Advice & Mentoring for Prospective Candidates

Please note: if you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or on coloured paper, please contact the LDHQ Candidates team on candidates@libdems.org.uk.

INTRODUCTION
Becoming a candidate for the Liberal Democrats can be a hugely rewarding opportunity, offering the chance to learn a diverse set of skills ranging from team-building, to public-speaking and to handling casework – as well as the chance to make a real difference in the community you represent.

However, virtually no one at the start of their journey to become a candidate is likely to have all the relevant skills at the outset, or a full understanding of the steps in involved in the process to become a Liberal Democrat candidate.

That’s why one of the options we offer is for those interested in becoming a candidate, or at various stages in the process to get access to advice, guidance and mentorship. This outlines some of the options currently available, at different stages in the candidate journey.

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1. JUST THINKING ABOUT IT

YOU: You are wondering what it would be like to stand as a candidate, what might be expected of you, and how to go about starting the process of candidate approval.

Who to contact

- Diversity & Candidates’ Office at LDHQ – this is always a good starting point. They will be pleased to learn of any potential new candidates and will be able to point you towards a variety of resources to get you started, including:
  - An introduction to becoming an approved Parliamentary candidate – this document provides an overview of the process.
  - The prospective candidate self-assessment questionnaire – this will help you to decide if you are ready to go forwards for approval
  - The application pack and forms – this will explain the competencies which you will be assessed for, and how to study for them, as well as simple application forms.
  - Training opportunities – if you have reviewed the competencies and feel you would like further training before submitting your application, the office will be able to let you know about training opportunities.

If you would like to talk about what it is like to be a candidate for the Liberal Democrats, the Candidates’ Office will also be able to connect you with a current or former candidate who can tell you a bit about their experiences.

Email: candidates@libdems.org.uk

- Your Regional Candidates’ Chair (RCC) – Every region or state has a person responsible for looking after candidate selection and approval matters in their area. They would also be a good person to advise you on next steps, talk you through the process and point you in the direction of current or former candidates to share their experiences with you.

The list of current RCCs can be found here
• **Your local party members, officers and other Liberal Democrat members you know:**

Often at this stage, there’s nothing like a bit of encouragement! Chat to other Lib Dems you know locally, through conference or even online. Tell them that you think you might be interested in becoming a candidate and you will probably discover a wealth of wisdom and plenty of enthusiasm to encourage you forwards.
2. PREPARING FOR APPROVAL

**YOU:** You have decided to go forwards with the process, and have filled out your forms to submit for the candidate approval process. You are waiting for your assessment day.

Who to contact

- **Diversity & Candidates’ Office at LDHQ** – At this stage you are likely to have been in touch with the candidates’ office to get your application pack. They will be also able to:
  - **Talk you through the assessment day process** – if you are not sure what to expect, or have any questions about what will happen during the assessment day, the candidate office will be able to talk you through it.
  - **Connect you with an assessment day mentor** – the office maintains a pool of mentors that they can put you in touch with who will offer approval advice. Typically they are current or former candidates who have been through the assessment day process and are willing to give prospective candidates the ‘inside view’ on what it is like, as well as tips and advice from their perspective on what you need to know and learn before the day.
  - **Signpost to tailored support for those from under-represented groups** – the party is committed to improving diversity at all levels of the party, and especially that our candidates better represent the make-up of the UK’s communities. Targeted support is available to candidates from under-represented groups in conjunction with the party’s SAOs (Specified Associated Organisations). This may include connecting you with a mentor who has an understanding of candidates’ processes and issues in relation to women, those from ethnic minority backgrounds, LGBT+ or those with disabilities. There may also be specialised training available.

  Email: candidates@libdems.org.uk

- **Your Regional Candidates’ Chair (RCC)** – Once you submit your application for approval you are strongly encouraged to get in contact with your RCC. They will be able to discuss your application, and suggest to you any additional learning or experience that
they would recommend you undertake in advance of the assessment day, particularly in relation to the core competencies for which you would be assessed.

The list of current RCCs can be found here and is included in the how to become a candidate document.
3. PREPARING FOR SELECTION

YOU: You have been approved to stand as a candidate for the Liberal Democrats. You are wondering which seats you might apply for, or you have applied and you are preparing for a local selection panel and/or hustings.

Who to contact

- **Diversity & Candidates’ Office at LDHQ** – the candidates’ office will be able to:
  - **Connect you with a mentor** – the office maintains a pool of mentors that they can put you in touch with who will offer advice and guidance on things like choosing a seat, what to do to prepare before the seat advertises for candidates, preparing for the short-listing panel, selection campaign and hustings. Mentors may include current and former candidates, Liberal Democrat peers and other volunteers with specialised knowledge.
  - **Signpost to tailored support for those from under-represented groups** – the party is committed to improving diversity at all levels of the party, and ensuring more candidates from under-represented groups are selected and selected into target seats is an important part of this. Targeted support is available to candidates from under-represented groups including women, ethnic minorities, LGBT+ and those with disabilities. Prospective candidates can also get in touch with the office who will facilitate this support, or candidates may be proactively contacted with offers of additional support and guidance.

- **Liberal Democrat Women** – LDW aims to inspire and provide tailored support and training for women, to enable them to achieve their potential in politics. To find out more about LDW and how to join, visit:

  [http://www.libdemwomen.org.uk](http://www.libdemwomen.org.uk)
LDW can also be contacted directly for support. They may be able to identify someone to provide advice or mentorship, as well as to suggest options for training, or for networking with other current, former and prospective candidates.

- **Ethnic Minority Liberal Democrats** – EMLD exists to develop the education, participation and representation of ethnic minorities within Liberal Democrats. To find out more about EMLD and how to join, go here:
  
  [http://emlibdems.org.uk](http://emlibdems.org.uk)

EMLD can be contacted directly for support prior to assessment days. They may be able to identify someone to provide advice or mentorship, as well as to suggest options for training or for networking with other current, former and prospective candidates.