

Welcome!

At Federal conference last year, Regional Diversity Champions and Local Party Diversity Officers told HQ and Federal Committee representatives that they wanted some help.



The Champions and Officers said that they were keen to do a good job but didn't feel absolutely clear what it was they were meant to be doing!

To respond to this request for more clarity, this document has been produced by FPDC and the Diversity team in Party HQ. We hope it is helpful.

The Liberal Democrat Diversity Structure

Federal level – The Federal Board, the Federal People Development Committee (FPDC) and the Diversity Subcommittee of FPDC.

The Federal committees agree policies and strategy for the Party as a whole.

FPDC oversees the Diversity staff and projects at Party HQ in London. FPDC works with all the Diversity related Specified Associated Organisations (SAOs) and campaigns – Young Liberals, Lib Dem Campaign for Racial Equality, LGBT+ Lib Dems, Lib Dem Women, Lib Dem Disability Association and the Campaign for Gender Balance and the new Racial Diversity Campaign. The SAOs help set the policies of the Party and raise concerns about specific issues within their portfolio.



The Diversity Subcommittee of FPDC is made up of all the Regional Diversity Champions, and exists to communicate these decisions, encouraging discussion, and promoting best practice. Miranda Roberts is acting as Chair for the Diversity Committee as well as for FPDC as a whole.

State level – Each State Party (England, Scotland, Wales) has a State Diversity Officer or Diversity Champion.

The State Diversity Champions are responsible for implementing the Federal policies and encouraging States to consider diversity when creating internal policies and rules. They may also work with the State Party Executive to draw up a Diversity strategy.

They should be available to the Regional Diversity Champions, so that if a Region is falling behind, or needs support, the State Champion can raise this with the State Party and find the appropriate help.

Regional level – the Regional Diversity Champions

The Diversity Champions are responsible for:

- Encouraging their regions to include issues of diversity in their discussions, and if possible set a diversity and inclusion strategy for the region
- Organising involvement in regional diversity events, like big Pride marches
- Communicating to local party Diversity Officers and Chairs good ideas for ways to improve diversity in local parties
- Gathering examples of best practice in the region, and feeding it back to the State and Federal levels
- Reporting back to the State champions any issues of concern in local areas, where support is needed
- Organising region-wide efforts at outreach, supporting local party Diversity Officers as they implement them – for example, providing sample emails to send to community groups to make first contact
- Helping Diversity focused SAOs and internal Party Campaigns (CGB and RDC) to connect with local parties to support their diversity work, particularly to support talented individuals from under-represented groups



● London Assembly Member Caroline Pidgeon with London Mayoral Candidate Siobhan Benita and LDCRE Chair Roderick Lynch at London Pride

Local level – Local Party Diversity Officers

Each Diversity Officer is expected to:

- Remind their Executive committee of the importance of diversity as decisions are made – are a range of different members encouraged to participate in discussions and decisions?
- Ensure that no group is consistently excluded from local events (Examples: Are all events needing paid tickets for entry? Are events always on the same day of the week or at the same time? Are events always in the pub?)
- Make sure that all-member events like the AGM are accessible to all members (for example: not in a pub, not up steps, accessible by public transport – and ask members if they need any adjustments or help so that they can participate)
- Encourage recruitment of under-represented groups into the local party
- Encourage participation in diverse community activities (eg Pride events, Visit my Mosque day, International Women’s Day, Fresher’s Fayres etc)
- Organise events that are attractive to diverse groups (eg Chinese New Year celebrations, ‘Little Lib Dems’ events for new parents etc)

- Attend events held by local community groups to represent the Party and build meaningful links with them (it's a good idea to take along Councillors and your PPC as well to some events)
- Use the 'Diversity Calendar' and briefings that are produced by HQ and consider how to send messages of celebration to different groups around important times of year, particularly on social media and in leaflets produced by your local party

What do we mean by Diversity?

These are the main groups we expect Diversity Champions and Diversity Officers to be considering for inclusion – but please think more widely than this too – this is the core.

Age/time of life – Under 18's, students, young people (in and out of work), young parents, middle aged, retirees, pensioners.

Race, nationality and ethnicity – Look at your local community and consider your local residents. Try to recruit new members and helpers from groups that are under-represented in your membership, compared to your local area. There are often community groups and centres, shops and charities that are connected to people of various nationalities. If you would like to look up the data for your local area, it's available on [this Commons library website](#)

Faith groups – Every local party will have various Christian churches in their area, and most will have at least a few other places of worship – Synagogues, Mosques and perhaps even a Gurdwara (for Sikhs), Mandir (for Hindus), Vihara (for Buddhists) or other temples. Try contacting the Faith leader at the place of worship to ask for a meeting. Ask what concerns their community is facing and see if there are issues where Liberal Democrats could help them work for change. Remember that these places of worship also often act as community and education centres for members of their community.

LGBT+ - It's important to remember that this is an umbrella term that includes many distinct groups of people who may face very different challenges and forms of discrimination. It's not enough to have one gay member and feel you have this covered. In particular, the transgender community is currently suffering from some new and more subtle forms of discrimination. Look for charities in your area who work to support these groups, as well as LGBT+ friendly bars and businesses.

Disability – This should include people using wheelchairs, but there are many other kinds of disability – from people who are mobility impaired (using sticks and crutches) to those who may be fully or partially blind or deaf or have learning disabilities. There are also a lot of other physical and mental impairments, as well as hidden or invisible disabilities and long term health conditions within the term 'disabled' so please try to think more widely about this term. (There is a way for us to involve everyone in our campaigns!)

Sex & Gender – Women remain greatly under-represented in politics, and particularly on local party executives.

Three worrying things we hope you will watch out for:

- Meetings where everyone is the same gender, or age, or ethnicity – or all three!
- In photos that you use for leaflets, are you demonstrating your diversity yet?
- The argument that “we don’t have any members of that group, so there’s no point changing our ways for them!” The only way we become more diverse is by changing our culture to one that is welcoming, inclusive and open. Then when someone from that group does choose to come and meet us, they will be able to participate and enjoy their time with us.

Whichever of these jobs you are doing, **thank you** for your efforts. Together, we can change the party and put inclusion and diversity at the very heart of our culture.

Miranda Roberts, Chair of FPDC, February 2019