

Members' Code of Conduct

Our Constitution begins with these words:

'The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community, and in which no one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity. We champion the freedom, dignity and well-being of individuals, we acknowledge and respect their right to freedom of conscience and their right to develop their talents to the full,'

This applies as much to the internal working of our party as to the type of society we wish to build.

As a member you have the right to be treated fairly, equally, and within the bounds of party rules. You also have the responsibility to behave in a way that does not negatively impact other members, staff, volunteers, people who interact with the Party in a professional capacity, or the party's reputation.

We encourage robust and passionate debate on policy, strategy and the way in which the party functions. We also expect our members to behave lawfully and honestly, to be sensitive to other people's feelings and respect their right to have and express different views to their own.

Our responsibilities as party members apply not only to our personal conduct but also to our conduct in communications, including electronic ones and with the media in all its forms. Here is a checklist of questions you should ask yourself as you act internally or externally:

- Could what I am intending to do or say or write (in any format) be taken as intimidation, harassment or bullying?
- Am I acting in the party's best interests?
- Am I declaring all my interests if asked to make such a declaration?
- Is what I am doing compliant with electoral law?
- Is what I'm doing compliant with data protection law and the party's data protection standards?
- Can we afford what I am planning to do?
- Is what I'm doing in line with our constitution and rules?

If you are unsure about any of these then take advice before acting. Your local party officers, regional officers and national officers are there to help and interpret. They can act as sounding boards for any action. Our staff at local, regional and national level are there to support you and are the appropriate sources of expertise on all legal and constitutional requirements.

We do need to make it clear that behaviour which is unlawful, dishonest, deceitful, violent, or threatening will constitute bringing the Party into disrepute, will constitute grounds for disciplinary action under the Party Constitution. We should also remind you that the party reserves the right to refer any breach of this code of conduct which breaks the criminal law to the police rather than/ as well as dealing with it under this code of conduct.

Our hope is that we never have to do this. With your support we can challenge others who seem to be acting against the spirit of this code and support those who are role models. In this way we can ensure that we encourage the best in ourselves to thrive and grow.