



Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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EEDI Strategy



Flow diagram for approval

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Corporate/Party wide - applicable to Party wide governance or policies and processes which affect Members.	Director level	FPDC
HR/People policies - applicable to all HR matters for HQ staff	Director level	n/a
Data Protection operational policies	Data Protection Officer/Director level	n/a
IT & Information Security policies - applicable to HQ staff & Party wide	Director level	n/a
Finance - policy documents containing guidance relating to financial payments	Director level	n/a
Operational process documents - team level process documents for systems and processes	Team level	n/a



1 Purpose

This policy sets out i) our commitment to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion (EEDI), ii) our responsibilities as an employer and to our members and iii) how we intend to implement our EEDI Strategy for the Party and our key stakeholders.

2 Definitions

The policy uses the terms **Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** (EEDI) interchangeably, demonstrating our understanding of what must be done to maintain our commitment and initiate positive change within the Liberal Democrats. Our definition of each component of EEDI (based on good practice outlined by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)) are outlined below:

Diversity refers to demographic characteristics and differences of a group – often at team or organisational level. Frequently, diversity references protected characteristics as defined in UK law: age, disability, gender reassignment/gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Sometimes, diversity also references non protected characteristics such as class.

Equality means equal rights and opportunities are afforded to all. The UK's Equality Act protects those with protected characteristics from direct and indirect discrimination in the workplace and wider society.

Equity recognises that treating everyone equally has shortcomings when the playing field is not level. An equity approach emphasises that people should not always be treated the same, rather that they are treated according to their own situation and circumstances. This is consistent with the Preamble to our Party's Preamble and to the Constitution.

Inclusion is often defined as the extent to which everyone at work , regardless of their background, identity or circumstance, feels valued, accepted and supported to succeed.



Forms of Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 clearly defines discrimination, and demonstrates how some behaviours are defined as unlawful, in the following way:

Direct discrimination means treating someone less favourably than someone else because of a protected characteristic. In the case of age, treating someone less favourably than someone else may be justified.

Direct discrimination by perception means treating one person less favourably than someone else, because you incorrectly think they have a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination means putting in place, a rule or policy or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified.

Direct discrimination by association means treating someone less favourably than another person because they are associated with a person who has a protected characteristic.

Harassment is unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken some form of action relating to the Equality Act, e.g. made a complaint under the Act or supported somebody who is doing so, such as appearing as a witness.

The Party is accountable for ensuring we remain compliant with the United Kingdom's law. Our EEDI policy, while meeting legal requirements, incorporates best practice that goes beyond compliance, and work towards eliminating all forms of discrimination and upholding equity for all.

3 The values of EEDI and their significance to the Liberal Democrats

At the Liberal Democrats we believe earnestly in a modern Britain that embodies fairness for all in a diverse and inclusive society. The introduction of the Preamble to our Constitution reflects the values of EEDI and states:



“The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community, and in which no one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity. We champion the freedom, dignity and well-being of individuals, we acknowledge and respect their right to freedom of conscience and their right to develop their talents to the full. We aim to disperse power, to foster diversity and to nurture creativity”.

We have pledged to tackle institutional biases, promote equality and hold power to account through applying values of openness, transparency and accountability in our communities and wider society. This pledge will be the foundation of our obligations to employees, members and other key stakeholders.

4 Our Commitment to EEDI

Our Employees

The Party believes it is essential to foster EEDI within our workforce. We want our employees to thrive in an environment where everyone is welcome and supported to achieve their potential. We aim to be an employer that adopts best practice and will:

- Positively value and acknowledge EEDI as key to the Party's achievements,
- Treat all employees fairly, equitably and with dignity;
- Promote the health and wellbeing of all employees;
- Ensure Party Leaders role model inclusive behaviour and uphold EEDI values; and,
- Make certain everyone understands their responsibility to uphold EEDI values.

Members and supporters

Members and supporters are the cornerstone of the Party and are part of our growing liberal movement to effect positive changes in our Society. In acknowledging the value that differences within our membership base can bring, the Party will:

- Ensure every member feels included, is valued and treated fairly within the Party;



- Work to expand the diversity of the Party in terms of Membership;
- Promote our commitment to EEDI visibly, attracting more diverse members, supporters and candidates; and,
- Expand our knowledge of EEDI issues to understand and combat inequalities and meet socio-economic needs more appropriately.

In valuing EEDI, the Party will make certain that everyone is treated fairly, and no-one receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which are not relevant to good employment practice, the Party membership and other key stakeholders. Liberal Democrats and its EEDI Strategy.

Strategic intent

We aim to embed EEDI as an ongoing process.. We expect there to be emerging issues and developments in the field of EEDI, and the operating environment. These mean that the Party will need to take continuous action to enhance our practice. To address this the following medium term strategic objectives, for 2021-2025, have been developed:

Objectives

Objective 1 - Increase diversity across the Liberal Democrat party in the Federal, State, Region and Local Parties, so that we are more representative of the society we serve, with a specific focus on diversity of candidates and in particular Black, Asian and Disabled people (and other underrepresented communities). Our objective is to be recognised as a natural home for these voters.

Objective 2 - Embed and build capability and understanding of EEDI practice, and enhance learning across all functions of the party, through improved governance and practice. Our objective is to be considered a leader in the design and implementation of EEDI policy.

Objective 3 - Effectively positioning EEDI in the Liberal Democrats by ensuring consistency of terminology and communication. Our objective is for our EEDI policy and achievements to be recognised in the community.

Objective 4 – Attract, develop, progress the capability and enhance the pipeline of members, potential votes, candidates, MP’s staff and leadership.

The EEDI Strategy and Action Plan will be implemented jointly with the Liberal Democrat’s EEDI Communications Strategy and Action Plan. Both



are integral components of day-to-day operations and part of the Party's overall strategic and business plans.

Key aim of the EEDI Action Plan

Action on EEDI forms an integral part of our vision for the Liberal Democrats. Action will ensure that we continue to reach the changing society which we serve. Action will also improve organisational capacity to deliver, through valuing and making the best use of the diversity of talent across our organisation.

In addition, the EEDI Action Plan moves beyond Liberal Democrats' legal and moral obligations, enhancing our commitment to our community and social responsibility.

5 Implementation of the EEDI Action Plan and Policy

Accountability and Responsibilities

Every member of Liberal Democrats has an individual responsibility for valuing EEDI. However, specific responsibilities are designated and defined follows:

Liberal Democrats' EEDI Action Team, established by FPDC, will drive the continuing development and recognition of EEDI within the Party.

The Action Team will have overall responsibility for all EEDI issues within Liberal Democrats. The Group oversees the development of the EEDI Strategy and Action Plan alongside any resulting implementation plans.

The Action Team is chaired by the Chief Operating Officer, Activity Officers will support the overall vision of this strategy and will liaise with the EEDI working group as required.

Chief Executive and Vice President

Accountability and responsibility for the overall development, monitoring and day-to-day co-ordination of the policy rests with the Chief Executive and Vice President.

Chief Operating Officer

The Chief Operating Officer will ensure that the policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements.



The relevant guidance linked to our Action Plan clearly outlines the legal responsibilities within each policy area.

Members of the House of Commons, Members of the House of Lords, Leaders and Managers

Leaders and managers have a responsibility to understand their part in supporting this policy, as well as ensuring their teams understand what is expected of them in terms of this policy. They have a responsibility to take all concerns and complaints regarding EEDI seriously, as well as set the tone for building positive working environments and healthy working climates. The Party will ensure that everyone at leadership and management levels is provided with the necessary support to implement EEDI objectives and create positive environments for all individuals.

All Individuals

Every individual member of Liberal Democrats has a responsibility to value EEDI. Good working relations and fair employment practices depend on everyone, and individual attitudes and behaviours are key to promoting EEDI. All individuals will be expected to:

- Co-operate with measures introduced by the Party that promote EEDI and prohibit discrimination;
- Not commit any acts or behave in a manner that would contravene the EEDI Action Plan;
- Not instruct or influence others (including agencies or clients) to practise unlawful discrimination;
- Draw the attention of Management and/or Human Resources to suspected incidents of unacceptable behaviour and/or discrimination; and,
- Behave consistently at all times, respecting and promoting the dignity and rights of all.

6 EEDI operational guidelines within the Liberal Democrats

Our Plan will remain active through the implementation of policies and practises that include clear operational guidelines and embrace EEDI values.

The guidelines also reflect the Protected Characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.



7 Monitoring

The Party is committed to ensuring the effectiveness of the EEDI Action Plan through efficient monitoring in accordance, where appropriate, with statutory requirements. The monitoring process will include classification in the areas of all Protected Characteristics. It will be applied to:

- Job applicants, short-listed employment candidates and successful appointments;
- Current employees through regular staff surveys and other feedback;
- Promotions and movement within job levels;
- Formal grievance and disciplinary outcomes;
- Exit interviews;
- Membership data and demographics;
- Prospective candidates; local council and parliamentary; and,
- Liberal Democrat Voters.

The results of monitoring will be reviewed by the EEDI Working Group at regular intervals to determine the effectiveness of the EEDI Action Plan. The EEDI Working Group will address any perceived areas of concern.

8 Learning and Development for EEDI

The Party will provide individuals with the relevant learning opportunities to increase their awareness of EEDI and widen their perspective about difference.

Learning and Development will seek to ensure that those with key Party responsibilities fully understand what is expected of them. In addition, all those with the authority to recruit both employees, members and prospective candidates (via selection) will receive Inclusive Recruitment and Selection training.

The Party will also ensure that those with designated responsibilities for operating procedures within the guidelines/codes of practice will receive specialist skills training as necessary.



9 Handling Complaints

Although we will do our utmost to ensure that individuals within the Party feel valued, there will be occasions when complaints will be made, acknowledging that everyone has the right to have their grievances heard.

Discrimination and unacceptable behaviour related to any Protected Characteristic may constitute gross misconduct and will be treated as disciplinary offences. Any member of the Party who has committed an act of unlawful discrimination may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Any employee of the party who has committed an act of unlawful discrimination may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal.

Complaints against members will be handled via our Complaints procedure which can be found on our website.

Complaints or grievances raised by an employee against an employee will be handled via our Dignity at Work Policy or our grievance and disciplinary policy whichever is appropriate.

Liberal Democrats will take steps to ensure that any individual who has, in good faith, complained and/or taken action according to our policies will not receive less favourable treatment than any other individual, for example, by being subjected to disciplinary action in connection with their complaint.

10 Policy Review

This policy has been reviewed by the EEDI Action Team and formally approved by the FPDC, and will be reviewed on an annual basis, or more regularly, and in line with revised working methods or new legislation as required.