

## [LGBT Lib Dems committee elections](#)

Ballots have just opened for the LGBT+ Lib Dems committee elections. Read the manifestos for the candidates who are running here:

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## [Improving how our party works](#)

Coming up on Saturday (18 July) is the next meeting of the Federal Board (FB). This is the body which I chair as your President and is, “responsible for directing, coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the Party’s strategy and the work of the Federal Party”.

We’re a bit like the board of trustees of an organisation, therefore, and Saturday’s meeting will be our next quarterly review, where we review progress in the federal party over the second quarter of the year against our overall plan.

**The first half of the year has been dominated by getting basic elements of good management in place**, such as objective settings for staff and their teams, a more robust approach to risk management and making a start on improvements to our use of technology.

The second half of the year will see a shift to focusing on improved cooperation internally between the federal party and other elements of our family along with improving internal communications. Then towards the end of the year attention will focus more on improving our political messages ahead of the huge May 2021 elections.

**An important part of all that is implementing [the independent Election Review](#)**, which was headed up by Dorothy Thornhill. So we’ll be considering the plans for integrating its recommendations into the work of the federal party – crucial so that implementation is seen as part of all of our day-to-day roles, rather than an optional add-on.

Alongside that, we need to develop a new party strategy and so we’ll be discussing the key issues to go out to consultation with members.

A major theme running through the recommendations from Dorothy and her colleagues is **the need to improve our record on diversity and inclusion** – both so that we give all members and supporters the best possible opportunities to be involved in and influence the party, and also to improve

our voter appeal in BAME communities in particular. We'll therefore also be discussing how the party should react to the Black Lives Matter movement and how to ensure that previous party reports on diversity are fully actioned.

**Another big part of her recommendations focus on how the party is run**, so we'll be considering the best way to progress internal party reforms. One part of that is better defining the roles of Leader, CEO and President – as the review goes into necessary, if painful, detail about the problems that follow if that is got wrong.

Another part is for the Board to look at its own performance and structure. The size of the Board at 43 (35 elected, six non-elected and two other in attendance) is an obvious sign that our structures are not always as helpful as they should be in making sure the party is run well and so that your views, efforts and support generate the outcomes they should. This is by no means the only part of how we're run that needs looking at, so we'll be considering our overall approach, as well as specific options on the Board's own future.

I've also asked the Federal Conference Committee (FCC) for a good allocation of time to allow us to consult properly with members at party conference on issues such as our strategy, the implementation of the election review and how we improve the way the party is run.

In other business, **the Board is currently seeking applicants for the Federal Appeals Panel** – the party's Supreme Court, as it were. You don't have to have a legal background to apply. These roles could also suit you if, for example, you have experience with applying and interpreting rules in HR, compliance or many other areas. [More details on the party website here.](#)

Meanwhile, **nominations have opened for the party's annual awards, to be presented at our autumn conference.** This time there's a new award, named in honour of pioneering Liberal election agent Bertha Bowness Fischer. She was the first female qualified election agent for any party and the award named after her recognises the contributions from newer party members. [More details on the party website here.](#)

Finally, I'll continue to do a report back after each Board meeting, so keep an eye on this site for the next one, coming out after the weekend.

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**[There should be an 'X' gender option](#)**

## on passports

There are hundreds of thousands of people in the UK who do not identify as exclusively male or female. Sadly – like other members of the LGBT+ community – far too many of them experience discrimination, harassment and hate crimes. Many avoid being open about their identity for fear of how others will treat them.

Non-binary people deserve to have their identities recognised and their dignity respected.

That is not acceptable. **Non-binary people deserve to have their identities recognised and their dignity respected.**

Yet, despite years of campaigning, the Conservative Government is still refusing to even allow non-binary genders to be recognised with an 'X' option on passports.

**It's a relatively small change that would make a big difference to so many people's lives.**

It would bring the UK into line with other countries such as Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, Germany, India, Netherlands and New Zealand that already include non-binary gender options on passports, as well as 18 US states that allow residents to mark gender 'X' on their driving licence.

It's something Parliament's cross-party Women and Equalities Committee recommended back in 2016, and our own Norman Lamb secured cross-party support from 83 MPs for an Early Day Motion on it three years ago.

Liberal Democrats will always stand up for the rights and dignity of trans, intersex and non-binary people.

**Yet Conservative Ministers have ignored these calls.** Instead, they have chosen to waste taxpayers' money in the courts resisting a legal challenge to force it to introduce an 'X' gender option. I find it utterly incomprehensible that they still refuse to follow the example of so many other countries and make this change.

So today, on International Non-Binary People's Day, I've tabled a Private Members' Bill – the **Non-gender-specific Passports Bill** – to require the Government to introduce an 'X' gender option on passports for non-gendered, non-binary and other people who do not identify as, or exclusively as, male or female.

**Liberal Democrats will always stand up for the rights and dignity of trans, intersex and non-binary people.**

We must combat the hostility and discrimination that prevents too many people from living freely and fulfilling their potential.

Many people in the UK do not identify as exclusively male or female, but the Government still refuses to recognise their identities.

Introducing an 'X' gender option on passports would make a big difference to so many people's lives.

†‡‡#NonbinaryDay<https://t.co/D2lViD09g5>

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [July 14, 2020](#)

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## **Fighting for the 3 million excluded.**

**We have all heard too many heart-breaking stories from those who have lost their livelihoods overnight as a result of the coronavirus crisis and are entirely excluded from the Government's financial support measures.**

It is simply unacceptable that many individuals are ineligible for every kind of support.

It is simply unacceptable that many individuals are ineligible for every kind of support, even Universal Credit, for entirely arbitrary reasons.

That is why, with the help of [ExcludedUK](#), over 150 MPs have come together to set up an All Party Political Group (APPG) to represent the 3 million individuals who have not been entitled to the Government support in response to the coronavirus crisis.

The fact that so many MPs have requested to take part is testament to how many of us want to see the Government help the 3 million people who have been left behind during the pandemic.

**The Chancellor must stop burying his head in the sand.**

3 million UK taxpayers are still excluded from any meaningful support through no fault of their own.

He must not only respond to the Treasury Select Committee Interim Report and its recommendations for how to help all those who have been excluded, but he must commit to a meeting with the APPG and Excluded UK as a matter of urgency so we can get the change these people so desperately need.

Having reached a critical juncture more than 100 days on since Government Covid-19 financial support measures were introduced, 3 million UK taxpayers still find themselves excluded from any meaningful support through no fault of their own.

**We hope the APPG will lead to positive action within Parliament, and ultimately from the Government, on behalf of all those who have been excluded.**

Liberal Democrats are standing up for the 3 million excluded from the Government's financial support. [#ExcludedUK](#)

Back our campaign to protect jobs during COVID-19  
†<https://t.co/10jjeLgF1L> [pic.twitter.com/Is4LNf0mCu](https://pic.twitter.com/Is4LNf0mCu)

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [July 10, 2020](#)

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## [Meet the panel](#)

On Thursday 16th July, the two candidates for leader of the Liberal Democrats, Ed Davey and Layla Moran will be answering questions from a panel of experts in a new hustings format.

So you want to be leader? Is styled like a job interview. Candidates will get to make their pitch to the panel on why they should be leader and that'll be followed up by questions from the panel on the skills they'll need to make being leader a success.

It promises to be an interesting event. If you'd like to watch live, you can register here: [www.libdems.org.uk/job-interview-hustings](http://www.libdems.org.uk/job-interview-hustings)

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