



# Complaints procedure

Safeguarding and  
Complaints

Date these procedures came into effect: 31/12/2022

Date these procedures must be updated by: 01/01/2024

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This document sets out: the complaint's procedures for the Liberal Party, what to do if you have a complaint, what will happen if someone has made a complaint against you and how incidents are dealt with.

Who is covered by this policy? This policy is applicable to all members of the Liberal Party. This includes the: Administration, Spokespeople, Regional/State Chairs, ex-members of the Liberal Party and members of the Liberal Party Students. You can also make a complaint as a member of the public.

People mentioned in the procedure:

See our full safeguarding, complaints and pastoral care team: <https://liberal.org.uk/contact-and-info/>

Preventing issues from occurring. Within the Liberal Party we want to create an atmosphere and a culture that ensures as far as possible people are comfortable to make complaints and incidents do not occur to begin with. We will also learn from any past safeguarding breaches or complaints to prevent issues from reoccurring.

Who to make a complaint to? We have a team within the Liberal Party that deals with collecting complaints, either of which you can make a complaint to. This can either be our Head of Complaints or our Deputy Head of Complaints. However, the Deputy Head should only be used if there is a conflict of interest with the Head of Complaints. Both also have previously undergone Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS). Our complaints team is independent of the Liberal Party and it includes our Head of Complaints and the Deputy Head of Complaints. These members are not allowed to have a position anywhere else within the Liberal Party to maintain their independence

Methods to make a complaint. Complaints should be reported through the complaints form on our website in the complaints and safeguarding hub. This form can include your name, email address so you can be kept up to date with the process, whether you are a member of the Liberal Party, whether the complaint happened to you or someone else, whether you would like to remain anonymous, whether you have done anything to try and resolve the issue, the categories the complaint falls under, an explanation of the complaint, the URL of the post if it is a social media post, whether there is currently a police investigation into the issue, whether there is any additional evidence in the case, the name of the person you would like to make a complaint about, how old they are, whether they are a member of the Liberal Party, what region they live in, what position they hold, what you would like to see happen with your complaint, whether it is a joint complaint, if your complaint is an appeal and whether you agree to our privacy policy

Any communications about the complaint should then take place only through the contact details provided by the person making the complaint and the email for the member of the complaints team dealing with your case. To make a joint complaint, both people must mention the other person making the complaint alongside them in their own complaint.

The first email you will receive from our complaints team will simply acknowledge that we have received your complaint. If a member of our complaints and safeguarding team does not get back to you within a few days to acknowledge they have received your complaint, you can contact them by email.

At both the beginning and the end of the complaints process the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints, depending on who is managing the case, should send a small report to the Director stating the random number given to the complaint. At the start it should simply say the rough nature of the complaint without any names or anything that could be used to identify the individual involved. At the end of the process, they will simply need to be told what action needs to be taken, if any.

If the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints leaves within this process the next person to hold that position will take over investigating the case. Once they are in the position, they will then have three months in which to investigate the case.

If you lose your email address during this process, then you should contact the head of complaints with your complaint number to change future emails to that address with your case number.

**Anonymity.** You should not mention the details of the people or person that the complaint is against publicly or to members of our team. However, you are free to discuss details of the case if identifying details about the person you have complained against are not included. This lasts for three months after submitting a case to us unless the person the complaint is against has left the Liberal Party or if the police are contacted in which case it lasts up until their investigations has concluded. This does not stop you from discussing details with the police, social services or councillors for issues such as mental health.

**Where this information goes.** Once the information is received by us, we will act as quickly as possible to respond to it. Complaints procedures are enacted by our Head or Deputy Head of Complaints. Depending on who the complaint goes to, only the person you send the complaint to will see who has made the complaint. The information will be anonymised by them to ensure no one else dealing with the complaint knows who the person making the complaint is. The only case in which the information will be shared is if the information needs to be shared with the authorities, the police or anonymous information with our complaints committee. Once an incident has occurred, or if there is a near miss, anonymous records will be kept so we can ensure our procedures learn from incidents in the future.

**Dealing with complaints.** When complaints are received by the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints, they have 3 days in which to acknowledge the complaint and the complaint has to be dealt with in full, excluding any appeals, within three months of the complaint being made. They must also keep the person who made the complaint up to date with its progress.

**Pastoral support.** Members of the Liberal Party or those outside of the Liberal Party may also get support from the Pastoral Care Officer during the complaints process or more broadly during their time in the Liberal Party if they wish. This may necessary if the person is under 18 or a vulnerable adult. This can include when submitting a complaint, throughout the process and after the process is complete if requested.

Initially responding to the complaint. The first step will be to acknowledge the complaint from the person within three days. They can then request a copy of the latest membership data from the Director, the Deputy Director or the Membership officer. This can then allow them to email the person the complaint is against to tell them that there has been a complaint filed against them.

Anonymising the complaint. The Head or Deputy Head of Complaints then ensures that the information of the person making the complaint is anonymised. This will involve any details that may be used to identify the person such as their name, gender and age being anonymised so any details that go before the Complaints Committee will be purely about the case itself. To do this, each case will be assigned a number using Excel and the people within the case will only be referred to as person A, person B, person C and so on. The random number will be used for every email sent by the Head or Deputy Head of complaints during the process.

Complaints against members of our team. If a complaint is made against a member of the Liberal Party team then they will not be allowed to take part in the process other than to appear before the Complaints Committee. If this is a member of the Administration, a Spokesperson or a Regional/State Chair has a complaint made against them, then they will immediately be suspended from their position until the process has been completed. If the Head of Complaints is the person the complaint is against, then the Deputy Head of Complaints will take on the roles originally carried out by the Head of Complaints in the process set out below. When this person is suspended, the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints will need to send an email to inform them that they have been suspended from their position within five days.

Complaints against or by former members. If the person making the complaint, or the person the complaint is against, leaves the Liberal Party then the complaint will still go through the complaints system. This is to ensure we do not allow people into the Liberal Party that could harm our members and members who have broken the rules are not allowed to remain within the Liberal Party. However, this means there will be no emails sent during the complaints process to former members if the complaint is against them.

Investigating the complaint. The Head or Deputy Head Complaints then compiles any evidence on the complaint. This includes a description of the complaint, any evidence supporting the complaint and statements from any witnesses. It can also involve emailing questions to the person who filed the report and those involved in any potential issue.

When the investigation begins, the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints will email both the person who submitted the complaint and the person the complaint is against to inform them that the investigation has begun. Once the investigation is completed, both the person who made the complaint and the person the complaint was against should be informed that the investigation has concluded.

Clear breaches. When there is a clear breach of safeguarding, our code of conduct, our safeguarding code of conduct or our privacy policy, then our Head or Deputy Head of Complaints must immediately suspend that member. Once this has taken place, any appropriate actions or repercussions will be put in place.

Possible breaches. In situations where it is unclear as to whether there is a breach of safeguarding procedures; our code of conduct or our safeguarding code of conduct, then the complaint will go to our Complaints Committee. This allows the person the complaint has been made against to appear in front of the committee along with the person who made the complaint, who can write down what happened anonymously, which will be alongside any evidence gathered by the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints. Appearances are held remotely unless a physical meeting is needed and meetings will be recorded. There will then be a secret vote which will look at whether safeguarding rules or code of conduct were broken based on the balance of probabilities (whether it is more than likely the complaint is true). They also consider any previous complaints in the past four years to make their decision. Once this has taken place, any appropriate actions or repercussions will be put in place.

Possible incidents and repercussions. If repercussions are needed, these are the minimum repercussions depending on the nature of the incident. The full definitions for all of these terms can be found in our “definitions” guide.

An apology which may also include training during which time the person will be temporarily suspended as a member of the Liberal Party. If the person has already been suspended, for any reason, then this should instead result in their membership of the Liberal Party being revoked and a permanent ban.

- Drinking during meetings.
- General unkindness or disrespectful behaviour towards another member of the Liberal Party or a member of the public.
- Using the Liberal Party social media accounts for personal purposes rather than their role within the Liberal Party.
- Agreeing to partnerships without a vote by the Liberal Party team.

A temporary suspension of the persons membership, this can be permanent depending on the nature of the incident. If the person has already been suspended, for any reason, then this should instead result in their membership of the Liberal Party being revoked and a permanent ban. This often depends on the scale of the incident.

- Breaking GDPR rules.
- Bullying or cyberbullying.
- Harassment.
- Defamation/libel.
- Intimidation.
- Violent behaviour.
- Posting content of a violent nature.
- Breaking our safeguarding rules.

This will result in their membership of Liberal Party being revoked and a permanent ban.

- Breaking the law.
- Rape.
- Assault by penetration.
- Sexual assault.
- Taking photos or videos of members without their consent.
- Discrimination, bullying or derogatory behaviour based on: age, gender, sex, disabilities, sexual orientation, race, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnerships, religion, pregnancy and maternity or other characteristics.
- Sexual harassment.
- Physical, emotional, sexual, discriminatory, financial or material and psychological abuse.
- Homophobia.
- Islamophobia.
- Racism.
- Transphobia.
- Antisemitism.
- Sending unwanted messages of a sexual nature.
- Ableism.

May fall into any of these categories.

- Conduct on social media or online that breaks any of these rules.

Once an outcome has been decided. The Head or Deputy Head of Complaints will email both the person who submitted the complaint and the person the complaint is against explaining the outcome of the case and what the next steps are. This may include training or an apology which will be arranged by the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints. It can also include their membership being revoked or suspended in which case they will need to arrange this with the Administration section of the team in order to change the membership list.



Breaches of the law. When a breach of the law is believed to be involved, then the issue will be reported to the police by the Head of Complaints. If this happens the Liberal Party will wait until the police investigation has been completed. If this takes more than 6 months, then we will follow up with the police to check when an internal investigation can take place.

Appeals process. If either the person who made the complaint or the person who was complained against is unhappy with the outcome of the case, then an appeal can be made. This would go to the Complaints Committee and decisions can only be appealed once or, under exceptional circumstances, where new evidence has been found.

Malicious complaints. If a person makes three or more complaints that are proven to be untrue, the person can be reported for making malicious complaints.

Learning lessons from breaches of Safeguarding or the Code of Conduct. To learn the lessons from any breaches or near misses we will keep anonymous records of complaints. This involve storing the information on a password protected Excel document that only the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints can access. The records will be kept for four years and, after that, date, this will be deleted.

Ensuring these measures are kept up to date. These measures will be kept up to date to ensure our organisation can prevent mistakes from happening or to learn from them if they do occur. They will be reviewed once a year, if an incident occurs or if there is a 'near miss'. In order to improve these measures, we will also talk to survivors of incidents to ensure our practices are as effective as possible.

Availability of these measures. To ensure these measures are accessible to those that may need to consult them or to go through the processes in this document, this will be available on our website. A copy of this policy will also be sent to every member of the Liberal Party when it is updated via email.

Have any ideas to make these procedures better? Let us know by submitting any ideas on the "Contact and Info" page of our website.

## Definitions

These definitions are used when deciding whether complaints meet our definitions and to help those with a complaint decide what to include as their reason for making a complaint. We also include examples to help both people either making or deciding complaints.

### **Assault by penetration:**

“A person (A) commits an offence if— (a) he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of his body or anything else, (b) the penetration is sexual, (c) B does not consent to the penetration, and (d) A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (2) Whether a belief is reasonable is to be determined having regard to all the circumstances, including any steps A has taken to ascertain whether B consents”. This is as defined in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 which can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/section/2>

### **Abuse:**

Abuse is complex as it can include multiple types of abuse including domestic, physical, emotional, sexual, discriminatory, modern slavery, financial or material and psychological abuse.

The definition of domestic abuse and economic are: “(a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and, (b) the behaviour is abusive. (3) Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following— (a) physical or sexual abuse; (b) violent or threatening behaviour; (c) controlling or coercive behaviour; (d) economic abuse (see subsection (4)); (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse; and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct. (4) “Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to— (a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or (b) obtain goods or services. (5) For the purposes of this Act A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child). (6) References in this Act to being abusive towards another person are to be read in accordance with this section”. You can see the full definition in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/1/enacted>

### **Financial or material abuse:**

Examples:

- “Theft of money or possessions
- Fraud, scamming
- Preventing a person from accessing their own money, benefits or assets
- Employees taking a loan from a person using the service
- Undue pressure, duress, threat or undue influence put on the person in connection with loans, wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions
- Arranging less care than is needed to save money to maximise inheritance
- Denying assistance to manage/monitor financial affairs
- Denying assistance to access benefits
- Misuse of personal allowance in a care home

- Misuse of benefits or direct payments in a family home
- Someone moving into a person's home and living rent free without agreement or under duress
- False representation, using another person's bank account, cards or documents
- Exploitation of a person's money or assets, e.g. unauthorised use of a car
- Misuse of a power of attorney, deputy, appointeeship or other legal authority
- Rogue trading – e.g. unnecessary or overpriced property repairs and failure to carry out agreed repairs or poor workmanship”

These examples are from the Social Care Institute for Excellence:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse#physical>

### **Domestic abuse**

Examples:

- [Coercive control](#) (a pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence)
- Psychological and/or emotional abuse [\[2\]](#)
- Physical or sexual abuse
- [Financial or economic abuse](#)
- [Harassment and stalking](#)
- [Online or digital abuse](#)

These examples are from Women's aid. You can find out more at Women's aid here:

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/>

### **Discriminatory abuse:**

“Unequal treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation (known as [‘protected characteristics’ under the Equality Act 2010](#))

- Verbal abuse, derogatory remarks or inappropriate use of language related to a protected characteristic
- Denying access to communication aids, not allowing access to an interpreter, signer or lip-reader
- Harassment or deliberate exclusion on the grounds of a protected characteristic
- Denying basic rights to healthcare, education, employment and criminal justice relating to a protected characteristic
- Substandard service provision relating to a protected characteristic”

These examples and the definition are from the Social Care Institute for Excellence:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse#physical>

### **Modern slavery:**

“Modern slavery is the illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. It covers a wide range of abuse and exploitation including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour, criminal exploitation and organ harvesting.

Victims of modern slavery can be any age, gender, nationality and ethnicity. They are tricked or threatened into work and may feel unable to leave or report the crime through fear or

intimidation. They may not recognise themselves as a victim". This definition is from the Metropolitan Police which can be found here: <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/ms/modern-slavery/>

Examples:

- "Human trafficking
- Forced labour
- Domestic servitude
- Sexual exploitation, such as escort work, prostitution and pornography
- Debt bondage – being forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they never will be able to"

These examples are from the Social Care Institute for Excellence:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse#physical>

### **Physical abuse:**

Our definition for abuse is "Physical abuse is when someone is hurting you. This could be hurting you with their hands, their feet, or an object" which comes from Childline:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/abuse-safety/physical-abuse/>

Examples:

- "Assault, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing
- Rough handling
- Scalding and burning
- Physical punishments
- Inappropriate or unlawful use of restraint
- Making someone purposefully uncomfortable (e.g. opening a window and removing blankets)
- Involuntary isolation or confinement
- Misuse of medication (e.g. over-sedation)
- Forcible feeding or withholding food
- Unauthorised restraint, restricting movement (e.g. tying someone to a chair)"

These examples are from the Social Care Institute for Excellence:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse#physical>

### **Psychological or emotional abuse:**

This involves using behaviours, gestures or language to abuse another person.

Examples:

- "Enforced social isolation – preventing someone accessing services, educational and social opportunities and seeing friends
- Removing mobility or communication aids or intentionally leaving someone unattended when they need assistance
- Preventing someone from meeting their religious and cultural needs

- Preventing the expression of choice and opinion
- Failure to respect privacy
- Preventing stimulation, meaningful occupation or activities
- Intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing or verbal abuse
- Addressing a person in a patronising or infantilising way
- Threats of harm or abandonment
- Cyber bullying”

These examples are from the Social Care Institute for Excellence:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse#physical>

### **Organisational or institutional abuse:**

Our definition for Organisational or institutional abuse is: “...neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting”. See more about the definition here:

<https://www.anncrafttrust.org/institutional-abuse-definitions-signs-symptoms/>

Examples:

- “Discouraging visits or the involvement of relatives or friends
- Run-down or overcrowded establishment
- Authoritarian management or rigid regimes
- Lack of leadership and supervision
- Insufficient staff or high turnover resulting in poor quality care
- Abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using the service
- Inappropriate use of restraints
- Lack of respect for dignity and privacy
- Failure to manage residents with abusive behaviour
- Not providing adequate food and drink, or assistance with eating
- Not offering choice or promoting independence
- Misuse of medication
- Failure to provide care with dentures, spectacles or hearing aids
- Not taking account of individuals’ cultural, religious or ethnic needs
- Failure to respond to abuse appropriately
- Interference with personal correspondence or communication
- Failure to respond to complaints”

These examples are from the Social Care Institute for Excellence:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse#physical>

### **Sexual abuse:**

“Sexual violence and abuse is any behaviour thought to be of a sexual nature which is unwanted and takes place without consent. Sexual violence and abuse can be physical, psychological, verbal or online. Any behaviour of a sexual nature that causes you distress is considered sexual violence or abuse”. This definition is from NI direct which can be found here:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/sexual-violence-and-abuse>

Examples:

- “Rape, attempted rape or sexual assault
- Inappropriate touch anywhere
- Non- consensual masturbation of either or both persons
- Non- consensual sexual penetration or attempted penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth
- Any sexual activity that the person lacks the capacity to consent to
- Inappropriate looking, sexual teasing or innuendo or sexual harassment
- Sexual photography or forced use of pornography or witnessing of sexual acts
- Indecent exposure”

These examples are from the Social Care Institute for Excellence:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse#physical>

### **Neglect and acts of omission:**

“Neglect is the failure of any person who has responsibility for the charge, care or custody of an adult to provide the amount and type of care that a reasonable person would be expected to provide”. This definition can be found here: <https://www.rbsab.org/the-public/what-is-abuse/neglect.aspx> and here <https://www.traffordsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/Safeguarding-Adults/Adults-in-specific-circumstances/Neglect-and-acts-of-omission.aspx>

Examples:

- “Failure to provide or allow access to food, shelter, clothing, heating, stimulation and activity, personal or medical care
- Providing care in a way that the person dislikes
- Failure to administer medication as prescribed
- Refusal of access to visitors
- Not taking account of individuals’ cultural, religious or ethnic needs
- Not taking account of educational, social and recreational needs
- Ignoring or isolating the person
- Preventing the person from making their own decisions
- Preventing access to glasses, hearing aids, dentures, etc.
- Failure to ensure privacy and dignity”

These examples are from the Social Care Institute for Excellence:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse#physical>

### **Agreeing to partnerships, new supporters or team members without a vote by the Liberal Party:**

This involves someone agreeing to new partnerships, supporters or team members on behalf of the Liberal Party without first having a vote by the Liberal Party.

**Ableism:**

Ableism is defined by SCOPE “...as discrimination in favour of non-disabled people”. You can see the full definition here: <https://www.scope.org.uk/about-us/disablism/>

Examples:

- “Making assumptions about what a disabled person can or cannot do.
- Not making reasonable adjustments at work”.

You can see more examples from SCOPE here: <https://www.scope.org.uk/about-us/disablism/>

**Antisemitism:**

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities”. This is as defined by the IHRA including all of the examples below which are also provided by the IHRA: <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism>

Examples:

“Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.

- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Antisemitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of antisemitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries”.

### **Afrophobia:**

### **Bullying or cyberbullying:**

Examples:

- Verbal, written and e-mail harassment through derogatory remarks, jokes, insults, offensive language, gossip, spreading malicious rumours and slander.
- Open aggression, threats, shouting, and unpredictable outbursts.
- Deliberately setting objectives with unreasonable deadlines, or changing objectives unfairly.
- Twisting something someone says or does.
- Threatening disciplinary or other action deliberately to intimidate e.g. making threats or comments about selection/deselection without foundation.
- Unjustifiable exclusion, e.g. withholding information, not talking to, not including in discussions or meetings, or exclusion from social occasions.
- Inappropriate or derogatory remarks in connection with performance, particularly in front of other members.
- Incitement to commit any of the above.

These examples are from the Labour Party.

### **Breaking General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) rules:**

Breaking GDPR rules includes breaking the rules set out in our privacy policy or the General Data Protection Regulation rules. You can read the full guide for GDPR here:

<https://gdpr.eu/>

### **Breaking the law:**

This can include breaking any law that may affect either the reputation of the Liberal Party or the persons activities within it.

### **Breaking our safeguarding rules:**

This includes all of the rules set out in our Safeguarding code of conduct and procedures which can then be submitted as a complaint.



**Conduct on social media or online that breaks any of these rules:**

This includes any conduct on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube or any other form of social media.

**Discrimination:**

There are multiple types of protected characteristics which include: age, sex, disabilities, sexual orientation, race, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, religion and belief or pregnancy and maternity.

Below are the different types of discrimination that can occur for these groups:

Direct discrimination: "This means treating someone less favourably than someone else because of a protected characteristic. In the case of age, treating someone less favourably than someone else may be justified".

Direct discrimination by perception: "This means treating one person less favourably than someone else, because you incorrectly think they have a protected characteristic".

Discrimination arising from disability: "This means treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability when this cannot be objectively justified".

Direct discrimination by association: "treating someone less favourably than another person because they are associated with a person who has a protected characteristic".

"Failing to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

Harassment: Harassment is unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment

Victimisation: Victimisation is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken some form of action relating to the Equality Act, e.g. made a complaint under the Act or supported somebody who is doing so, such as appearing as a witness".

These are all from the Equality and Human Rights Commission. You can also find out when discrimination may be justified:

[https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/ea\\_legal\\_definitions\\_0.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/ea_legal_definitions_0.pdf)

Examples:

- Refusing someone membership of our team, supporters' network, membership or a partnership due to a protected characteristic. This can include rejecting them on that basis, telling them there are no spaces available when there are.

**Drinking during meetings:**

This involves drinking alcoholic drinks during the Liberal Party meetings aside from social events.

**Defamation/libel:****General unkindness or disrespectful behaviour:**

This involves low level issues where a member makes others feel uncomfortable or upset as a direct result of their actions. This can be towards either another member of the Liberal Party or a member of the public.

Examples:

- Not debating respectfully and getting aggressive with others.
- Personal insults aimed at another member.

**Harassment:**

“...repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a victim in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person”.

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/stalking-and-harassment>

This can make people feel offended, threatened, humiliated, uncomfortable or intimidated. It can also be based on protected characteristics, whether someone is believed to have HIV/AIDS, personal traits or their appearance.

Examples:

- Invasion of personal space and/or inappropriate touching to serious assault.
- Derogatory remarks, jokes, insults, offensive language, gossip and slander.
- Sexually suggestive and unwelcome comments or derogatory remarks including any regarding the sexual orientation or preference of an individual.
- Unwanted requests or pressure for sexual favours.
- Sexual graffiti or displays of pornographic or degrading pictures or objects including pornographic displays on computer screens.
- Intrusion by pestering, spying, following, stalking, etc.
- Repeated gibes, invasion of privacy, or practical jokes causing physical or psychological distress.
- Repeated statements to an individual or third parties, which demean his/her status e.g. copying emails that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know.
- Intrusion by pestering, spying, following, stalking, etc.

**Homophobia:**

We use the Stonewall definition which is “The fear or dislike of someone, based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about lesbian, gay or bi people.

Homophobic bullying may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be, lesbian, gay or bi”. You can find the Stonewall definition here:

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/faqs-and-glossary/list-lgbtq-terms#h>

Examples:

- Homophobic language such as using the term gay as a derogatory term. For instance, “that’s so gay”. It can also include other derogatory terms such as “queer”, “poof”, “fag”, “faggot”, “dyke”, “lezza” and “no homo”. You can find out more about these words and the impact they can have here [https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/tackling\\_homophobic\\_language\\_-\\_teachers\\_guide.pdf](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/tackling_homophobic_language_-_teachers_guide.pdf)
- Bullying, harassing or making fun someone because you perceive them to be lesbian, gay or bi.
- Ignoring or excluding someone because you perceive them to be lesbian, gay or bi.

**Intimidation:**

**Islamophobia:**

We use the Runnymede Trust definition which is “Islamophobia is any distinction, exclusion or restriction towards, or preference against, Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslims) that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life”. Read the full definition here: [https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/Islamophobia\\_Report\\_2018\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/Islamophobia_Report_2018_FINAL.pdf)

Examples:

**Posting content of a violent nature:**

This is when someone posts content on social media aimed at another person which involves violent threats. It can also be when someone posts violent content in a group or forum which contains members under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults in.

Examples:

- Posting graphic scenes of people being killed or injured in a group chat or forum with under 18's or vulnerable adults in.
- Calling for someone to be physically injured or hurt.

**Rape:**

“(1) A person (A) commits an offence if— (a) he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, (b) B does not consent to the penetration, and (c) A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (2) Whether a belief is reasonable is to be determined having regard to all the circumstances, including any steps A has taken to ascertain whether B consents”. This is as defined in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 which can be found here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/section/1>

**Racism:**

Racism can involve hostility or prejudice based on race. It can involve discrimination, abuse or harassment.

First of all it is important to define what race is which is done in the Equality Act 2010: “(1) Race includes— (a) colour; (b) nationality; (c) ethnic or national origins. (2) In relation to the protected characteristic of race—(a) a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person of a particular racial group; (b) a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons of the same racial group. (3) A racial group is a group of persons defined by reference to race; and a reference to a person's racial group is a reference to a racial group into which the person falls. (4) The fact that a racial group comprises two or more distinct racial groups does not prevent it from constituting a particular racial group”.

See the full Equality Act 2010 definition of race here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/9>

abuse or harassment are both defined within this document, it is counted under racism if either was racially motivated.

**Discrimination:**

### **“Direct discrimination**

This happens when someone treats you worse than another person in a similar situation because of your race. For example:

- if a letting agency would not let a flat to you because of your race, this would be direct race discrimination

### **Indirect discrimination**

This happens when an organisation has a particular policy or way of working that puts people of your racial group at a disadvantage. For example:

- a hairdresser refuses to employ stylists that cover their own hair, this would put any Muslim women or Sikh men who cover their hair at a disadvantage when applying for a position as a stylist

Sometimes indirect race discrimination can be permitted if the organisation or employer is able to show that there is a good reason for the discrimination. This is known as objective justification. For example:

- a Somali asylum seeker tries to open a bank account but the bank states that in order to be eligible you need to have been resident in the UK for 12 months and have a permanent address. The Somali man is not able to open a bank account. The bank would need to prove that its policy was necessary for business reasons (such as to prevent fraud) and that there was no practical alternative

### **Harassment**

Harassment occurs when someone makes you feel humiliated, offended or degraded. For example:

- a young British Asian man at work keeps being called a racist name by colleagues. His colleagues say it is just banter, but the employee is insulted and offended by it

Harassment can never be justified. However, if an organisation or employer can show it did everything it could to prevent people who work for it from behaving like that, you will not be able to make a claim for harassment against it, although you could make a claim against the harasser.

### **Victimisation**

This is when you are treated badly because you have made a complaint of race related discrimination under the Equality Act. It can also occur if you are supporting someone who has made a complaint of race related discrimination. For example:

- the young man in the example above wants to make a formal complaint about his treatment. His manager threatens to sack him unless he drops the complaint”

See the full Equality and Human Rights Commission page here:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/race-discrimination#act>

Examples:

### **Sexual assault:**

“A person (A) commits an offence if— (a) he intentionally touches another person (B), (b) the touching is sexual, (c) B does not consent to the touching, and (d) A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (2) Whether a belief is reasonable is to be determined having regard to all the circumstances, including any steps A has taken to ascertain whether B

consents". This is as defined in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 which can be found here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/section/3>

Examples:

**Sending unwanted messages of a sexual nature:**

This involves sending messages of a sexual nature to someone without their consent or sending these to people under 18.

Examples:

- Sending pictures of genitalia or sexual and reproductive organs.
- Messages involving sexual phrases or comments about either the person sending or being sent the message.

**Sexual harassment:**

This is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as "There are three types of harassment. The first type, which applies to all the protected characteristics apart from pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership, involves unwanted conduct which is related to a relevant characteristic and has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the complainant or of violating the complainant's dignity. The second type is sexual harassment which is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature where this has the same purpose or effect as the first type of harassment. The third type is treating someone less favourably because he or she has either submitted to or rejected sexual harassment, or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment". The full legislation can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/notes/division/3/2/2/14>

Protected characteristics include: "Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation", find out more about protected characteristics here:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>

Examples:

There are multiple examples given by ACAS of sexual assault:

<https://www.acas.org.uk/sexual-harassment>

- "flirting, gesturing or making sexual remarks about someone's body, clothing or appearance
- asking questions about someone's sex life
- telling sexually offensive jokes
- making sexual comments or jokes about someone's sexual orientation or gender reassignment
- displaying or sharing pornographic or sexual images, or other sexual content
- touching someone against their will, for example hugging them
- sexual assault or rape"

**Transphobia:**

Transphobia is fear or dislike of, or prejudice against someone based on the fact they are or are perceived to be trans or non-binary.

Examples:

- Assaulting, abusing, harassing, bullying or ostracising someone because they are Trans. This also includes calling for any of these things to happen.
- Deadnaming which is using the former name of someone who is transgender.
- Taking a small number of trans people to represent the entire community.
- Using the actions of one trans person to represent all trans people.

**Taking photos or videos of members without their consent:**

This involves taking photos or videos during events or during meetings. Before taking photos or videos the person doing so should ask if anyone would either not like to be in the photo to give them time to leave.

**Using the Liberal Party social media accounts for personal purposes rather than their role within the Liberal Party:**

This means posting either personal information on an account that isn't relevant to your role within the Liberal Party or completely non-Liberal Party related posts. Whether something is a non-Liberal Party related post should be judged on whether there is any attempt to tie it to the Liberal Party in any way. If this rule is broken, then the post should be taken down within a day, otherwise it could be submitted as a complaint.

Examples:

- Retweeting a sports event where there is no link to the Liberal Party.
- Retweeting a personal post with no relevance of link to the Liberal Party.
- Tweeting from a Liberal Party account with policies that contradict the Liberal Party policies.

**Violent behaviour:**

Violent behaviour involves either physically harming others or behaviour that makes people afraid they will be hurt.

Examples:

- "...beating, burning, kicking, punching, biting, maiming or killing, or the use of objects or weapons". This is from the Council of Europe <https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/physical-violence>