



YOUNG LIBERALS

Young Liberals Conference 101

Conference is a brilliant way to network with fellow Young Liberals, as well as practising skills such as policy speeches and getting bespoke training from the executive. This guide gives an alphabetical explanation of the various things that may crop up at conferences.

Any questions can always be directed to the events officer at events@youngliberals.uk

What is a political party conference?

A party conference is an event held regularly that brings members of a political party together. In the Liberal Democrats, it is how we make policy. The federal party holds a Spring Conference - usually in March, and an Autumn Conference - usually in September, every year. A guide to them can be found [here](#). Young Liberals hold a Winter Conference, typically in February, and a Summer Conference, typically in August.

The Young Liberals Conference is where we debate policy for our [Policy Book](#), hold the executive to account, receive training, have an opportunity to network and meet other Young Liberals, and overall enjoy a weekend of politics.

Who are the executive?

The Young Liberals Executive are a group of annually elected individuals who represent the membership. They are responsible for the work of Young Liberals. [The executive can be found here](#). The positions relevant for Conference are:

- Chair - they represent the whole organisation and can be a good person to ask questions of, or talk things you wish to see the organisation do.
- Events Officer - they organise conference and are likely to be the executive member you hear from most in and around conference.
- Finance Officer - they help distribute & decide the Access Fund.
- Accessibility, Diversity & Standards Officer - they are responsible for working with the events officer to make sure conference is as accessible as possible. They also help to decide the Access Fund.
- Membership Development Officer - this individual is responsible for training, which you will receive at conference

- Policy Officer - this individual, along with their committee, helps to decide which policy is debated and supports the running of the debates.
- Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) - this is an individual delegated by the executive, who may be another executive member, to be responsible for safeguarding throughout the organisation, including conference
- The Young Liberals Staff Member is an employed individual who works for the organisation and is another contact you can go to to ask questions or raise concerns.

A-Z of conference

Below is a range of topics that you may wish to know about, in alphabetical order.

Breaks

We try to ensure that there are regular breaks throughout the conference, but you're welcome to take any time you need away. There is a quiet room for you to use, and as long as you aren't disturbing anything, you're welcome to slip away!

Dress Code

There is no dress code for our conferences, we want you to be comfortable so encourage you to wear whatever you prefer, be that a suit or jeans and a t-shirt! Some people do change into evening wear for nights out, and some people do dress up for our conference in a business way, but there's no need to.

Executive Scrutiny

This is where the executive officers are held to account. Each officer position provides a report to the conference, and there is the opportunity to ask questions and ensure the officers have conducted themselves in a professional and appropriate manner.

Guest Speakers

Sometimes we have guest speakers, such as MPs, international guests or other people the Events Officer has invited. These sessions are typically, but not always, a small speech followed by a Q&A.

Lanyards & Passes

We provide passes with your name and pronouns on. These are colour coded, and members of the executive, policy & events committee, and the safeguarding team are highlighted either through names on the pass, coloured lanyard, or both. We also use these to highlight under 18s, so our safeguarding team can spot them, and to help make sure no one accidentally purchases a drink for anyone under age.

The name and pronouns on the pass will be the ones given at sign up - if these change at any time, you can contact events@youngliberals.uk no later than a week before conference starts.

Meals

Young Liberals do not provide the meals, but we ensure there is (at least) an hour long break for meals. There will be people ordering food, going out to eat and going to a nearby supermarket, so feel free to tag along with your preferred crowd!

Photos

Our Communications Officers often take photos throughout the conference - these can then be used on graphics and our website. We sometimes take group photos with any guests or at certain times. You have no obligation to be in any photos and feel free to inform anyone taking photos that you would rather not be in any.

You're welcome to take your own photos but please be respectful of any individuals who ask you to not photograph them.

Policy

A guide to policy, how you can write your own and an overview of how it works can be found [here](#).

Policy Debates

Policy debates are a key part of conference, and they will be facilitated by a 'Chair' and an 'Aide'. The Chair is responsible for keeping to time and calling on individuals, while the Aide is responsible for letting the Chair know who has submitted 'Speaker Cards', and let the Tech Desk know when to start a vote.

Policy Desk

This is where the Chair and Aide sit - if you have any questions on the procedures, approach this desk at an appropriate time.

Panels

These are sessions where we have multiple people discussing an issue or topic. We often have pre-prepared questions, but also accept audience questions on the day.

Quiet Room

Every conference since 2021 has had a quiet room. This is where you can go if you are finding things overwhelming, whatever the reason. We provide sensory items and things designed to help calm you down such as play doh and a weighted blanket, and ensure these

are kept sanitised. We try to ensure directions are clear, but if in doubt, find a member of the executive, events team, or safeguarding team who can guide you to where it is located.

Recording

While we broadcast our conference for the hybrid/online attendees, we do not record our conferences to use at later dates to allow for individuals to feel comfortable speaking openly and allow guest speakers to be more candid. We may record small parts of speeches etc. but this will be for our social media/communication officers use. Similar to the photos, if you see anyone recording and you do not want them to, please inform them.

Safeguarding

Young Liberals takes safeguarding seriously, and acknowledge that anyone has the potential to need support and be vulnerable. The safeguarding team will be highlighted to you at the beginning of the conference, with signs posted around the venue. They will be wearing a green lanyard and will be available throughout the conference to talk to. The email safeguarding@youngliberals.uk also goes to the relevant individuals, and this is open both during conference and throughout the year too.

Socials

We organise social evenings each night. The socials often continue after the 'organised fun' and often lead us to a pub or club. You can often find YLers who prefer a quieter evening in the hotel lobby though.

Every conference we have a series of awards called "Spatulas" (from the joke that many people use the cooking utensil to put leaflets through doors to avoid any unfriendly letterboxes or even dogs..). These are decided by the executive and/or events committee, and sometimes we open typeforms to ask for nominations.

Every summer we give out the "Emily Price" Award, named after the Welsh Young Liberals member who unfortunately lost her life shortly after being elected a councillor in Aberystwyth. The Emily Price Award is given annually to a Young Liberal to recognise their work and dedication, like Emily.

Speakers Cards

You submit these to speak in a debate. We ask that you fill in the card with information on what you have to say, so we can have a range of points. We try and prioritise new points, individuals with relevance to the subject, and encourage healthy debate through opposing opinions.

Tech Desk

This is the desk at conference where the technology is set up to run from. If you have any issues with the app, such as submitting a speaker's card or voting, this is the best place to come.

Training

Whether you're just starting out as a Liberal Democrat member, or whether you've been a member for decades, there's a training session for everyone. You can learn new skills, brush up on existing skills or even learn how to take on new roles in the party. Training is organised by our Membership Development Officer. This conference we are planning to run training sessions about [X] and [Y], so if you have any questions