Steering Committee

What does the Steering Committee do?
The Steering Committee is the Party’s central decision-making body outside of Party Conferences. It steers the direction of the Party by agreeing strategy, planning ahead and reacting to internal and external factors. It monitors the Party’s activities and outcomes against its mission, aims and objectives, and makes sure the Party’s activities are within the budget it sets and approves each year. It is also the body with the sole discretion to decide when and where WE stand candidates in elections.

Who should put themselves forward?
The Party needs a breadth of experience, skills and expertise in these important strategic roles. Committee members need to be able to debate, listen, analyse and work together to reach consensus about Party direction. If you are committed to steering and growing our movement of political activists, to making it diverse and representative of all women, if you have the time and energy WE need, please put yourself forward.

How many positions are open on the steering committee?
There are three positions on the steering committee that WE members can put themselves forward for, to be elected by conference.

Who is on the Steering Committee?
The Steering Committee is made up of:
The Party Leader;
The Party’s Life President (Catherine Mayer) and Life M.C (Sandi Toksvig);
Five WE members, elected by Party Conference;
Five WE members, randomly selected; and
Five WE members, recommended by the Steering Committee, subject to Party Conference approval.

For the current members of the Steering Committee, see http://www.womensequality.org.uk/steering-committee.

In order to have consistency on the Committee, the terms of office for WE members are varied in order to maintain a constant basis of experience. This year, three of the five elected positions are open*

*A number of the randomly selected positions and appointed members are also open, and will be ratified at conference in accordance with our constitution.

What is the process for election?
Committee members are elected by delegates at Party Conference. If you decide to put yourself forward, you need to submit a short video and statement to support your candidacy.
The videos and statements of all candidates who put themselves forward (and confirm they are willing to sign and abide by the code of conduct) will be made available to conference delegates one month before the conference.

There will be a time allocated at conference for members to talk to you before they vote.

All Party delegates will have an opportunity to vote for up to three candidates for the three vacant roles.

Candidates are elected by a simple majority vote, and successful candidates will be announced at Party Conference.

**What are the requirements of Steering Committee members?**

- Party membership
- Believe in and abide by the Party’s mission and objectives
- Willingness to become knowledgeable and familiar with the Party’s policies, political campaigns and electoral campaigns
- Availability for around 6 meetings of roughly 4 hours per meeting per year (usually held at weekends) as well as extraordinary meetings than can be called at short notice to respond to sudden events
- Willingness to read and digest papers sent to you ahead of meetings
- Ability to listen to and analyse information, debate and reach a consensus
- Ability to constructively challenge the Executive and Party employees and representatives
- Willingness to abide by a confidentiality agreement
- Commitment to the growth and diversity of the Party

Please read the [constitution](#) for the constitutional requirements of steering committee members (see section 7.5), and make sure you are content to sign and abide by the [code of conduct](#) and our [WE code](#).

**How do I put myself forward?**

Send us a short statement and video making your case for why conference delegates should vote for you, taking into account the requirements of the role. All candidates will be invited to take part in a session at conference, to give delegates the opportunity to ask them questions before casting their votes. This will take place at 9am on Saturday 8th September at our conference in Kettering.

You might want to refer to your personal connection to and passion for women’s equality; strategic roles you have played, how you have been part of making change happen, your role in improving or growing organisations, your experience of setting budgets, your understanding of our mission, how you have challenged other organisations, or how you would steer this Party, for example.

**Specifications:**

1. A film for publication on the Women’s Equality Party website:
   - Maximum 2 minutes (anything that exceeds this will not be posted)
2. A short statement for use on the Women’s Equality Party website:
   o Length: Maximum 200 words.
   o Style: Written in first person (anything written in third person will not be posted)

3. Your social media handles (if you wish to use these to support your campaign)

Send them to returningofficer@womensequality.org.uk

The Returning Officer will make sure your submissions meet the specified requirements. They will confirm receipt of your submission.

Your film and statement will be made available to conference delegates, who will vote on who they want in these positions at Party Conference.

The deadline for submitting the film and statement is midnight on Sunday 12th August.

Selected candidates’ films and statements will be live from the 20th August.
Procedures and guidance for committee elections 2018

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The committee elections shall be conducted in a fair, open and transparent manner. The procedures shall ensure that each candidate has equal access to the eligible electorate and has equal treatment in all other matters pertaining to the election.

2. The Returning Officer for the election to the policy committee and steering committee is Claire Webb, deputised by Marta Brebner. They can be contacted on returningofficer@womensequality.org.uk

3. The Returning Officer(s) shall be independent and impartial at all times.

4. Candidates do not have to run a campaign, or undertake any activities beyond the requirements set out below. The rules cover any activities candidates may decide to undertake in support of their candidacy.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND TIMESCALE

5. All candidates must supply:
   a. A film for publication on the Women’s Equality Party website:
      i. Length: Maximum 2 minutes (anything that exceeds this will not be posted)
      ii. File type: .mov or .mp4 (other file types will not be posted)
      iii. Format: Recommended to film in landscape, against a plain background
   b. A short statement for use on the Women’s Equality Party website:
      i. Length: Maximum 200 words.
      ii. Style: Written in first person (anything written in third person will not be posted)
   c. Your social media handles (if you wish to use these to support your campaign)

6. All submissions must be received by 23:59 on Sunday 12th August electronically to returningofficer@womensequality.org.uk

7. Should any candidate wish to withdraw, they must put this in writing via email to the Returning Officer by 23:59 on Wednesday 15th August in the following way:
   Email: returningofficer@womensequality.org.uk

8. The Returning Officer will invalidate any candidate who fails to meet the
criteria for standing by 23:59 on Sunday 19th August.

9. All nominations will remain valid once submitted unless the nominated candidate fails to meet their obligations set out above or has withdrawn their nomination in writing to the Returning Officer by the date set out above. Validly nominated candidates will go through to the ballot.

10. In the event that only one candidate remains for any one vacancy on the Policy Committee, or no more than the number of vacancies on the steering committee remain, there will not be a ballot for those positions but they will be ratified at conference.

11. Voting, counting and announcement of the successful candidates will take place at Party Conference, 7-9th September.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDATES WHO ARE EXISTING OFFICE HOLDERS

12. During the election period, candidates who are existing WE office holders must carry on their essential business.

13. During the election period, candidates who are existing office holders may court as much publicity as possible for their candidacy as long as they do so in their capacity as candidates:
   a. during election-related media or events; and
   b. independent of their WE office; and
   c. according to the rules for candidates; and
   d. independent of any official WE work or volunteering that is not election-related.

14. During the election period, candidates who are existing office holders may cite their record of achievement for WE in election communication and in specifically election-related publicity, but while they are working or volunteering for WE in ways that are not election-related may not:
   a. discuss their candidacy; or
   b. use their office to give them greater visibility than their competitors or any form of electoral advantage.
   c. If asked about their candidacy during the normal course of WE work or volunteering, they may offer to give an election-related interview at another time.

15. In the same way, non-office holding candidates who are WE volunteers may
not use their normal WE volunteering as a platform for their election.

REQUIREMENTS FOR OFFICE HOLDERS

16. During the election period, office holders must not use their normal WE work or volunteering as a platform for expressing their preference for any candidate, or to influence voters.

17. During the election period, office holders may express their preference for a candidate as long as they do so in their capacity as individual members:
   a. during election-related media or events; and
   b. independent of their WE office; and
   c. according to the Code of Conduct; and
   d. independent of any official WE work or volunteering that is not election-related.

18. Office holders must not accept financial inducement, gifts or treats from candidates in exchange for support.

19. During the election period, office holders must not facilitate or provide access to the WE database for any candidate or those working on their election campaign.

20. Anyone found providing access to the WE database for any candidate or those working on their election campaign will have their WE database access suspended indefinitely by decision of the Returning Officer(s)

21. During the election period, office holders should not answer questions on behalf of, or regarding, candidates even where those candidates belong to their branch, hub or committee. They should refer the questioner to that candidate.

22. During the election period, office holders must be impartial in all mentions of candidates on Party social media channels and all other forms of Party communication related to the officer elections.

23. During the election period, office holders may organise election-related events. Office holders should aim to give equal platform and mention to each of the candidates.

   They can contact candidates via the Returning Officer(s) by emailing the Returning Officer(s) at returningofficer@womensequality.org.uk.
RULES FOR CANDIDATES

24. Candidates or persons acting on behalf of a candidate must not use their own material, access to publicity or any media outlets to disparage any other candidate. Bullying, defamation, harassment or intimidation of any kind by candidates or persons acting on behalf of candidates shall not be tolerated and will be dealt with in accordance with the terms of the Constitution.

25. Candidates or persons acting on behalf of a candidate who are existing WE office holders cannot use their office to promote their candidacy.

26. No financial inducement, gifts or treats to local branches, regional or national hubs, WE officeholders, staff, election officials, Members or Registered Supporters may be offered in an effort to secure support.

27. A contact list for Members and Registered Supporters will not be provided to any candidate. Candidates or those campaigning on their behalf may not access or use the WE database during the election period for election purposes.

28. An aspiring candidate, or someone who publicly supports any of the candidates, cannot attend any WE discussions that deal with the administration of the election unless specifically invited by the Returning Officer(s).

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RETURNING OFFICER(S) DURING THE ELECTION PERIOD

29. Returning Officer is Claire Webb, who has appointed a Deputy Returning Officer, Marta Brebner.

30. The Returning Officer(s) may not indicate any preference for any candidate at any time, and must be seen to be completely impartial throughout the whole election process.

31. The Returning Officer(s) must treat all candidates equally and ensure they are each afforded the same opportunities, including:
   a. access to available resources from WE as appropriate; and
   b. access and reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates.
   c. This includes being wholly impartial in conversations, interviews, on social media and in all correspondence.

32. They will keep the proceedings of the Returning Officer(s) confidential at all times.
33. They will keep the candidates' financial and personal information confidential at all times, and will not publish these or refer to them except with the WE finance team where necessary.

34. However, in any report to WE Central Office, the Steering Committee or Conference, they may supply non-personally identifiable aggregated information.

35. The Returning Officer(s) will ensure the election is run in a free, fair, impartial and transparent manner, with honesty and integrity.

PARTY SUPPORT FOR CANDIDATES

36. The Party will publish all candidate films and short statement on a page of its website, and publicise the site to members.

37. At Party conference, candidates will be offered one slot at the open mic session in the evening on Friday 7th September to promote their candidacy to delegates. These slots are all 3 minutes long each, and the Chair will ensure that all election candidates who put themselves forward get selected to speak (any delegate is able to ask to speak on any topic for 3 minutes).

38. The Party will provide a stall at conference for candidates to deposit any electoral communication they wish to use to promote their candidacy, in accordance with the rules set out above.

CANDIDATE SPENDING AND REPORTING

39. Candidates are regulated by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 ("PPERA 2000") and are required to fully comply with the rules for accepting and reporting donations.

40. Candidates in this election are defined as 'regulated donees' under schedule 7 of PPERA 2000; therefore donations made to them in connection with their political activities – including seeking election to a position within the party – are regulated.

41. Donations (cash or in kind) of more than £500 are controlled. A regulated donee can only accept donations of more than £500 from permissible donors or lenders. PPERA 2000 defines permissible donors as:
   a. An individual on a UK electoral register;
   b. A UK registered political party;
c. A UK registered and trading company;
d. A UK registered trade union;
e. A UK registered building society;
f. A UK registered Limited Liability partnership;
g. A UK registered friendly/building society;
h. A UK based unincorporated association.

42. Donations must be checked for permissibility within 30 days of receipt. There is no 30-day grace period. It is an offence to accept donations of more than £500 from an impermissible source. In addition, donations of more than £500 must not be accepted from anonymous or unidentifiable sources.

43. Donations of more than £500 from impermissible sources must be returned to the donor and reported to the electoral commission within 30 days of receipt. Impermissible donations which cannot be returned must be sent to the Electoral Commission.

44. A cap on all cash expenditure, resources and donations in kind will be set at £1,000. This includes spending.

45. The cap will include:
   a. Advertising and unsolicited materials of any kind, for example, leaflets, posters, websites or videos, including production costs for the candidate video statement.
   b. Transport costs, for example, hire cars or public transport for the candidate and/or their agent.
   c. Meetings and events held to promote the candidate’s campaign that are not organised by WE Central Office.
   d. Administrative costs, for example, stationery, photocopying, and phone costs.

46. All associated costs of each activity will also be included in the spending cap. For example, the design, photography and distribution cost of producing leaflets will be included.

47. The cap will not include:
   a. Anything appearing in a newspaper or licensed broadcast channel that is not an advert.
   b. written candidate statements for the candidate profiles.
   c. volunteers who are not paid for their time.
   d. the use of someone’s personal car so long as that car is not loaned
exclusively to the candidate for their campaign.
e. the use of someone’s main residence, provided free of charge.
f. computer equipment bought for the candidate’s personal use.

48. Any surplus in total cash donations received to support the campaign for any candidate shall be paid to the Women’s Equality Party with the submission of the return of election expenses.

49. Candidates are required to document income throughout their campaign, a form for submitting an expense return will be provided to all candidates.

50. The regulated period for candidate spending on this election begins when a candidate submits their video and statement to the Returning Officer(s).

51. Any breach of this Code of Conduct will be reported to the Returning Officer(s) by the Treasurer. The decision of the Returning Officer(s) will be final.

VOTING ELIGIBILITY

52. Conference delegates who are WE Members who are on the Membership List, including both Full Members and Affiliate Members, and whose membership has not expired at the time of voting, will be eligible to vote.

53. Conference delegates who are supporters and non-members will not be eligible to vote.

54. WE members and affiliate members who do not attend conference will not be eligible to vote.

BALLOT

55. Ballot papers will be issued to voting conference delegates at conference.

56. There will be separate ballot papers for the Steering Committee and the Policy Committee.

57. Steering Committee candidates will be published in alphabetical order, by first name.

58. Voters can vote for up to three people, and have one vote for each of the three vacant positions.
59. Policy Committee candidates will be published by policy area, position, and then in alphabetical order, by first name.

60. Voters can vote for one candidate for each vacant position.

61. The ballot will open when registration opens at the beginning of conference on Friday 7th September, and eligible delegates will have until 3:45pm on Saturday 7th September to cast their votes.

THE COUNT

62. The Returning Officer(s) are responsible for counting the votes, and ensuring accurate results.

63. In accordance with 7.5.7 and 7.6.1 of the constitution, candidates for both committees will be elected by a simple majority.

64. The Count will take place on Saturday 8th September at 4pm.

65. The successful candidates will be announced on Sunday 8th September by the Returning Officer(s).