How To Progress: in The Labour Party

Elect Her & 50:50 Parliament's Handbook:

Labour

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Credits

Progressing In Politics

Introduction

Elect Her is a multi-partisan organisation that works to motivate, support & equip women in all their diversity to stand for elected office in all spheres of government, providing them with the knowledge, confidence, and skills they need to do it.

We demystify the process of standing for elected office and motivate women to create action plans for standing for political roles.

50:50 Parliament is a friendly network that works with all of the political parties helping women progress in politics. 50:50 Parliament has been campaigning for women to have equal seats and equal say since 2013 and provides women with confidence and connections to take the next step towards selection.

It's more important than ever to have more women standing and being elected in all spheres of government and we want to signpost you as you establish what part you want to play in that.

The political parties have lots of internal support and networks and we want to make it as easy as possible for you to access them. This guide has been designed for women in our community who are aligned with the Labour Party, to help you understand how to access different areas of support, community and training as you progress within the party. There are different groups and associations across the three nations of Britain and we have tried to include all that information in one place.

If you find additional groups or networks that you've been part of that are missing from these pages, please get in touch with our team so we can update this guide.

1.

The Labour Party

If you are a Labour woman, there are loads of opportunities within the party and its affiliate groups to meet other like-minded women and receive advice on how to progress in politics. Here we hope to help you to navigate the party and the fantastic support that is available to you.

Getting Started

Getting started is often the hardest part of the journey. Here are a few steps that you can take in order to get the ball rolling.

First up, if you haven't done so already, join the Labour Party:

- If you're in England, join the Labour Party here.
- If you're in Scotland, join the Scottish Labour Party here.
- If you're in Wales, join the Welsh Labour Party here.

- Get in touch with your local Constituency Labour Party (CLP). Once you've joined as a member you should receive emails introducing you to your local branch officers. Sometimes there is a delay between sign up and receiving information, so be patient. Go to a meeting which is usually held each month. Meet members, learn about how the local party works, what issues are being discussed and what local campaigns are being led. You can use the main Labour Party website to find out more about events and activities that might be taking place in your area.

- There is LOADS of jargon within political parties which can be intimidating at first. This Labour Party jargon buster is a really helpful resource as you get started.

- Take a look at Phase One on the Elect Her website.

- #SignUpToStand on the 50:50 Parliament website to receive access to their regular support and the community of other women looking to progress in politics. Once you have clicked on #SignUpToStand, you will receive a 'Personal Political Profile' and access to regular party-specific workshops, as well as being paired up with a 50:50 buddy as part of a peer-to-peer support network. You will also be invited to their session offering bespoke support to women from minority groups.

Ready To Get Involved

So you've got the ball rolling but what are the next steps on your journey?

- Sign up to volunteer locally and get involved with local campaigns here. Go along to a local meeting, get some door knocking experience under your belt. If an election is called, volunteer for your local candidate's campaign.

- Find a Labour campaign event near you by visiting this website.

- Join the Labour Women's Network:

Labour Women's Network exists to secure the election of more Labour women to public office at every level and to support Labour women to play a full part in the party. It's a fantastic resource for every Labour woman. They run excellent trainings and campaign for feminist culture change within the party.

- Take a position in your local party - Chair, Women's Officer, Membership Secretary etc. Learning about how CLPs work from the inside will really help you on your journey through the party. Getting your name known by local members is also key as they will be the ones voting for you if and when you want to put yourself forward for election in the future. More information is available here.

- Attend a party conference - a multiple-day event with panels, talks and networking opportunities. Conferences happen in the spring and autumn. Each CLP will send official delegates to conferences to vote on key decisions or you can go as an observer. Find out when the next conference is taking place and consider joining. Some CLPs have funds to support official delegates participation.

- The Labour Party also suggest joining a trade union. You can find out more about which unions are affiliated to the Labour Party here.

- Take a look at the Ready To Get Involved resources on the Elect Her website.

- Join the 50:50 Parliament Labour Bitesize meetings that take place every week.

Labour Party Online Resources

The Labour Party has some excellent online resources to support your journey within the party once you are a member. It's a little confusing as different platforms perform different tasks, so spending some time organising your logins to all of them is worth it in the long term!

- Labour's training webinars are presentations by Labour's Training Team and specialised staff to give practical guidance across a range of subjects for activists, role holders and councillors.
- Achieve is Labour's e-learning platform. This site hosts loads of interactive courses such as: Labour's Legacy – a guide to the history of the Labour Party, Planning Your Campaign, and courses on how to use our various software platforms.
- Activist guides are available on Labour Hub.

- Campaign Technology Contacts and Resources.

Labour Party Training

- You can find out about upcoming training by signing up to the Training and Campaign Bulletin here.

- Labour Women's Network run the Jo Cox Leadership Training. It is an incredibly popular programme, so many people apply a few times before being accepted. So do apply, but persist if you don't get selected the first time round.

- The Bernie Grant Leadership Programme is specifically for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members of the party. Access recordings from previous cohorts of the programme here.

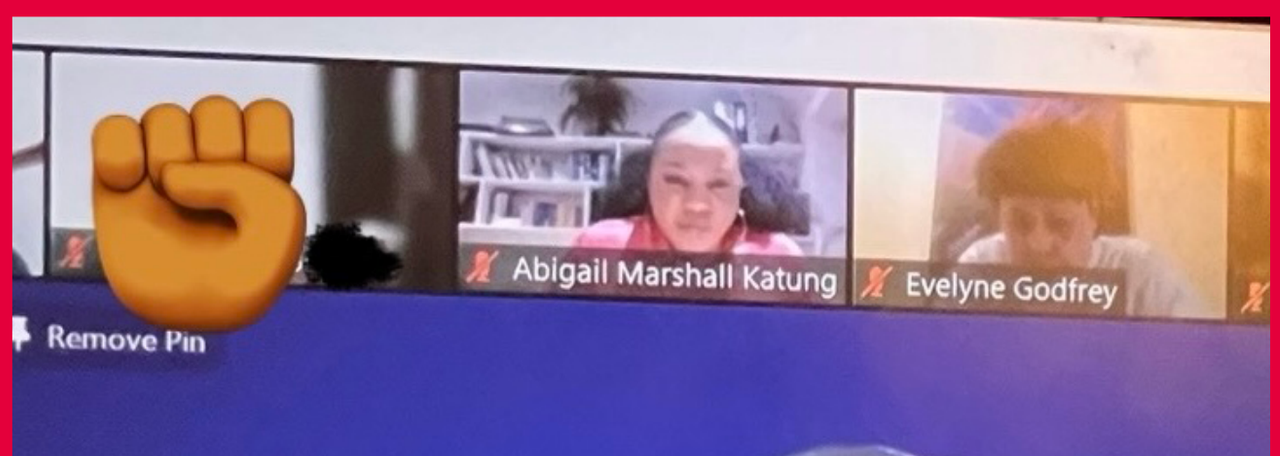
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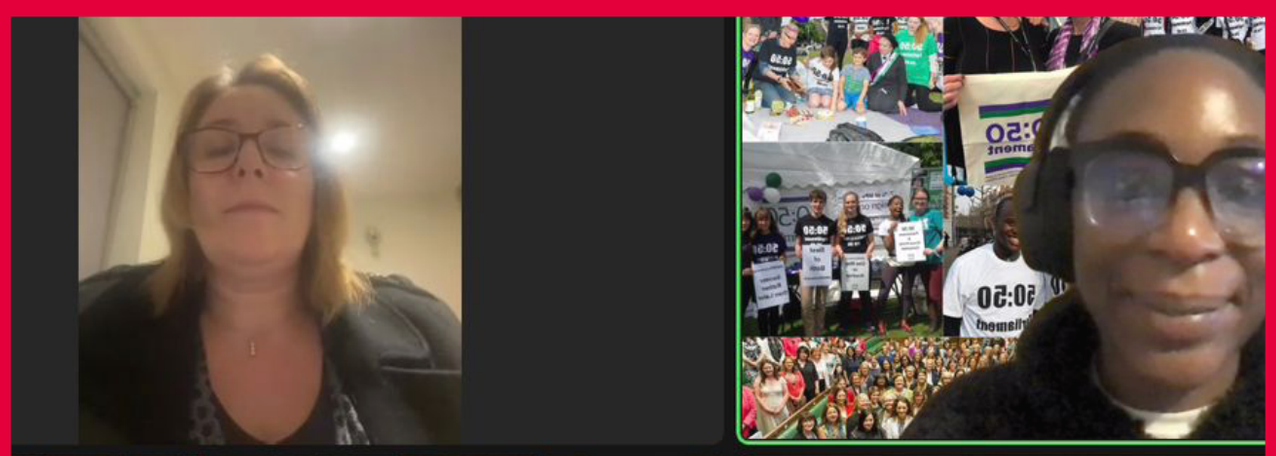









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2.

Getting Ready To Stand

OK, so you're starting to think that maybe you would like to consider being a candidate in the future. Perhaps there is a local election in your area in 12 months time, what should you be doing now in preparation for that?

- Build connections within your communities - these are the people who will advocate, support and campaign for you when the time comes. Volunteer for local organisations. Make calls for another candidate.

- Research what spheres of government you are interested in. This could include, MP, Councillor, a School Governor, a Police and Crime Commissioner Candidate, a Mayoral Candidate, a GLA Candidate, a Senedd or Member of the Scottish Parliament Candidate. Elect Her's My Political Future programme has loads of resources to help you understand the different roles and which one might suit you – find that here.

- These are great tools that will help you to connect with your community and document your achievements. Set up your political social media platforms - X, Facebook, Instagram etc. Be aware that your social media will come under scrutiny if selected as a candidate. Worried about online abuse? Check out Glitch - an amazing charity working to end online abuse and championing digital citizenship. Access the Digital Self Defence resource that Glitch and Elect Her have created to help you feel safe whilst creating your political profile online.

- Join Elect Her's Peer Support Circles, a 7 part programme that supports you to reflect on how to build a team, your public presence, tell your story and build influence whilst preparing to stand for election in the future.

- Read the Labour Guide to Becoming a Councillor Candidate - this guide will help you to navigate the process of becoming a Councillor Candidate.

- Begin to familiarise yourself with Labour Party Policy. This website is regularly updated with the party's position on key issues. If there are areas of policy in which you are particularly interested in or have experience in - get involved!

- Speak at a party conference or participate in some way that works for you. Find out when the next conference is and whether you can join in person or online.

- Take a look at the Getting Ready to Stand resources on the Elect Her website.

3. Selection & Election

There will come a time when you are ready to put yourself forward as a potential candidate whether it is for a local, regional, devolved or national election. We are here to cheer you on as you do it! We call this the selection phase - as your party needs to select you to be the candidate and then the election phase as you run a campaign to become elected.

The team at Elect Her provide training, community and support to women who are specifically at the selection and election stage. Find out more on our website here where we detail the training, workshops and candidate clinics that we schedule around the electoral cycle.

In this section we have outlined the process of putting yourself forward as we understand it. The party has outlined the process on their website which you should also read and reference when gathering local information from your association.

Standing For Office

Below we have gathered details on the process of standing for Labour. The process is easy to follow and is similar across England, Wales and Scotland.

- Are you eligible? In order to be eligible to put yourself forward for selection as a Labour candidate you must be
  - Eligible by law
  - Have 12 months continuous membership of the Labour Party
  - Hold Trade Union membership

How to Stand as a Councillor for the Labour Party

1. Each Constituency Labour Party (CLP) has a Local Government Committee (LGC) or a Local Campaign Forum (LCF) who agree on the timetable, procedures and who run the process. The process then proceeds as follows:

- Submit nomination form
- Interview
- LGC endorses application
- Personal statement circulated to wards
- Ward shortlisting meeting
- Once shortlisted, receive membership list
- Selection meeting

2. Selection Meeting: At the selection meeting each shortlisted candidate delivers a speech and answers questions. Selection is like an internal election, so use it as an opportunity to practise campaigning.

3. Once you're selected: Once selected you can begin to meet all the key people in your CLP, work out your campaign plan and budget with their support and start campaigning.

4. All Women Shortlists: All women shortlists are affirmative action that the party has in place to ensure gender balance in candidates. Where less than 50% of elected Labour representatives are women, ‘winnable wards’ will be agreed with the LGC. In those wards which are multi-member, at least 1 candidate must be a woman. In single member wards LGCs should also identify sufficient wards with all women shortlists.

How to stand as an MP for The Labour Party

1. Keep an eye on Labour Party emails, which you will receive regularly as a member, to hear about seats that are up for selection. You can also join the Labour List. Don’t wait to be asked - contact your CLP or LGC secretary to understand the timeline of when the seats are open for selection.

2. Fill out the Candidate Application Form. On this form you will be asked questions that will give you the opportunity to demonstrate that you have the skills and experience needed to stand and be elected to public office and why you want to stand for that particular seat.

3. Longlisting and shortlisting will be managed by the CLP selection committee. This will include looking through your social media history, so make sure you are happy with everything.

4. Once you are shortlisted, the campaign period starts where you can canvass for support from members. This can include leaflets, phone calls etc.

5. Hustings meetings are organised by the CLP where each shortlisted candidate delivers a speech and answers questions from members. The members then vote to choose who they want to represent their area as their Labour Party candidate.

6. Stand in a General Election.

   - As soon as you have been selected as a candidate for a seat, you can begin to campaign in your constituency and start to encourage people to vote for you when an election is called.
   - Meet all the key people in your CLP, work out your campaign plan and budget with their support and start campaigning.
   - Build an Election Team - this can include a social media lead, press, leafleting team, door knockers etc. These are the people that will support your campaign to become an MP.

- The Labour Party offers bursaries for women running as parliamentary candidates. We encourage you to apply if you need support with essentials such as childcare or travel. You can learn more about the Labour Party Bursary Scheme here.

Don’t forget to stay in touch with the Elect Her team once you are selected! Additional programming, training, funding and support are available to assist you during your time as a candidate.




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4.

Financial Support

It costs a lot to stand for election. Your local party should support the costs of your campaign, printing leaflets and posters, etc., but there are often additional personal costs. Elect Her also runs Fund Her, a grant giving scheme for women from marginalised communities who require additional financial support on their journey to elected office. You can find out more here.

For people in Scotland with a disability that face additional financial burdens on their election campaigns, the 'Access To Elected Office Fund' is administered by Inclusion Scotland. Contact their team here to find out more.

Disability Wales host the Access to Elected Office Fund for people in Wales with a disability that face additional financial burdens on their election campaigns. Contact their team here.

Unfortunately, there is currently no access to elected office funds available for disabled people in England.

Contact.

Support, structures, processes and groups around the associations and national party are changing and evolving all the time. If you know of spaces of support, discussion and interest within the party that you think we should add to this guide then please do get in touch.

We are also looking to add to the collection of images which are currently featured in this guide as it continues to grow. If you have images of yourself and other women within your community that you'd like us to feature in this guide, please submit them to us via the link on the following page.

Images should be of a high quality and contain credits in the email.

We have worked to gather all of the information that we have learnt over the past few years about how to get involved in the Labour Party, but we need your support to continue to develop this work.

Please contact the team:
community@elect-her.org.uk
with ideas and feedback you might have.

Credits.

We are enormously grateful to all of those individuals in our community and in the political parties who have shared their knowledge, experience, insights and images, to enable us to create these guides. Including, but not limited to:

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Siân Humphries, Olivia Vaughan, and the Labour Women's Network.

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