



GUIDE TO BECOMING A CONSERVATIVE PARTY CANDIDATE



Conservatives



Introduction

We want our Parliamentary Party to truly represent and reflect modern Britain. To do that, we want to give local associations as diverse a range of potential Candidates as possible, with a wide variety of skill sets and experiences.

Whatever your passion, your issue, or your special subject, there are enduring principles upon which the policies of our party are founded – principles which serve the national interest.

So whatever your background or experience, if you would like to be a Conservative MP, please read this booklet. This is to help you to understand the process by which Conservative MPs are selected, and to answer a number of questions which are regularly asked about how you can become an Approved Conservative Candidate.

I want to assure you that everyone connected to the Candidates' Team would like to give you as much help and advice as needed, so please do not delay taking the first steps to becoming an Approved Candidate.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Damian Collins MP
Co-Chairman
Candidates Committee

Amanda Sater
Co-Chairman
Candidates Committee



Guide to becoming a Conservative Party Candidate

Being an MP is a vocation like no other, where you have the chance to make a real and lasting difference to the future of our country and the people who elect you.

Whilst it may seem a long, complex and sometimes uncertain process, if you think it's right for you then please read on as we try to answer some of the questions you may have at this stage.

I'm interested in becoming a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate (PPC). What is the first thing I should I do?

At the beginning of each Parliamentary cycle, we start the process of establishing a new Approved List of Parliamentary Candidates.

The Candidates' Team will be happy to talk to you and will give you advice on what you can do in order to improve your chances of getting on to the Approved List.

If you are interested in taking the first step please contact the Candidates' Team at candidateenquiries@conservatives.com or telephone **020 7984 8150**.

So, I am sure I would like to stand what do I do next?

Currently to stand for Parliament, you must be over 18 and be a UK, Irish or Commonwealth citizen and not be otherwise disqualified. If you meet this requirement then the first thing to do is to contact the Candidates' Team at candidateenquiries@conservatives.com or telephone **020 7984 8150** where you will be advised on the next steps.

You may then be invited to attend a Forum which will be held within your region to discuss your interest further. This will give you an opportunity to have an informal chat about the process with various members of the Party and to ask any questions you may have at this stage.

I've attended a Forum. What happens now?

After attending a Forum you will be asked to fill in an application form. This form will ask about your life and political experiences, your career, and will try to discover more about you as a person. At the same time you will be asked to submit a Diversity Monitoring Form.

You will also be asked to provide three referees. This could be your employer, or someone else who knows you well, and someone connected with the Party. At least one of your referees should have known you for more than 5 years.

If, on the basis of your application form and references, it is felt that your experience and skills are suitable, you will be invited to attend a Parliamentary Assessment Board (PAB). This is the final stage of the application process lasting approximately 5 hours, and you will be assessed by MPs and senior Party volunteers. Here we are looking to discover whether you have the skills that are needed to make a good MP.

In order to attend a PAB there is a requirement that you are a current Party member and have been a member for a minimum of three months. A non-returnable fee of £250 will be charged to cover the Party's costs of hiring the venue and running the assessment day. Our Data Protection Policy for Candidate

Applicants describes how we will use your personal data in considering your application.

The assessment process is tried and tested over many years, involving very senior Party professionals, volunteers and MPs all of whom have been trained to be Assessors. This process is also subject to ongoing monitoring, review and feedback. Although we are never complacent and are always looking to improve, we feel that the process we have serves us well and tests the skills we require.

So what are they looking for at the PAB?

We look specifically at the competencies, skills and abilities which are most prevalent in successful Candidates and effective MPs:

- Communication skills
- Intellect
- The ability to relate to people
- Leadership and motivational skills
- Resilience and drive
- Conviction (*you will be asked about your core beliefs and values*)

Remember that you can demonstrate an ability across all of these competences in many different ways. For example intellect can be demonstrated through problem solving skills and being able to put across an argument in a clear and simple way, it's not always about academic qualifications. Leadership can be demonstrated in a number of ways such as in community and voluntary activities rather than through paid employment.

I'm a disabled applicant. What help will I get to become an MP?

We welcome applications from people with disabilities and if you want to discuss any particular concerns then please contact the Candidates' Team. We have worked with the disability organisation, SCOPE, to survey our processes and help us to remove any barriers to disabled applicants. The venues we use for PABs are accessible to all.

As part of the recruitment process you are asked what we can do to assist you to achieve your potential and, after discussion with you, we will make whatever reasonable adjustments we can to fit your personal circumstances. If you become a selected candidate and then elected as an MP, the House of Commons will consult with you to ensure reasonable steps are taken to accommodate your needs.

Will I need to know all your manifesto and policy proposals?

No. We are only interested in you as a person and your abilities and the process is designed to stretch, not stress.

We are looking for men and women who have different skills, with an interest in and understanding of the modern world.

I haven't passed the PAB but I still want to get involved. What can I do?

Not everyone passes first time; some people do need some training or some more experience before trying again. If this is the case you will be entitled to undertake another PAB in the next Parliament.

If, after attending your PAB, you receive a letter advising you that you have not been successful on the first attempt, it's up to you to get feedback, learn from your areas of development and put in the extra campaigning or other work that is necessary for you to succeed next time. If not offered a second opportunity to apply the Party is always in need of talented and enthusiastic constituency, area and regional officers or volunteers in other sections of the Party, including District and local councillors and school governors, so your talents can be directed there instead and you may find that this is what you wanted to do all along.

I've passed the PAB, am I a candidate?

If you do pass the PAB, you then go onto our Approved List of Parliamentary Candidates. Once you are an Approved Candidate, you can apply to constituencies that are selecting a candidate. You will be notified when selections take place. You will also be encouraged to take up training and support to further improve your skills.

Do I have to do anything once I am on the approved list?

We will expect you to work hard and actively support the Party. That will include campaigning in your local area, getting involved in local activities, helping at by-elections, participating in networking events and helping the Party nationally. This will of course be mutually beneficial because the harder you work the more likely you are to impress a selection committee when you apply for a seat as you will have so much more knowledge and experience.

What are the selection panels like?

Local Constituency Associations have the final say in who they choose as their candidate. They will interview applicants and, through the selection process, decide upon their preferred candidate. The process is thorough, fair and transparent, and allows every applicant to present themselves to the best of their ability. Associations want to find out about the real you and you may be required to do a short presentation and answer questions.

But what if I've never made a speech in public?

Once you are on the Approved List, we can give you support and training. We can help you with things like public speaking, communication and presentational skills, to ensure that you make the most of your potential.

Useful Web Sites



www.conservatives.com



www.parliament.uk



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