



# **Becoming a Parliamentary Candidate**

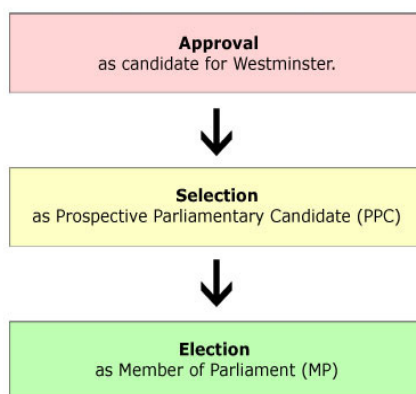
A rough guide to the process

# Becoming a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate

## A rough guide to the process

This rough guide is intended to give potential applicants a broad idea of the process involved in becoming a Parliamentary Candidate. The full application pack, which contains detailed information and guidance, is available by contacting the English Candidate's Office on [candidates@libdems.org.uk](mailto:candidates@libdems.org.uk).

There are two stages to becoming a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate - Approval and Selection.



### Step 1: Approval

#### The application form.

The application form has recently been changed and has shortened dramatically. It no longer forms part of the assessment process, so just fill it out and get it in as soon as you feel ready!

As part of your application, you will need to provide three references - one of whom must be an office-holder within the Lib Dems, and others that you should have worked with in the past 12 months. It is worth starting to think about whom you might want to ask eg. former or current employees, teachers, members of groups or organisations you have been involved with.

When you have prepared your application, send in your application to the Candidate's Office at Cowley Street (one electronic copy and one hard copy). To avoid delays, do check that you have included everything that is required - a checklist can be found in the application pack.

#### The assessment day

You will be sent an invitation by the Candidates Office when a space is available on an assessment day (usually within six months from application).

The day normally lasts for four hours, and costs £50 (if the cost would present you with any difficulties, please contact the Candidates' Office).

During the assessment day the assessors will look for evidence of six competency areas. (Further information about these competencies can be found in the 'Competency Framework' in the application pack). The exercises that you will be asked to complete are designed to assess different aspects of these competencies, but remember that you will not be expected to excel in all of them - nobody's perfect!

On the basis of all the exercises of the day, you will be awarded a coloured grading. A 'green' or 'yellow' grading means that you have scored well against the competency framework and you will be added to the list of approved candidates. A 'blue' or a 'red' grading means that you have shown limited or little evidence of competence, and will not be added to the approved list at this time. In this situation, you will be permitted to retake the assessment day after an allotted period of time - the Candidates Office will inform you of this when they send out your results.

*Please note that the assessment days will start again after the General Election in late 2010, and there is likely to be a waiting list. You should submit your application form as soon as you are ready in order to go onto this list.*

## **Step 2: Selection**

Once you are formally approved, your name goes on to the list of Approved Candidates for the Westminster Parliament.

Adverts for seat vacancies appear in Lib Dem News and the Parliamentary Candidates Association website, as well as in the monthly Campaign for Gender Balance newsletter - if you would like to sign up to this, please send a blank e-mail to [subscribe-genderbalance@lists.libdems.org.uk](mailto:subscribe-genderbalance@lists.libdems.org.uk)

If you see a seat you would like to apply for, you should contact the Returning Officer as listed in the advert. The Local Party decide on the selection criteria they will use for the selection in their constituency - you will be sent a copy of these criteria and a profile of the constituency as part of the application pack.

*NB. It is worth noting that if you want to go for selection in the top seats you shouldn't wait until the seat advertises - if you are serious about becoming an MP you should be looking at seats well in advance and positioning yourself to win the selection long before it advertises.*

After applying for the seat, you may be asked to attend a selection interview (depending on the number of applicants). If you are shortlisted, you will be asked to attend a hustings meeting at which you will give a short speech. The members of the local party will then vote on their choice of PPC.

If you are chosen to be a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, you are the potential MP for that seat in the next General Election ☺

*Remember...*

### **Just go for it!**

You should apply for approval as soon as you think you have the necessary experience - don't wait for a seat to advertise first. You never know when a seat is going to come up in your area, and you should be ready to go for it!

### **No-one is perfect**

The competency framework is a guide for the qualities that are being looked for in a candidate, but the assessors are aware that people may show these qualities in different ways.

### **We're not looking for clones!**

Diversity and individuality is recognised and valued in the process - whatever your gender, age, ethnicity or background, nothing should stop you going for it

### **Sell yourself.**

You probably have a lot more to offer than you give yourself credit for. Think about all your experiences (personal, professional, voluntary) and how these relate to the competencies - no doubt you are more impressive than you initially think!

### **You are not alone!**

The Campaign for Gender Balance provides mentoring, training and a network of support and contacts to help and support women through all stages of the approval and selection processes - we're here to help, so please do get in touch!



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