



Councillor Selection & Local Groups

What Momentum Head Office can and can't do

Momentum's Head Office do not have the capacity to run training events and support individual candidates across London. In fact, local Momentum groups should be able to do a much better job of this given their local knowledge and connections.

What we can do is **provide guidance to Labour Party Engagement Officers, help to coordinate between different local groups and share examples of best practice.**

Local groups working together

This is a great opportunity for **local groups to make connections with each other** and share tips, advice and capacity or even run joint events. Have a look at the map of Momentum groups (<http://groups.peoplesmomentum.com/>) to find your neighbouring groups.

General Information

We're going to concentrate on practicalities here. If you want information on what councillors do and why anyone might want to be one, then please have a look at the guides produced by the Labour Party and Local Government Association (see the Useful Links section below).

Remember that in order to stand you must have been a member of the Labour Party for **12 months from the date of selection.**

When you stand to be a councillor there are four stages:

- 1) Filling in the **application form** (see the example at the end of this document)
- 2) **Being interviewed** by three people from the Local Campaign Forum (LCF) who get to approve all candidates
- 3) Going to **Candidate Selection Meeting** where members who live in the ward in question will vote on who they want as their candidate
- 4) **Election campaign** (this is where the Labour Party will take over!)

If you are approved as a candidate by the LCF then you will be allowed to choose which ward to put yourself forward for. People often stand in the ward they live in but you can stand in any ward so long as you can demonstrate a real connection to the area and understand the local issues.

It is really important that candidates also make connections with local community groups. There will be time to start this during the actual campaign but it is an effective way of demonstrating that you are really engaged in the community.

It is also important to also remember that **not everyone who stands will be selected.** People will be understandably disappointed but many people stand to be councillors for years before they are successful. What is important is that you take steps to **make sure their energy and enthusiasm doesn't go to waste.**

Standing for councillor will make you known in the local Party, so maybe use the profile to **stand to be an Officer in the CLP? Or to be a delegate to Labour Party Conference?**

Communication

The Labour Party has a long tradition of making **all councillors stand for selection at every election** (this is known as mandatory re-selection and is nothing new – it ensures that local councillors remain connected to their local party). That means that, even if you live in a ward with Labour Councillors, you can stand if you feel that you have something to contribute!

Councillor selections, like all elections, can at times get heated. **It is essential not to allow these contests to get personal and divide the local Labour family.**

If you are subject to personal attacks, focus on a **positive, local message** and don't descend into negative campaigning.

Candidates should focus on presenting **a positive argument, putting forward their vision for the area and the policies they are passionate about.**

All of **this also applies to Momentum groups who want to endorse specific candidates.** Focus on their positive arguments and their local vision rather than criticising other candidates.

Ward selections

Candidate Selection Meetings will happen in each ward and it is here that the local members of that branch will vote on who they want to be their candidate.

These meetings generally start with a long list of candidates' manifestos which local members will use to create a shortlist. Then there will be a hustings for everyone on the shortlist, after which a vote will be taken.

Only people who have been members for more than 6 months prior to the Selection Meeting will be able to vote in the Council Selection Meeting. This is to avoid candidates packing the local party with their contacts in advance of the Selection Meeting.

One thing that Momentum can do is to ensure that there is a **high turn out at these Selection Meetings.** **Phone-cavassing and mailouts** are very effective ways of encouraging people who don't normally attend ward meetings to come down and get involved.

Wards vary from safe Labour seats, to marginals, to safe seats for other parties. So, **when elections come around in 2018, Momentum will play a vital role in** door knocking, phone-cavassing using Momentum's Grassroots Now website, and getting the vote out. But even now you can start to think strategically about where to focus the energy and talents of your local members.

Mentoring

One of the most useful things that local groups have been offering is **mentoring prospective candidates.**

Senior members with experience in the Labour Party could **offer feedback on people's applications, help draft their manifestos and introduce them to local community groups.**

You could also offer to **introduce candidates to friendly local councillors and ex-councillors to ask for advice.** But bear in mind that councillors are usually very busy people, so try not to be too demanding on their time.

Training and Events

Local groups have also put together some fantastic **training programmes and workshops** (the Labour Party itself also runs some events).

Introductory events: Many local groups have already organised events to introduce people to the idea of becoming a councillor and to build up enthusiasm. It might be too late for this to be effective by January but if you can organise anything to encourage people to think about standing then it would be well received. All you need is a panel of speakers who are either councillors themselves or experienced in the local Labour Party to talk through what the job entails, why people should stand and how the process works.

Public Speaking workshops: If there is someone in your group who is experienced in public speaking or delivering training, then you could ask them to host the event. Here are some examples of useful videos and exercises you can find online:

<http://publicspeakingpower.com/fun-public-speaking-activities/>,
<https://vimeo.com/44980607>, <http://noisyclassroom.com/primary/ideas/different-forms-of-speaking-and-listening.html>, <http://www.write-out-loud.com/public-speaking-activities.html>.

Community Engagement workshops: you could ask a local person with experience in community organising to facilitate a workshop. Such a workshop could include ideas and discussion on how to engage with local campaigns, organisations, and community groups in your area. It could also entail participatory exercises on how to plan a campaign. The New Economy Organisers Network (NEON) provide a range of documents on structuring campaigns - <http://neweconomyorganisers.org/resources>.

Useful links

LGA Labour Group's guide to becoming a councillor	http://lgalabour.local.gov.uk/web/lgalabour/publications/-/journal_content/56/330956/7900442/PUBLICATION
LGA Labour Group's guide to becoming a councillor for disabled members	http://lgalabour.local.gov.uk/web/lgalabour/publications/-/journal_content/56/330956/7102464/PUBLICATION
Generic LGA guide to becoming a councillor	http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=fa4de86d-1009-4b58-a9e7-3103fe3d9a36
Generic LGA guide to becoming a councilor for disabled members	http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=b7193d96-8eed-4097-9561-733c110874bb
Association of Labour Councilors (ALC)	http://www.labourcouncillors.co.uk/
ALC also run training events	https://members.labour.org.uk/trainin-g-listings
LGA's Be a Councillor website	http://beacouncillor.co.uk/