

STELLAR  
PROGRAMME ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# Welcome



There is great talent in our ranks. But unfortunately members that are Black, Asian or from a Minority Ethnic background have more barriers than most to succeed within our party and beyond.

We want to support you in becoming a “Stellar Candidate” and increase your chances of winning your seat in the 2024/2028 General Election.

We know that to be a great politician requires you to have a great team around you, to manage that team well and to be a true leader. This programme is different to those before it: we offer a practice-based programme developed by a broad range of leaders within the party. We have consulted with past and current BAME candidates to ensure that gaps they have experienced in the past have been covered to ensure that you get the best possible support.

This is a flexible programme that will adapt to you and your seat. It is uniquely placed to help you transform your political opportunities and to contribute to the party's success.

Working with your mentor and our trainers, you will develop proven campaigning strategies. This ensures you are able to critically assess and apply new knowledge and skills and it means that we can support you in taking the next step in your political career.

The successful outcome of this programme is that you will reach Westminster where you can shape the destiny and future direction of this country and make it better.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Dixon'.

**Mike Dixon, CEO, Liberal Democrats**

# Why join this programme?

## **We are providing you with a unique access to the experts within Lib Dems**

Since 2019 the organisation has had a far greater focus on its purpose. That is to make this country better and to win more seats.

We know which seats we can win and we know how to do it. We just need the right resources in that constituency at the right time.

This course will provide you with access to the experts in Lib Dems as well as external experts to provide you with the tools to break down barriers.

## **Join a strong team**

By learning with a group of candidates from a variety of cultures you will share best practice and experiences. This group will be stronger together, as a peer group you will be experiencing the same things at around the same time and together you are far more powerful than you are as individuals.

## **Leading the way**

You are the first cohort of candidates to go through this programme the aim of which is to enable more Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic candidates to win at a general election. You will blaze a trail for others behind you and show people what is possible.

## **Access to Grants**

This is a donor funded programme and we believe the best way to invest in you is to provide you with expert training but also to provide you with access to grant funds that can remove some of the barriers that may be in your way to succeed.

## **Access to Mentors**

This programme will provide you with access to Peer mentors who have been where you are now on the next big step of your political career. Their experience and knowledge will support you all the way through to the next general election.

# Your learning and support

We believe that our levels of support set us apart from other previous development programmes. You will be supported before your programme even starts, right through to 2024 and beyond.

## About your cohort

As soon as you join the programme you will join a group ranging from 6 - 12. You will stay with your fellow candidates for your first module which is residential which is due to be held on 4th to 6th February. The group is supported by the Stellar Programme administrators.

As you work through the programme, you will have opportunities to work with a wide range of trainers.

The Stellar Programme administrators and your fellow students will be your practical source of support throughout your learning journey.

## About your trainers

Our dedicated trainer team and the generous trainer - student ratio means you will benefit from individuals and intensive support and guidance.

For any practical assignments you will be provided with comprehensive feedback to help you improve as you progress through the programme.

## Residential events

Our 2 residential events are a compulsory part of the programme. They are an immersive experience, bringing you all together. These face-to-face events take place at Wyboston Lakes Resort in Bedfordshire across two or three days.

Working with live case studies you will accrue a wealth of real world experience. The concentrated sessions will help you to work, network and learn alongside other candidates improving your understanding of the wider issues facing the UK, not just your constituency.

Dedicated development workshops will help to improve your skills in areas such as campaigning as well as your own personal development.

## **Cohort days**

In addition to our residential events you will be attending further sessions that will either be in a constituency, at a Lib Dem office location or via Zoom. These will be facilitative learning events so you will interact with your fellow students.

## **Mentoring**

As a delegate of this course, you will be matched with a Lib Dem Member of the House of Lords to act as your mentor from your selection until the next General Election.

We will make every effort to match you with a Peer who is a good fit with your needs and that of your constituency. The Campaigns and Elections Team will arrange an initial meeting in-person, for you to get to know your mentor.

The Peers will provide help and support to you, and your wider team, with:

Member motivation - They will attend online and in-person events, to help engage the wider membership with the campaign.

Fundraising - They will use their experience of fundraising to provide advice and support.

Raising issues in Parliament - They will use Parliamentary Questions (Written, Oral and Urgent) to raise local and key campaigning issues in Parliament.

Mentoring - They will provide trusted and confidential advice and support, both practical and emotional, to you.

Together, you will work out the best way for you to stay in touch, and for your Mentor to provide the support you need. We hope you will have regular conversations and develop a strong relationship over time.

This scheme will be reviewed quarterly, to share best practice between candidates and the peer.

## Grants

If you are accepted onto this programme you will be eligible to apply for grants through the duration of the course. The grants are one-off contributions, designed to help and support candidates to do one of the following (or similar):

- Attend a specialist training course which would upgrade skills
- Attend a conference or seminar which would develop professional knowledge and contacts
- Attend networking events to support their role as a member of the Project Stellar
- Purchase equipment needed to develop and practice skills
- Cover the cost of travel and/or accommodation to attend any of the above
- Cover the cost of travel or accommodation to enable a candidate to carry out voluntary work, work shadowing or work experience with an elected official
- Cover the cost of childcare to enable a candidate to take part / attend any of the items listed above.

The grants are not to support campaigning costs. Applications for these grants will be made quarterly and will be made for a maximum of £300 per application.

## Programme structure

Programme overview

This programme is our Stellar development programme. The title denotes that you will be a higher performer and to achieve this level we will concentrate on themes of:

- leading your campaign,
- voter contact,
- campaigning,
- defining yourself and your campaign,
- developing yourself and your team,
- policy
- Fundraising

In total 90% of the programme consists of compulsory elements with 10% composing elective modules. This enables you to select the right learning that suits your needs. There

will be some modules that are challenging but will always direct you towards improving your political capabilities.

This programme starts in February each year and is designed to take you through to the 2024 and 2028 General Election.

## **Yearly programme**

We know that the most valuable use of your time is out on the doorstep and we do not intend to make the programme a burden but we believe that the skills you will learn will help you win your seat.

You will need to spend approximately 1- 5 hours a month on the programme this excludes the 2 residential courses, 3 cohort days and assignments set in between.

## **Compulsory Modules**

We know that the amount of time you have to make a first impression as a candidate is very short. These modules are about giving you the skills to make a memorable impression and build vital relationships in your constituency.

### **The role of the candidate**

Everyone has their own idea about what the role of the candidate should be. This will be your opportunity to hear the experiences of an experienced candidate and ask the questions you want answered.

### **Hearing what people say**

As a candidate one of the most important parts of the job is to listen and be seen to listen. This session will help you turn what people say into effective local campaigns.

### **Polling and Messaging**

As part of Project Stellar we will share with you the most recent and comprehensive polling we have and what you need to include in your messaging in your constituency. This session will also include updates on recent effective campaigns for example, Chesham and Amersham.

## **The power of effective literature**

No matter how hard a candidate works, they are never going to meet everyone. As a result, locally delivered literature will be the most effective way to get your message across in the way you want it delivered. These sessions give handy hints, share best practice and help you develop your profile.

## **Voter Contact**

As all parties deliver literature, individual voter contact is becoming more important, especially in marginal constituencies when two or three parties are delivering on a regular basis. This session will enable you to make the best use of the 30 secs you have on the doorstep and get the information you need for your campaign.

## **How to get the most out of Social Media**

Social media is a minefield for political candidates. We will give you advice on how to promote yourself and your campaigns. We will also run a later session with Glitch to help you build up your digital resilience.

## **Election Law Basics**

This short session will give you a guide for the things you need to be aware of when running for election.

## **Presenting the best version of yourself**

In most cases, we will get a very short time with people who are going to vote for you whether at a selection meeting or on the doorstep. This session will give you helpful advice on preparing to be a candidate so you can present the best version of yourself.

## **The Mentoring Programme and Working with your Mentor**

Each Project Stellar participant will be paired with a mentor. This session is how the mentoring programme will work and about setting realistic expectations about the support you can receive.

## **Building your Campaign Team**

You can't run for election on your own, you need a team around you who will support you. In this session we look at who you need on your campaign team and what skills they should have.

## **Managing Relationships and Building Alliances**

As a parliamentary candidate you are expected to lead and manage a team of volunteers. All of whom will have different expectations and demands. They won't always be reasonable. This session looks at how you lead a team of volunteers effectively.

As a candidate you will also need to work with local groups and how you build an effective working relationship with those who may not be natural Liberal Democrat supporters.

## **Dealing with the media**

Dealing with the media can make candidates nervous, particularly if it's an unexpected call. This session will give you strategies for dealing with the media.

## **Network with Key Leaders within the party**

Through attending events you will get to meet key leaders in the Party, not just Members of Parliament, but Members of the House of Lords, senior staff, key stakeholders and donors.

## **How do we form Policy?**

Christian Moon will lead a session on one of our London days about how the Liberal Democrats form policy and what you can do to contribute.

## **Focus on key policy**

As we get closer to the next General Election, we will run briefing sessions and Q&As with party spokespeople on the policies that will form key aspects of our manifesto.

## **Bursary Support how does it work**

Each member of the cohort can apply for bursary support. This session will explain what you can claim for and how to make a claim.

## Elective Modules

Where a candidate needs specific training that is not detailed in this course the Stellar Programme Administrators will work hard to source that learning. This will either be feedback via the mentor or the candidate themselves.

For example, some candidates may not have any administrative support so they may want training on Connect or Lighthouse. If we identify a need, all members of the cohort will be invited to attend.

## Entry Requirements

All those attending must be from an Ethnic Minority heritage.

There are two routes into this programme.

### Route 1

You will have been selected as a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate in a Target Seat in the 2021/2022 rounds. In this scenario we will contact you to welcome you to the programme.

### Route 2

You will be an approved candidate that is recommended by the Race Diversity Campaign.

Please note if English is not your first language, a capability equivalent to an IELTS score of 6.5 is required.

# Reading list

We believe that this programme is more than just sitting in a classroom and we understand that people learn in different ways. The Team has compiled a reading list that we think will be useful to you.

During the programme we will run a book club type activity on the whatsapp group as there will be books/podcasts which we think are important for you to read at that time.

## Books

### Politics as fighting to win

- Groundbreakers: How Obama's 2.2 million volunteers transformed campaigning in America by Elizabeth McKenna
- Run for Something by Amanda Litman
- The Victory Lab by Sasha Issenberg
- The Political Campaigning Handbook by Lionel Zetter
- 101 ways to win an election by Mark Park
- How to make a difference by Kate Robertson

### Politics as ideas

- This is the Fire by Don Lemon
- Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire, Akala
- Bad News – What the headlines don't tell us by Mark Park
- To Obama by Jeanne Marie Laskas
- On Liberty by John Stuart Mill
- The Road to Somewhere, David Goodhart
- Superforecasting, Philip Tetlock
- Where Power Stops, David Runciman
- Nudge, Thaler and Sunstein
- Influence, Robert Caldidi
- 'It's about Freedom' - slightly old but values piece still useful
- Equal Power by Jo Swinson
- Invisible Women by Caroline Criado-Perez
- Women & Leadership by Julia Gillard
- Dear Madam President by Jennifer Palmieri

## **Politics as personal**

- Everything you really need to know about politics – my life as an MP by Jess Philips
- How to be an MP by Paul Flynn
- The Women Who Shaped Politics by Sophy Ridge
- Confessions of a Recovering MP by Nick De Bois
- Things can only get better by John O'Farrell
- No excuses: Confessions of a serial campaigner by Robert Shrum
- Becoming by Michelle Obama
- Election Notebook by Nick Robertson
- Team of Rivals by Doris Kearns Goodwin
- Unpresided by Jon Sopel
- Breaking the Code by Gyles Brandreth

## **Personal development**

- Speak without fear by Deb Sofield
- Winners by Alastair Campbell
- Lean In by Sheryl Sandberg
- Leading by Alex Ferguson
- Run to win by Stephanie Schnock
- The Audacity to Win by David Plouffe
- Dare to Lead by Brene Brown
- The Confidence Effect by Grace Killelea
- A Practical Guide to Election Law by Tom Tabor

## **Self Care**

- Mindfulness by Professor Mark Williams
- The Stress Solution by Dr Rangan Chatterjee
- The 4 Pillar Plan by Dr Rangan Chatterjee

## **Apps for building up resilience**

- Headspace
- Calm

## **Fiction**

- The President is Missing by Bill Clinton and James Patterson
- The House by Tom Watson
- House of Cards by Michael Dobbs
- The Voter File by David Pepper
- While Justice Sleeps by Stacey Abrams
- Primary Colors by Anonymous

## Podcasts

- Crisis, what crisis? With Andy Coulson
- The Michelle Obama Podcast
- Talking Politics, Professor David Runciman
- The political Party with Matt Forde
- Campaign HQ with David Plouffe
- For the Many
- My campaign coach
- BBC Newscast
- Political Thinking with Nick Robinson
- Feel Better, Live More with Rangan Chatterjee