

# Representing Britain

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Conference regrets:

- A large proportion of female and ethnic minority candidates who stood for the party in the general election, many in winnable seats, were not successful.
- That the parliamentary party now lags behind both Labour and the Conservatives on the proportion of women and ethnic minorities represented in Westminster, and that the party have no ethnic minority MPs, MEPs, MSPs or AMs.
- Limited personal wealth is sadly often a deterrent to prospective candidates, and the economic reality that women and ethnic minorities are over-represented in poorer socio-economic groups.

Conference requires the Chief Executive to seek to establish a regular diversity fund, to be allocated in the following manner:

- Living expenses grants for parliamentary candidates, to cover taking unpaid leave during the campaign. These to be means tested so that funds are used efficiently, and to be subject to the regulations proposed in <http://files.politicomaniac.net/1.pdf>.
- Campaign funding grants for parliamentary candidates, offered through the same means testing mechanism as the living expenses grant, and also subject to the same regulations.
- All remaining funds to be allocated to ethnic minority, female and disabled candidates' campaigns, where such candidates are in target seats.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to opening parliament up to people from all walks of life, and especially to making parliamentary duties more compatible with family life.

Conference urges the Deputy Prime Minister, as part of his special responsibility for constitutional reform, to seek to:

- Modernise the operation of parliament as working environment to make hours and facilities consistent with standards in the wider economy.
- Propose and support formal rules for MP maternity leave.

Conference notes that:

- The party must monitor progress within the electoral cycle and ensure that desired measurable outcomes at the next general election are realised.
- Ethnic Minority citizens are not uniformly distributed in the UK.
- The realities of processing candidate applications mean that there is often a waiting list for assessment days.

Conference moves to:

- Place on regional party bodies the responsibility for meeting locally sensitive diversity targets, in particular by matching the proportions of ethnic minority and female candidates on regional approved candidate lists to regional population proportions, within a margin of error.
- Empower candidates' office(s) to prioritise applicants who are from an ethnic minority, female or disabled for assessment day places.