

Liberal Democrats



in England

Party in England Election Regulations

Adopted by English Party Board at its meeting on 10 September 2026

Introduction

- 1) These regulations set out procedures for the election by members of the English Party of positions specified in the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats in England:
 - a) the Chair of the English Party Assembly;
 - b) the Executive Officer for Candidates;
 - c) the Executive Officer for Diversity;
 - d) 3 members of the G8 committee; and
 - e) individuals representing the Liberal Democrats in England on Federal Party committees:
 - i) 3 members of the Federal Council; and
 - ii) 1 member each on the Federal Policy Committee, Federal Conference Committee, Federal People Development Committee and Federal International Relations Committee.

Where subsequently to the adoption of these election regulations this list is changed, either by addition or removal of positions, as a result of either constitutional amendment or standing order change, either in the English or Federal Party, the revised list shall take precedence.

The English Party's representative on the Federal Communications & Elections Committee shall be the individual elected in 2025 until completion of their term of office, whereafter it shall become a responsibility ex officio of the Chair or Vice-Chair of the English Party Board.

Organisation of elections

- 2) The English Party Board shall appoint a Returning Officer to oversee all party elections conducted under these election regulations for a period of three years, or until their resignation, incapacity or death if any of these occur sooner. The Returning Officer shall be responsible for the efficient and timely conduct of these elections.
- 3) The Returning Officer may appoint an Acting Returning Officer from party members or staff with relevant experience and delegate any of the responsibilities set out in these regulations to that person. Other Deputy Acting Returning Officers may be appointed if required.
- 4) In any cases of dispute within the Returning Officer team, the decision of the Returning Officer shall be final, excepting any rights of appeal granted under these rules.
- 5) No motion shall be considered by either English Party Board or English Party Assembly in relation to any election process which is still under way (namely after nominations have been opened and before results have been announced).

- 6) The Returning Officer shall ensure that the procedures and any appropriate guidance for the use of the Returning Officer team, candidates and voters, are in place for each election at least one month before the opening of nominations in an election. These shall not, thereafter, be amended without good cause.

Timetables

- 7) At least one month before the count in an election the Returning Officer shall publish a written description of the counting method to be used to ensure that results are compliant with Article 2 of the Federal Party constitution and that the provisions of paragraph 31 regarding casual vacancies are met.
- 8) The Returning Officer shall agree with the English Party Board a timetable for each election and ensure such a timetable is publicised as widely as practicable
- 9) Elections for the roles in 1 a), b) and c) shall be held every three years, save as specified in Article 5.4 of the English Party constitution. Elections for the roles in 1 d) and e) shall be held in the same years as elections for the other places on Federal committees and the timetable shall conform as far as is practicable to the timetable set by the Federal Board for the Federal elections.
- 10) Once the timetable for any election has been announced but before the opening of nominations, the English Party Board may postpone the election if the timetable conflicts with a General Election or a referendum covering England, or any other significant event, that in the English Party Board's view would unduly hinder the conduct of the election.
- 11) After the opening of nominations for any election, the Returning Officer may postpone or suspend the election if it would conflict with a General Election or a referendum covering England, or any other significant event, that in the Returning Officer's view would unduly hinder the conduct of the election. If any votes have been cast, the Returning Officer has the power to cancel them and restart the election as soon as the Returning Officer considers practicable.

Eligibility and nomination

- 12) The electorate for the purpose of these elections shall be those members with paid-up membership of the Liberal Democrats in England on the closing date for nominations. Members who, at the closing date for nominations, are in the grace period following their membership subscription due date can be added to the electorate if they renew their membership at least three days prior to the close of voting.
- 13) Only members of the electorate for an election may stand in the election, save that:
 - a) no member employed directly by the party at any level, or employed as part of parliamentary staff, may stand for the roles in 1 a), b) or c);

- b) no member employed by the Federal Party, a state party or a regional party may stand for the roles in 1 d) or e); and
- c) no member may stand for the positions listed in 1 a), b) or c) if by being elected they would serve more than six years.

14) Nominations may be submitted by:

- a) any Local Party;
- b) any Regional Party, which includes the Affiliated Organisation representing youth and/or students; or
- c) any ten members of the English Party

and must be accompanied by the written consent of the candidate.

15) A nominator may not subscribe to more nomination papers than there are vacancies in the election being held.

16) In order to be covered by one of the minimum representation requirements under Article 2 of the Federal Constitution, a candidate should submit information with their nomination paper as to which of the protected characteristics apply to themselves. Candidates will be informed on the nomination form that, when the election results are published, it may be possible for someone to infer some information regarding the fact that a candidate made such a submission.

17) The Returning Officer shall specify how forms required by these regulations shall be submitted, such as via a specified web address.

Conduct of elections

18) All elections will be conducted electronically, including the submission of nominations, display of candidates' manifestos and casting of votes. The online voting system shall prompt voters to look at candidates' manifestos prior to voting and provide for the randomisation of the names on the ballot paper.

19) The Returning Officer shall make provision for voters who cannot vote electronically to vote by post upon a request in writing received no later than two weeks before the day of election. Any such request shall only be valid for the specific election(s) being conducted at the time of the request.

20) Any official party publication whether in paper or electronic form shall give, as far as possible, equal coverage and a fair balance to all candidates. Coverage of activity by any candidate that is not related to the election may continue in a normal way.

21) English Party employees shall maintain strict neutrality from the opening date for declaration of candidacy. It is recommended that employees of the Federal Party, Regions, Affiliated Organisations and any other relevant employing bodies shall also maintain such neutrality.

- 22) Party Officers, acting in their capacity as officers at federal, state, regional and local level, are expected, as far as possible, to give equal opportunities and fair balance to all candidates.
- 23) No candidate may incur, or directly or indirectly authorise or cause to be incurred, any further expenses on campaigning for the role(s) for which they are standing at any time from the announcement of the timetable for the election until the count has been concluded, other than:
- a) the cost of the production and submission of their personal election address(es);
 - b) the cost of emails, or phone calls to voters using their own personal email or phone, or the personal email or phones of volunteer helpers; and
 - c) the cost of visiting a voter by the candidate or a volunteer helper using their own vehicle or public transport.
- 24) Candidates must not carry out any activities during the election period which may be viewed as treating.

Manifestos and publicity material

- 25) Each candidate shall be entitled to a personal manifesto to be displayed electronically, in a format to be determined by the Returning Officer. Each candidate shall be responsible for verifying, to the satisfaction of the Returning Officer, any statement in their manifesto claiming that they are endorsed by any individual or organisation. Such material must accompany the candidate's manifesto when submitted. A separate manifesto must be provided for each role for which the candidate is standing.
- 26) In addition to candidates' manifestos, the Returning Officer may decide to require each candidate to provide answers to common questions about their suitability for the position(s) for which they are standing. The Returning Officer shall draw up these questions in consultation with relevant party staff, party officers and the English Party Board.
- 27) No candidate or persons acting on behalf of a candidate will use their own material or access to publicity to disparage any members of staff. All candidates and members acting on their behalf are governed by the Code of Conduct for Members and Registered Supporters and shall in particular follow its provisions when making any reference by name or implication to other candidates.

Counting of elections

- 28) All contested elections shall be conducted by secret ballot and the single transferable vote. Counts shall be conducted in accordance with the current edition of the Electoral Reform Society's publication How to Conduct an Election by the Single Transferable Vote, subject to the application of paragraph 31 below. On completion

of the count, the election result will be published on the Party website giving details of all stages of the count.

- 29) The elections shall be counted in the order they are listed in Article 1. Once a candidate has been elected to a post under 1 e), they will be withdrawn from all subsequent counts for posts under 1 e) for which they were nominated.
- 30) If the specified proportions of candidates with protected characteristics in Article 2 of the Federal Party constitution are not elected by the operation of the above rules, the Returning Officer shall apply the counting method published under paragraph 7.
- 31) Casual vacancies occurring in the roles in 1 (d) and (e) shall be filled by recounting the original ballot papers in the election, passing over any preferences for any candidate causing a vacancy. If necessary, further counts shall be conducted using the counting method published under paragraph 7 to ensure that all candidates originally elected so remain and that the specified proportions of protected characteristics are met as far as possible. On completion of the count, the election result will be published on the Party website giving details of all stages of the count.
- 32) If 31 is not possible, and for all other roles, a by-election for the casual vacancy shall occur, the electorate being solely members of the English Party Board.
- 33) The Returning Officer shall have the power to make rulings to facilitate the completion of the count.

Interpretation, complaints and appeals

- 34) In interpreting and applying these regulations, and in any case where the regulations are silent, the Returning Officer shall have the power to make all necessary decisions concerning the conduct of these elections, following the aims and principles of public election law.
- 35) The Returning Officer shall have the power to disqualify before declaration of the result, or unseat if declared elected any candidate who:
 - a) has brought the party into disrepute during the campaign or where the Returning Officer has clear evidence of this happening in the near future; or
 - b) is found to be in breach of any of these regulations,but shall not exercise such power without first offering any such candidate the right to make representation, and having regard thereto.
- 36) Any member of the Liberal Democrats in England may lodge, in writing in a format prescribed by the Returning Officer, a formal complaint of infringement of election regulations upon becoming aware of any alleged infringement and not more than 7 days after the declaration. The written complaint should be addressed to the Returning Officer and specify in detail the nature of the infringement. The Returning Officer shall then decide, in full consultation with the Returning Officer team, if appointed, whether there is sufficient evidence and grounds to uphold the complaint,

but shall not do so without offering any candidate concerned the right to make representations, and having regard thereto. Any party member who makes repeated and vexatious complaints may be referred to the party's disciplinary system.

- 37) If a complaint is made prior to the declaration of the result, the Returning Officer shall have the power to postpone such declaration until the determination of such complaint or, where an appeal is made against their decision, until the determination of such appeal. The Returning Officer shall have the discretion to use this power to suspend individual candidates from serving on any position they are elected to while any such complaint is investigated and/or subject to appeal.
- 38) Appeals against decisions of the Returning Officer must be referred to the English Appeals Panel within 14 days of the decision. For the purposes of appeals under these regulations, if the Chair of the Panel is also the Returning Officer, one of the Panel Vice Chairs shall act as the Chair of the English Appeals Panel, unless they are not available in which case the other Panel members shall appoint one of their number as Acting Chair.

Review

- 39) The relevant sections of these regulations will be reviewed by the English Party Board based on a report from the Returning Officer no later than six months after the completion of any election. The report must include a report on any diversity measures taken as a result of any requirement under the Federal constitution, potential data protection breaches and any changes or clarifications required by rulings made by the Returning Officer or the Federal Appeals Panel.
- 40) 'These Regulations shall be used for such elections as may be specified in the English Party Constitution referring to rules made under Article 9.9c of the Federal Constitution. Where these rules are used for election to roles other than specified in paragraph 1, the Returning Officer shall make reasonable adaptations or reading across of rules as those roles require and shall publish these as part of their duties under Paragraph 6. Where a Returning Officer exercises this power, they should aim for the smallest change possible that preserves the original meaning and intent of these rules.'

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