

Chief Executive, Liberal Democrats

The Chief Executive is responsible for delivering the strategy of the party, underpinned by the Leader's vision, and approved by the Federal Board and the Party Conference. The Chief Executive is ultimately responsible to the Federal Board who monitors the strategy and actions delivered by HQ staff and by the Federal and State committees of the party.

The Liberal Democrats are a resurgent Party. Over the last few years it has grown in membership from 80,000 to over 110,000, increased its MEPs to 16 in the May European Elections, and former Labour and Conservative MPs Chuka Umanna and Sarah Wollaston have recently joined. In August the party won back Brecon and Radnorshire, with Jane Dodds, the Leader in Wales, joining the Westminster parliamentary party, and successfully defended Shetland in the Scottish Parliament. This has been underpinned with a steady growth of councillors in both by-elections and local elections. In the last two years alone the party has gained over 700 new council seats and since May now control 25 councils in England.

Politics is a volatile business. The last few years have been challenging following five years in coalition, when the party in the 2015 election was reduced to eight male MPs.

The 2016 referendum was a catalyst for significant change on the political landscape. Party membership surged to 80,000 and the party had the opportunity to harness the energy and enthusiasm of new, principally young (under-35) members. The last two years have seen a substantial growth in confidence, increasing volunteer activist numbers and a new vision for the party, as the strongest Remain party, resulting in polling numbers increasing over the last four months consistently to around 20% (from 7% in 2017).

Jo Swinson, the Party Leader, has a clear ambition and a vision for the future of the party, through growth of members, growth of finance and above all elected representatives. Her commitment to equality and diversity is widely recognised.

Role of the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive leads the party administration and directs the human, financial and administrative resources of the Party - both its senior professional team and its membership and supporter base. S/he will bring energy and outstanding leadership to this crucial job, whilst recognising that the relationship with the Leader (for political leadership) and the President (line manager of the Chief Executive and the representative of all members of the party) have a key role in the direction of the party.

The Chief Executive is directly responsible for the HQ Directors Team and other directly managed Senior Managers, and through them, all staff of the Federal Party and Parliamentary Office of the Liberal Democrats. S/he is also responsible for ensuring that HQ and staff teams work closely with their Federal and State member representatives, who will monitor and deliver services to members and the outside world.

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Location

The post is based in the Party's headquarters in Great George Street, London SW1.

Key objectives

In addition to day-to-day operations, the Chief Executive will:

- Lead the Party in delivering agreed strategic objectives.
- Work with the Financial Controller and Registered Treasurer to ensure that the Party's finances are on a sound footing. Monitor income and expenses on a regular basis to ensure that HQ directors are operating within budget and operating within agreed financial controls.
- Develop the Party and improve its impact by building world-class Policy, Communications, Campaigns and Marketing, and People (including Membership and Diversity) teams, ensuring that the voice and influence of the Liberal Democrats continues to grow.
- Work with the Federal and State parties to review and improve the structure, systems and processes of the Party, further embedding efficiency, integrity, diversity and transparency at the heart of all its operations.
- Transform the Party's fundraising infrastructure in order to enable the party to continue to win seats and have a solid (firm?) base year on year.
- Ensure that the party is ready to fight any relevant elections including a possible snap election or referendum as well as the next scheduled General Election in 2022.

Leadership and stakeholder engagement

1. Support the Leader and President with their party duties and responsibilities and undertake appropriate projects and initiatives to grow the capacity, diversity, and impact of the Party.
2. Work with the Leader, President, and Federal Board to deliver the party strategy through shaping the business plan and budget for each electoral cycle.
3. Manage and direct the Senior Management Team of the Party, ensuring that they have the skills, to deliver the objectives of the Party, with clear targets.
4. Work with staff and party bodies to create and maintain an inclusive and diverse culture where everyone is able to succeed. Work with the Federal and State parties to review and improve the structure, systems and processes of the Party, further embedding efficiency, integrity, diversity and transparency at the heart of all its operations.
5. Develop, professionalise, and integrate staff at HQ by improving communications promoting professionalism, and maximising the impact of available resources.
6. Ensure that the Party serves its members and supporters well, projects its messages strongly, and supports activists and volunteers at all levels to achieve maximum impact.
7. Help to enact the party's strategy of building a broad liberal movement by ensuring that the federal party's staffing structures, budgets and internal culture are fully aligned with this goal, including successfully managing any changes in existing working practices and service provision that this requires.
8. Work to ensure close and effective collaboration between party institutions, including the Federal Party, the Parliamentary Office, the English, Welsh and Scottish state parties, Regional Parties, Specified Associated Organisations and to encourage them and their staff to operate and use their resources to best deliver the Party's agreed strategic objectives, agreeing and delivering service level agreements where appropriate.

9. Help ensure close and effective collaboration and cooperation between elected Liberal Democrats at all levels, including Local Government and the Devolved, Westminster and European Parliaments and Assemblies, to ensure all levels of representatives are integrated into the mechanisms for achieving the Party's agreed strategic objectives.
10. Prepare the Federal Party organisation for Parliamentary and Council Election Campaigns, ensuring that the Party achieves its communications and campaign objectives.
11. Oversee the activities of the International Department of the Party to ensure that resources are brought in to help fund activities and that the Party is effectively represented overseas.

Fundraising

12. With the elected Party Treasurer, the Fundraising Committee and the fundraising staff, sustain and increase the financial strength of the Party. Help to build and maintain relationships with key donors in conjunction with the fundraising staff.

Campaigning and communications

13. With the support of the Federal Communications and Elections Committee and other key staff, build the campaigning strength of the Party, and ensure campaigning resources, both on and offline, are used effectively to develop capacity and increase representation at all levels.
14. Oversee the organisation of Federal Conferences to ensure that they meet their budgets while fulfilling democratic decision and policy making objectives, and presenting a positive public image of the Party.
15. Provide regular updates to the Party Leader and President to keep them abreast of activity and decisions. Keep the Chairs of the Federal Finance & Resources Committee (FFRC) and Parliamentary Office of the Liberal Democrats (POLD) informed of all matters pertaining to their budgets and staffing responsibilities and ensure effective communication with all staff and the wider organisation.

Administration

16. As Chief Executive and as Campaigns Officer¹ for the party, manage compliance and legal issues affecting the Party including electoral law, appropriate Codes of Practice at local, state and parliamentary levels and all other statutory obligations including those under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums (PPERA) act Work with the compliance department to ensure that all election and donation expenses are accurate, are filed on time, and that all other requirements of the Electoral Commission and the PPERA act are complied with.
17. Oversee the role of the Party as an equal opportunities employer, promoting and welcoming diversity in its ranks while developing good employment practices.
18. Manage and develop staff and oversee the provision of training in order to maximise their potential and effectiveness.
19. Oversee the preparation of the annual party budgets and business plans and monitoring thereof.
20. Ensure that all committees and sub-committees are well serviced and supported.
21. Be a signatory on behalf of the Federal Party and the Parliamentary Office.
22. Undertake the role of Acting Returning Officer for party elections.

¹ This is a formal officer role of the party, with legal responsibility for election compliance and returns to the Electoral Commission.

23. Manage the fabric, resources, infrastructure and lease of the Party's buildings and assets to ensure that they are fit for purpose and match the current and future requirements of the Party.
24. Manage the party's systems and processes to ensure that they are fit for purpose and match the current and future requirements of the party.

Competencies: the successful candidates will demonstrate:

1. A track record of strategic and operational management within either public, not-for-profit or private sector organisations, as well as experience of a member organisation (either as a member or manager serving members).
2. Strong senior management and leadership skills with proven ability to prioritise and delegate. Evidence of a track record in making difficult management decisions and executing/implementing them would be desirable.
3. Evidence of having taken full P&L responsibility in a medium size organization in conjunction with a financial director or chief financial officer. Evidence either of a financial qualification or its equivalent would be desirable.
4. Evidence of a strong commitment to diversity and a record of success in a management role of an organisation.
5. An ability to understand and work effectively in a political and campaigning environment.
6. Direct experience of fundraising.
7. An excellent understanding of marketing and branding in a digital world.
8. Strong diplomatic and people skills with a proven track record of organisational change including implementing and embedding new strategies in organisations with the staffing, structural, and cultural changes that are necessary to achieve success.
9. Experience of working in highly competitive, fast changing, and public organisation dependent on its volunteers.
10. Good judge of political appropriateness, compliance and a high standard of personal conduct.
11. Strong commitment to the Liberal Democrats and a determination to grow the Party and improve its impact.
12. An understanding of, and appreciation for, the role of digital technology and communication to modern politics.

Contract

The role is offered on a permanent, full-time contract and subject to a six-month probationary period (which may be extended based on performance) with two three-month check-point reviews led by the party president.

Remuneration

A competitive package will be negotiated with the chosen candidate.

Conflicts of interest

If you or your partner have any actual or potential conflict of interest with the activities of The Liberal Democrat Party, this should be declared clearly. Any indirect association of this kind through any other family member or partnership should also be disclosed in the application.

Appointment

Any offer of employment will be made subject to satisfactory references.

Application Contents

Your application should include:

- a current detailed CV;
- a letter of application no more than 2 sides of A4 with (a) a statement of suitability (drawing from the competencies listed in the job description) and (b) a vision for the role (drawing from the key objectives set out in the job description); and
- details for two referees, one of whom should be your current or most recent employer.

Closing Date

Applications should be sent to Natalia Villazan at natalia.villazan@libdems.org.uk or 07384 525218 by no later than midday on Thursday 12 September 2019. Please also complete the data monitoring form, and ensure we have the means to contact you by phone and email.

Potential candidates wanting further information should contact Anne Sullivan, Aide to the President, on Anne.Sullivan@libdems.org.uk or 07469 035 545 who will arrange for a telephone conversation with Baroness Brinton (the President) or another senior officer of the party.