individual and we all have different life experiences. Women from different backgrounds will often face different barriers and challenges. For example, the experience of a white woman will be distinctly different to those of a woman from a BAME background. Our goal is to empower everyone and that means supporting all women as they deal gender and other forms of oppression.



Use your voice

If you witness something sexist or misogynistic, speak up. Often our failure to speak out perpetuates the cycle of discrimination.

Listen up!

Women are the ones who have had to deal with patriarchy throughout their lives and so their perspective on gender oppression and inclusion is vital. Listening to the experiences of women is one of the most important things we can do. And when we listen, we ought to do so without judgement but with sincerity, focus and a genuine desire to understand.

Listening can also mean stepping back

So often women are not heard or even given the room to speak. This happens all the time in meetings, at events and in everyday conversations. If you don't identify as a woman, ask yourself whether you are giving women enough space to express their thoughts, ideas and opinions. Do the same group of people speak at every event? When women speak are they ignored, only to have their ideas echoed by a man moments later? If any of this rings true, make sure you're doing your part to redress the balance and call out or report inappropriate behaviour when you encounter it - remember you can be the catalyst for change.



Promote women at all levels

Whilst it's important to have female candidates, we should also have gender balance at all levels of the party. Not all women want to stand as candidates and that's OK, but we also need more female local party chairs, candidate assessors and campaign leaders.

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"GENDER EQUALITY IS NOT A WOMEN'S ISSUE, IT AFFECTS ALL OF US. "

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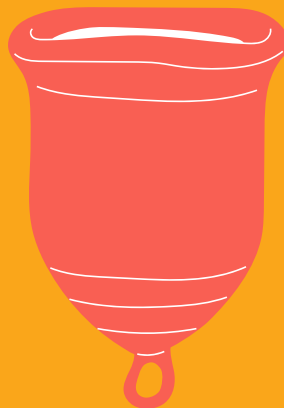
LIB DEM POLICIES



Scrap the so-called 'Pink Tax', ending the gender price gap



Prevent violence against women and girls and domestic abuse



End period poverty; remove VAT on sanitary products and provide them for free in schools, hospitals, hostels, shelters, libraries, leisure centres, stadiums, GP surgeries, food banks, colleges and universities

THE LGBT+ COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN: KEY FACTS



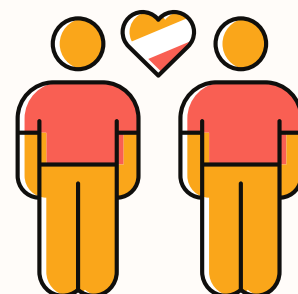
Around **45** MPs (7%) elected in 2019 openly identify as LGBT+

According to the Office of National Statistics the number of people in the UK, over 16 identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) increased from 1.6% in 2014 to **2.2%** in 2018



It is estimated that about **1%** of the population identifies as trans and non-binary but the figure could be higher as this information isn't collected on the census

According to the British Social Attitudes Survey attitudes to same-sex relationships have improved in recent years, with **64%** in 2016 saying that they are 'not at all wrong'



TIPS ON ENGAGING THE LGBT+ COMMUNITY

What is the LGBT+ community?

LGBT+ is an initialism that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans. The '+' includes a number of other sexual and gender identities including but not limited to pansexual, non-binary, intersex as well as those who are questioning or still exploring their sexuality or gender identity. There are also other acronyms such as LGBTQ, LGBTQ+ and LGBTQIA.

The Lib Dems have a long record in standing up for LGBT+ rights. We opposed Section 28 from the outset; we played a key role in securing same-sex marriage in coalition government and today we are speaking up for trans rights. From changing the law to allow same-sex couples to marry, to campaigning for the Turing Law - we have been at the forefront of change. However, this isn't always recognised. So, it is important to reach out to the LGBT+ community and show the incredible work we have done and are doing! We also need to keep working, as prejudice and outdated attitudes sadly still exist in our society today. Here are a few things you can start doing:

Educate yourself

If people are coming to work with you in your local party, it is important to make them feel welcome and accepted. In recent years new language surrounding sexuality has been introduced. This may mean you don't understand the language someone is using to identify themselves with. It is important to educate yourself, and not question them on the ins and outs of their sexuality. No one wants to have to explain themselves in every new social setting they enter. If you don't know something, ask questions, do your research. Check out the definition of terms on page 18.

Respect pronouns

In recent years the identities and existence of trans and non-binary people has been debated and questioned, and the debate surrounding trans rights has often been toxic to say the least. We all need to work to educate ourselves on some of these issues.

When someone tells you how they identify, respect them by using their preferred pronoun (which may be gender neutral i.e. they/them/their) or name.

Use your voice

Be a vocal ally by challenging homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and attitudes wherever you encounter them. Hateful and divisive language is never funny and our acceptance of it only perpetuates the cycle of hate. The same goes for anything that's sexist, racist or any words offensive to any community.

Listen

LGBT+ individuals are constantly attacked, dismissed and silenced. When people describe their lived experience



listen with an open mind and be respectful of everyone's journey.

Be careful about outing people

Some people feel comfortable disclosing their sexuality or gender history and some do not. Always remember that no one owes you this information, so don't demand it and don't speculate. Coming out is a deeply personal decision and everyone has the right to do it in their own time and in their own way or not at all.

Recognise difference

The LGBT+ community is a representation of lots of different identities and sexual orientations. Different people in the community will have different experiences as a result of how their gender identity and sexuality relate to other things such as gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. This means we can't have a one size fits all approach to engagement and should keep these differences in mind.

Get involved in LGBT+ Campaigns

There are lots of campaigns we can get involved with that can help demonstrate our commitment to diversity and equality. Getting involved in campaigns, both nationally and locally, shows our party support on a very real level. Campaigns like supporting LGBT+ education in schools and giving trans people the right to self-identify are the kind of campaigns we should all get involved in. It's also important in your local communities to shout about some of these campaigns so everyone understands the great work we do.

Be genuine

Make sure you know why these policies are important, otherwise you can come across as superficial when talking to LGBT+ people about LGBT+ issues. If you have LGBT+ people in your local party, allow them to take the lead on outreach. This way, outreach is genuine and doesn't seem forced.

People don't want to be known as their sexuality or gender identity

Remember that LGBT+ people are more than just their sexuality or gender identity. Yes, you can get people interested with campaigns they can relate to, but keep in mind they are more than that. They most likely don't want to front every campaign you have about LGBT+ rights and don't want to be the 'resident expert' and constantly asked to check everything the local party are doing isn't problematic.

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**"REMEMBER THAT LGBT+ PEOPLE ARE MORE THAN
JUST THEIR SEXUALITY OR GENDER IDENTITY..."**

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If they offer, then great, but don't assume they are willing to take on that burden. Reach out to LGBT+ members about all kinds of campaigns they could be interested in, not just the ones about LGBT+ rights. It's very easy for people to feel like they aren't wanted for them, but for just one aspect of their identity. So, make sure you include everyone in everything you do.

Use a diversity calendar

Use our party [diversity calendar](#) to plan activity around major dates such as Pride, LGBT+ History Month, Lesbian Visibility Day and Trans Awareness Week.

Be an ally

You may not identify as LGBT+ but can use your voice to actively champion LGBT inclusion. Allies can be a powerful force, so be proud to support the community.

Tips for events:

- Most local areas hold annual Pride events, why not invite people from your local party to go down and show support?
- Make sure that your local party events are as inclusive as possible by providing gender neutral toilets
- Try to use non-gendered ways of addressing people, for example try saying the "person in the green t-shirt," instead of "the man at the back."
- Offer pronoun identification - you could ask everyone attending your event to wear a sticker indicating their preferred pronoun
- When advertising events, make it clear that your event is LGBT+ inclusive



Term	Definition
Cisgender	A person whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.
Dead-naming	The refusal to stop using a person's birth name when they have changed their name as part of their transition.
Intersex	A person whose biological attributes fall outside the male/female binary. These attributes may be both male and female.
Non-binary	A term for people whose gender identity doesn't fit in the 'male' or 'female' binary. Some people will experience their gender as both male and female while others will reject these identities entirely.

LIB DEM POLICIES



Ensure Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention is fully available to all who need it on the NHS



Complete reform of the Gender Recognition Act to remove the requirement for medical reports, scrap the fee and recognise non-binary gender identities



Develop a comprehensive strategy for promoting the decriminalisation of homosexuality around the world

DISABLED PEOPLE IN BRITAIN: KEY FACTS



It is estimated that there are only **5** disabled MPs in parliament, making up less than 1% of MPs

Figures from Scope suggest that there are **13.9** million disabled people in the UK, making up **22%** of the population



While there is not much research on turnout among disabled people, the charity Mencap has found that only one third of people with learning disabilities in the UK vote

A report on political engagement among people with disabilities across Europe found that disabled people feel less confident in their ability to participate in and influence politics, and have lower trust in parliament, parties, and politicians



TIPS ON ENGAGING DISABLED PEOPLE

Despite making up over 20% of the UK population, disabled people are still marginalised across many parts of society. Negative stereotypes and prejudice still exist, leading people to treat disabled people and those with long term health conditions as though they are weak, incompetent and incapable of independence. These attitudes perpetuate discrimination and exclusion in society and we need to work to change them. The inclusion of diverse disabled individuals in our party is a benefit to us as an organisation, not only is it a demonstration of our values, but doing so makes us more effective.

What does disabled mean?

The Equality Act (2010) defines disability as "a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities".

Remember that not every disability is visible, and people can have disabilities that are not immediately apparent to you. These disabilities can include people with progressive, chronic and long-term health conditions. Disabilities come in a range of forms, they can be mental, physical, cognitive and sensory. So, please don't ever tell someone that they don't look disabled.

Building engagement at every level

We need to have diverse representation at every level of our party and must work to ensure that disabled people are represented in our local party executives, campaign and candidate teams. Having a more diverse party will ensure that decision making processes and policies are fair.

We also need to do all we can to encourage and support disabled candidates to stand. If a disabled member expresses an interest in standing here are some things to consider:

- Speak to the candidate about what they can and cannot do - ultimately it is up to the individual to decide what challenges their disabilities present
- Once expectations have been made make reasonable adjustments- for example, can you adjust the hours the candidate is expected to be out knocking on doors?
- Can you provide mentoring?
- When you publish selection adverts can you make clear that you are encouraging applications from underrepresented groups including those who are disabled?

Ultimately, never have low expectations for anyone. We all need to work to let go of our bias. Work with disabled individuals to properly accommodate their needs, whilst recognising that adjustments may not always be required.



Start a conversation

If you want to improve accessibility and inclusion within your local party, you can start by asking your members what they need. This helps to ensure that you make suitable adjustments. Often, we try to make changes without consulting and listening to those who will be affected by those changes, so always ensure that a disabled person is a part of the conversation. However, when you have this conversation don't expect people to disclose the nature or details of their disability as everyone has the right to privacy.

Similarly, when offering to help a disabled person, ask first and don't make assumptions about the kind of assistance someone needs. Your offer for help may be turned down, but don't be offended! Assuming a disabled person needs help can reinforce harmful stereotypes and attitudes towards disabled communities.

Address people directly

When you're out campaigning or at events don't ignore disabled people, simple things like asking a person's name, speaking directly to the person and not their assistant or companion can make a huge difference. Make an effort to get to know the person and don't focus on their disability.

You should also avoid asking personal questions, especially any questions you wouldn't ask a non-disabled person - no one wants to be made to feel uncomfortable.

Get involved in campaigns

As a party we have some great policies which would help support disabled people in the UK, see page 24 for some examples. However, it's also worth getting involved in local campaigns as these are a great way to show our commitment to diversity, e.g. making sure local services and buildings are fully accessible.

It's also a good idea to develop relationships with disability groups and charities in your local area. These groups often work hard to support disabled children and adults.

Improve accessibility

Accessibility is a major factor in inclusion, disabled people often face several barriers linked to physical and built environments, this includes but is not limited to stairs, lighting, narrow corridors and broken lifts. So when holding events, please take these things into consideration.

When holding events...

Here are some things that you can do to ensure that your events are as accessible as possible:

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**"REMEMBER THAT NOT EVERY DISABILITY IS
VISIBLE, AND PEOPLE CAN HAVE DISABILITIES
THAT ARE NOT IMMEDIATELY APPARENT TO
YOU..."**

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- Is there step free access and an accessible toilet?
- Accessible documents - organisations like the Royal Institute of Blind People can provide guidance on this
- Accessible parking and drop off points (remember to ensure that these spaces are kept clear for the people who need them)
- Hearing loops
- Can you get a BSL interpreter? Can you provide documents in braille or audio aids?
- If you're providing food, have you asked for people's dietary requirements ahead of the event?
- Is the space easy for wheelchair users to get around?
- If people are speaking, are mics available so they will be heard clearly?
- Clear signs
- If you're showing a video, is it subtitled?
- Do you have an evacuation plan in case of emergencies?

Language matters

Choice of language is also a crucial part of diversity and inclusion, there are some words and phrases which may sound acceptable to you, but can be offensive to others. For example saying that someone "suffers from a disability" implies that they cannot live a fulfilling life. See below for some words and phrases to avoid.



Some words and phrases to avoid

✓	✗
Disabled people	The disabled The crippled The handicapped
Non-disabled people	Normal people Able-bodied
Blind person	The blind
A wheelchair user	Wheelchair-bound Confined to a wheelchair
Person with learning difficulties	Slow
Person with challenges of mental health	Crazy Mentally ill

LIB DEM POLICIES



Increase accessibility to public places and transport by making more stations wheelchair accessible



Introduce a British Sign Language Act to give BSL full legal recognition



Create a social security system that will support disabled people and help them find meaningful work that they can reasonably do

YOUNG PEOPLE IN BRITAIN: KEY FACTS



According to a report by Ipsos-Mori, 62% of 18-24 year olds voted Labour and only **9%** voted Lib Dem at the 2019 General Election

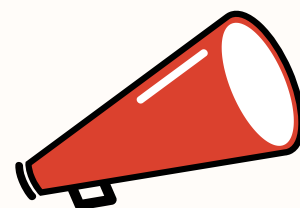


In recent years, more young people have become politically engaged, particularly around issues such as Brexit, the housing crisis and climate change

Between 1979 - 2019, the average age of MPs at elections has been consistently around 50 years. In 2019, 49% of MPs were aged over 50. Only **3%** of MPs were aged between 18-29



According to the Local Government Association, only **15%** of local councillors in 2018 were under the age of 45



TIPS ON ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

Effectively engaging young people is one of the most important priorities for any political organisation. Young people make important contributions to our party and they often have the skills and knowledge to be effective campaigners and activists. Often the contributions of younger members are overlooked but our job going forward is to foster a culture where young people's opinions and contributions are valued, recognised and respected.

What do we mean by "young"?

There are many perspectives on who can be called "young" but for the purposes of this toolkit the application is to people aged 26 and under.

Work with universities

The Young Liberals are the youth and student wing of the Liberal Democrats and they have strong university societies across the country. These societies are a great way to reach out to young people who are interested in politics. They can support the campaigns you are doing in your local party, and vice versa. Societies are often very good at mobilising their membership, especially at relatively short notice. Lots of universities have 'freshers' activities at the beginning of the academic year; getting involved in these events is a sure-fire way to get student interest!

Remember that **not all young people go to university**, so make an effort to engage with those in Further Education colleges as well as those doing apprenticeships and those in the workforce.

Create a strong social media presence

It's not just a stereotype – young people get their information from social media. To have genuine outreach to young people, you need a Facebook page and a Twitter account, with all your events on them. Emails are useful for the details, but to make sure people know the events are happening (and get reminded), you need social media – especially Facebook. So make sure you have creative engaging content that will get you noticed. And don't forget if you have a social media page, make sure it's updated regularly!

It's not just about getting people to events, using social media can help you, share campaigns and ideas with younger members.



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Even if people don't get directly involved, it's good to ensure that you're on their radar!

Campaigns

There are certain things that engage young people in politics, and it isn't usually potholes! You need to pick campaigns that are eye catching and engaging and affect young people. Campaigns like LGBT+ education, period poverty and the environment are the types of headline campaigns young people are likely to be interested in.

It's important to remember that young people are often transient, especially if you're working with a university group. They simply aren't going to be as engaged in local niche issues. This isn't to say abandon all other campaigns, some young people will be interested in campaigns in their local communities. But to draw people in, you need campaigns that aren't necessarily party political and feel real to young people. The Young Liberals themselves run campaigns throughout the year; reach out to them for support.

Young people reaching out to young people

There will be some young people who find their way to your local party without dedicated outreach, but it can often be more effective to get other young people to reach out to their own peer group. Utilise the knowledge and skills of your local party's younger members. While it is important to let young people take the lead, remember that youth engagement is still everyone's responsibility.

Make space for meaningful contributions

It's easy to assume the things that younger members will want to do, e.g. designing leaflets, but we need to make room for everyone to contribute in varied ways! Do you have young people on your exec? Do you have young councillors or parliamentary candidates? Are young people taking a leading role in campaigns or fundraising?

Be seen to be delivering

If there are issues that young people in your local area or party care about, get involved as it is an opportunity to increase your profile within the community. As your reputation builds as a local campaigner, you will find that people come to you more often. You want to make sure you are seen to be interested and are seeking to represent all age groups.



Events

Think about getting more involved with events that interest young people. You can use dates in the diversity calendar to plan activity and there are lots of events that attract a young crowd such as Pride and International Youth Day.

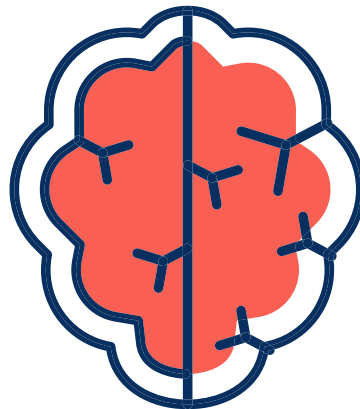
Safeguarding

The party takes the welfare of its young members seriously. If you have questions or issues around safeguarding, please get in touch with us.

LIB DEM POLICIES



Require schools to introduce gender-neutral uniform policies



Establish a Student Mental Health Charter which will require all universities & colleges to ensure a good level of mental health provisions for students



Introduce a 'curriculum for life' which includes age-appropriate Relationships and Sex Education, sexual consent & LGBT+ relationships

SOCIAL CLASS IN BRITAIN: KEY FACTS



17% of people with a degree or higher voted Lib Dem at the 2019 general election



A 2018 study found that more than two-thirds of councillors (**67.5%**) had a degree or higher degree or some other qualification equivalent to NVQ level 4

Data suggests that **41%** of Conservative MPs elected at the 2019 General Election were likely to have attended a fee-paying school, **30%** Liberal Democrat & **14%** Labour



Lib Dems have had the highest proportion of university educated MPs since 2010



TIPS

ON ENGAGING PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS

As liberals our job is to build and safeguard a country where everyone, regardless of their background can fully participate in society. The political influence of those who are less wealthy seems disproportionally low compared to those from wealthier backgrounds.

Often discussions around diversity don't focus enough on socioeconomic diversity and its impact, but it is something that we need to become more aware of as an organisation because the issues around gender, race, disability and sexuality can be profoundly influenced by an individual's social and economic circumstances.

What is socio-economic diversity?

Socioeconomic background refers to an individual's economic and social status; this includes, educational attainment, occupation and income. Our goal is to ensure that our party is inclusive of individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and to make sure these individuals are represented across the entire organisation. Discussions around this topic can be difficult. As with every other group discussed within this toolkit, we urge you to do away with generalisations and to honour everyone's individual identity and background.



Candidates

Our country's elected officials all seem to be drawn from a small pool of people who look a certain way, speak a certain way and are educated in similar institutions. In 2017 82% of MPs elected that year were graduates and 24% attended Oxford or Cambridge, not to mention there are still a high proportion of MPs who have attended private school.

We want more diversity in our candidates, but we need to recognise that standing as a candidate can pose significant barriers for people with restricted incomes. Standing for elections requires a great deal of personal sacrifice; physically, mentally and sometimes financially. Often candidates (particularly those in winnable seats) are required to take time off work to campaign, some will even contribute from their own personal savings to stand (though this is not something that the party demands or expects). We need to recognise that these might be sacrifices that a candidate simply cannot make.

When we select candidates, there is still bias in favour of the candidate in a polished suit, in a white collar job. This bias gives the false impression that anyone who doesn't fit this mould doesn't have what it takes to be successful.

When we do manage to recruit these candidates, they may lack the connections and relationships with senior leaders in the party, which make it more difficult for someone to navigate complex party structures. They may not have someone who can recommend they go on a training programme or may not know anyone to informally talk them through the candidate approval process. But there are a few things we can all do to help...

- Establish flexible campaigns schedules to reduce the pressure on the candidate, this will allow them to fulfil existing commitments
- When you advertise that you're looking for a candidate from a diverse background, make it clear that you're also looking to secure a more economically diverse slate of candidates
- When candidates with less financial privilege stand, support them and donate your time and ensure they have fundraising support so they don't need to spend their own money
- Hold events that are specifically aimed at recruiting, engaging and supporting these candidates and their campaigns
- Challenge outdated attitudes and perceptions of what the ideal candidate should look like
- Listen to people about their background and experiences

Call out social class stereotypes

Class stereotypes are harmful and exclusionary and they have no place in our party or society. These could include class-coded judgements about a person's accent, intelligence or where they live.

Events

Events are one of the major ways that people can get involved in our party. Here are a few things to consider:

- If you're charging for an event, think about waiving fees for those who can't afford it- the central party already does this as much as possible
- If your local party that can afford it, think about covering the cost of training programmes
- Make sure that those who speak at events come from a diverse range of backgrounds
- Create a welcoming atmosphere and ensure that no one feels left out or excluded

Hold surgeries

A concrete way to engage with all groups in your community is to hold regular surgeries in spaces such as community centres or religious buildings. This is a proactive measure which encourages familiarity with all parts of the community and demonstrates your commitment to serve the needs of the community as whole.

There are a lot of local activities that you can get involved in such as supporting local food banks or helping homeless people.



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LIB DEM POLICIES



Setting a 20% higher minimum wage for people on zero-hour contracts at times of normal demand to compensate them for the uncertainty of fluctuating hours of work

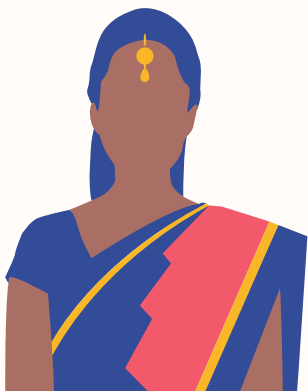


Investing £6 billion per year to make the benefits system work for people who need it and reducing the wait for the first benefits payment from five weeks to five days



Invest in public services, tackle inequality and combat in-work poverty

Summary & Next Steps

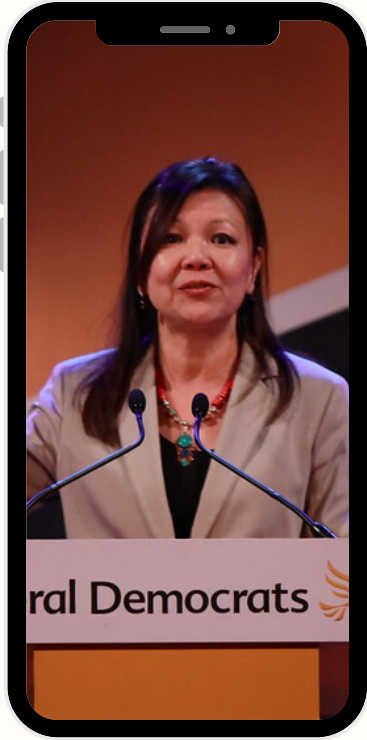


We hope that you have found the ideas in this booklet useful and we're excited to see some of the changes that we hope will follow. A few things to remember:

- 1.** The ideas that are discussed here involve cultural change and this isn't something we can achieve overnight but through commitment and prolonged efforts we can get there.
- 2.** An inclusive community includes everyone unconditionally – not only if they look like me, not as long as they've been a member for X years and not only if they fit in.
- 3.** Get comfortable being uncomfortable - one of the biggest barriers to diversity is fear of doing or saying something wrong. Start having conversations with people and read up on what you don't know. Use your fear as an indicator of the things you need to learn. You may get things wrong, but an apology goes a long way and it's OK to acknowledge that you need to learn from another person.
- 4.** Confront your bias - we all have an unconscious bias, take steps to recognise this. The Party offers unconscious bias and wider diversity training, take advantage of it.
- 5.** Become accountable. Start thinking about the things you can do as an individual and then work with your local party to drive change. Here are a few questions to think about:
 - Are there any groups in my local party that are excluded? Why are they being left behind?
 - How much space am I taking up as an individual (in conversations, at events and in meetings)
 - How can I use my experience, skills and networks to help others?

We've laid out a few of our equalities policies throughout this booklet, but you can access more policies here: [**www.libdems.org.uk/plan-equalities**](http://www.libdems.org.uk/plan-equalities)

Useful Contacts



The following organisations and groups exist to increase political engagement with underrepresented groups within the Party. They are a great resource and help inform policy and campaign activity:

Lib Dem Campaign for Race Equality (LDCRE)

Lib Dem Campaign for Race Equality acts as a forum for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members, and all those wishing to campaign for race equality. LDCRE also assists the party in recruiting more BAME members and encourages their greater involvement in political processes and campaigns of the Party.

Website: www.libdemrhc.org

Racial Diversity Campaign (RDC)

The Racial Diversity Campaign (RDC) was launched by the Federal Board to support BAME candidates in the Party. There are three key pillars to this mission: support BAME members to become approved parliamentary candidates, support BAME approved candidates to be selected as Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs) and support BAME PPCs to win elections.

Website: www.libdemrhc.org

Chinese Liberal Democrats

The Chinese Liberal Democrats (CLD) works to promote closer links between the Party and the Chinese community in the UK.

Website: chineselibdems.org.uk

The Campaign for Gender Balance (CGB)

The Campaign for Gender Balance exists to develop and support women interested in standing for public office within the Liberal Democrats. CGB organises some of the party's best training which includes Inspiration Days and Future Women MP's Weekends. CGB also offers approval and selection mentoring for any woman interested in kick-starting their candidate journey.

Liberal Democrat Women (LDW)

LDW is the Women's Organisation of the Liberal Democrats, working to eliminate all forms of discrimination based on gender. LDW also works to develop and influence policy, holds country wide networking and fundraising events, and engages with national and international women's groups.

Website: www.libdemwomen.org.uk

LGBT+ Liberal Democrats

LGBT+ Liberal Democrats are the sexual and gender identity minorities group within the Party. They campaign for LGBT+ equality both within the party and externally and work to promote the Party within the LGBT+ communities.

Website: lgbt.libdems.org.uk

Liberal Democrat Disability Association (LDDA)

Liberal Democrat Disability Association works to raise awareness and understanding of disability, both through the Liberal Democrats, and also the rest of society. It aims to ensure that disability is not thought about as an after thought, but rather with everything else. They also encourage the Party to ensure that all disabled members of the party are able to stand as candidates for election at every level of the Party.

Website: disabilitylibdems.org.uk

Young Liberals

The Young Liberals are the youth and student wing of the Liberal Democrats. They work to draw attention to the issues which affect young people. They also work to get young candidates elected. Everyone who is a student or under 26 is automatically a member of Young Liberals.

Website: www.youngliberals.uk

Isabelle Parasram, Party Vice President

Isabelle is the Party's Vice President and she works to improve awareness of minority group matters within the Party. Isabelle also campaigns in the media on these issues and she works with external organisations on policy matters.

www.libdems.org.uk/vice-president

Liberal Democrat HQ Diversity Team

The Diversity Team is responsible for coordinating and promoting diversity initiatives across the Party. We work with MPs, local parties, the Party's SAOs (Specified Associated Organisations) and the Federal People Development Committee to support diversity projects.

www.libdems.org.uk/diversity

diversity@libdems.org.uk

Useful Resources

The Diversity Team produces a diversity calendar as well as briefings around key dates, you can access these at: www.libdems.org.uk/diversity-days

Lib Dem Diversity Team

8-10 Great George Street

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SW1P 3AE

Diversity@libdems.org.uk