

How To Progress: in The Conservative Party

**Elect Her
&
50:50 Parliament's
Handbook:**

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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 Conservatives, 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.

ELECTHER

50:50
PARLIAMENT

1.

The Conservative Party

If you are a Conservative 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 Conservative Party:

- If you're in England or Wales, join the Conservative Party [here](#).
- If you're in Scotland, join the Scottish Conservatives [here](#).
- [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?

- Get in touch with your local Conservative Association. Once you've joined as a member you should receive emails introducing you to your local association officers. Each constituency association has its own website so try to do some research to find members in your local area.

- Take a position in your local association - Chair, Women's Officer, Membership Secretary, etc. Learning about how local associations 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.
- Sign up to volunteer locally and get involved with local campaigns [here](#). There are regional teams, so choose the one for the location you're based. 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.
- Attend a party conference - a multiple-day event with panels, talks and networking opportunities. Scottish conferences happen in spring and the wider Conservative conference happens every autumn. Find out when the next conference is taking place and consider going to join in.

- Take a look at the [Ready To Get Involved resources](#) on the Elect Her website.
- [Join the 50:50 Parliament Conservative Bitesize meetings](#) that take place every week.
- Join Conservative Affiliated Organisations. Lots of these organisations run Whatsapp groups that you can join to stay up to date with latest opportunities to participate and connect with other women:
 - [CWO](#) (Conservative Women's Organisation) supports women into elected office through training, mentoring, and networking. From Councillors, Police Crime Commissionaires, to MPs and all elected roles in the party:
[Facebook](#) // [X](#) // [Instagram](#).

CWO has regional groups so once you join, you should be connected with your regional group as well as have opportunities to join national events and conversations.

- [Conservative Young Women](#) (as part of the CWO) support and engage young women with their political journeys and careers. Women aged 35 and under are invited to join.
- Young Conservative is the official youth section of the Conservative Party for members 25 and under. Check out their website [here](#).
- Conservative Disability Group works to increase disabled representation within the party, society and government. Find out more about their work and how you can get involved [here](#).
- LGBT+ Conservatives are an affiliated national organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans Conservatives, and allies. They provide an LGBT+ voice within the party. You can learn more about their work [here](#).
- [Conservative Friends of Technology](#) is also a national network with regional branches.

[This wikipedia page](#) has a constantly evolving list of groups associated with the party. Have a look and find your tribe!

Additional space for Conservative women in Scotland:

- CWO Scotland is doing some fab work to connect Scottish Conservative women! [You can contact them by email](#) or on their socials: [Facebook](#) // [X](#).
- Women2Win Scotland aims to increase the number of Conservative women MPs/ MSPs and Councillors, by providing support, advice and training to women who wish to get more involved in politics and promote the brightest and best women the party has to offer. You can find out more on their [Facebook page](#) or by emailing at: ann@w2wscotland.com

- Scottish Young Conservatives is the youth wing of the Scottish Conservative Party for Scots under the age of 25. For more information on Scottish Young Conservatives please contact the Central Office on **0131 524 0030** or on [X](#).
 - Scottish Conservative Friends of BAME work directly with the Scottish Conservative Party to support the BAME communities of Scotland. Find out ways you can get involved [here](#).
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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 which might suit you - find those and the My Political

Future self led programme [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, whilst preparing to stand for election in the future.
- Conservative HQ are interested in hearing from women wanting to stand in all spheres of government. [Please email to connect with the team.](#)

- Find out more about all the different roles you can stand for [here](#).

You can find out more about standing as a local Councillor for the Conservatives [here](#).

[Read the Conservatives Guide to Becoming a Parliamentary Candidate](#)

- this guide will help you navigate the process of becoming an Approved MP candidate.

Find out more about becoming a Conservative Party Mayoral Candidate [here](#).

[This is a great guide to becoming a Conservative Party Police and Crime Commissioner](#) (in England and Wales).

- Familiarise yourself with Conservative Party Policy. [You can do this by taking a look at policy docs here](#) and on the [gov.uk website](#).
- Speak at a party conference or participate in some way.

- Check out the [Conservative Policy Forum](#). If there are areas of policy in which you are particularly interested in or have experience in - get involved.
- Take a look at the [Getting Ready to Stand resources](#) on the Elect Her website.

The Conservative Councillors' Association (CCA) has developed a membership offering to support Conservative Party members who are considering becoming Conservative councillors. The Community Champion Programme aims to highlight the important role councillors play within their communities and inspire more people to apply to become local government candidates. To find out more about the support on offer through the programme, please email: cca@conservatives.com. For information on joining the scheme, please click [here](#).

If you have any general questions about becoming a councillor, please do get in touch – the team is always happy to help!

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

How to stand as a councillor for the Conservative Party:

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

1. Get in contact with your local association.

- The first step of standing for the Conservative Party is finding out where your local association is in the selection process by contacting your local association. This is important as there is no official selection timetable so your local association may be different to another.

2. When you have contacted your local association.

- After contacting your local association, they will send out an email with an application form (in an editable PDF format) with a selection timeline for any

party member interested in applying to be a candidate.

3. Once you have completed the candidate application form.

- The Association Executive convenes an Approvals Committee which includes Association Officers, Councillors and non-councillors who interview (online or in person) all those who completed an application form and are eligible to stand as candidates. There is a minimum of five members of the committee who vote in a secret ballot after the interview to decide if a candidate is placed on the Approved Candidates List (the Group Leader does not vote).

4. Once you are on the approved candidates list.

- Candidate vacancies are then advertised to all people on the Approved Candidates List who then apply for these seats. Applications are then considered by a shortlisting panel.

5. The final stage.

- A General Meeting of all ward members is convened where each shortlisted candidate addresses the meeting and answers questions individually. All ward members then vote in a secret ballot to select their candidate.

The Conservative Councillors Association runs the Community Champion Programme for those interested in becoming a councillor. Find out more [here](#).

and contact cca@conservatives.com with any questions you may have.

How To Stand as an MP for The Conservative Party:

1. Apply to become an Approved Candidate.

- Your first step is to fill out the application form to become an Approved Candidate. [You can start your applications here](#), where you will be invited to create an account and fill out an online application form.

Once you start the application you'll have a month to complete the form.

- Once you have submitted your form you will be invited to start the due diligence process, which costs £110. The checks will include the production of an in depth due diligence report and a DBS check.
- Once you have fulfilled these two steps, you will be invited to take part in an in-person assessment day. These happen at Assessment Centre up and down the country and cost £250. The purpose of this day is for you to demonstrate that you have the skills and experience needed to stand and be elected to public office.
- If you are successful you will be added to the Approved List of the Conservative Party and given a 'pass', this will determine which seats you can apply for.

2. **Identify which seats you want to apply for.**
 - Candidate vacancies are advertised to all people on the Approved Candidates List through the Conservative ‘Candidate Portal’. Applications are then considered by a shortlisting panel.
3. **Shortlisted Candidates and Hustings.**
 - You will be invited to book the first part of a two-stage assessment. The first stage is online and consists of a competency-based interview and an inbox exercise. After successfully completing the first stage, you will be invited to complete an in person assessment. The purpose of stage two is a day for you to demonstrate the skills and attributes you have to stand and be elected into public office.

- Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend a hustings meeting where each candidate addresses the local party members and answers questions individually. In the run up to this you can campaign to encourage local members to vote for you.
- This can include leaflets, phone calls etc. Selection is like an internal election, so use it as an opportunity to practise campaigning.
- All ward members will then vote in a secret ballot to select their candidate.

4. 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.
- 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.

[Women2Win](#) aims to increase the number of Conservative women in Parliament and public life and is committed to identifying, training and mentoring female candidates for office. The support that Women2Win provides is specifically for women who have passed the assessment for parliamentary candidacy, but it's great to know that they will be part of your support system if that is where your journey takes you.

Follow the Women2Win team, join their events to support current candidates and sign up to receive their support once you have been added to the approved list:

[X](#) // [Facebook](#) // [Instagram](#).

4.

Financial Support

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

If finances are getting in the way of your ambitions to put yourself forward as a candidate please do contact the party directly.

[Candidates team: 020 7984 8156](#)

(Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)

Or [contact Felicity Roochove](#), Head of Women's Engagement to discuss your situation and learn about support available within the party.

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 hosts 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 Conservative 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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