

REDL Conference Report by Chang Liu

Membership Experience Survey Report

Since the last conference, I have started and concluded the membership experience report. The full report is attached to this conference report. I have engaged with LibDem Campaign for Racial Equality (LDCRE) and the LibDem Headquarter(HQ) staff for comments and feedback, as well as hearing from the wider membership with unstructured interviews.

Getting to work

In the remaining part of my term. The report's recommendations have been accepted by the whole federal executive committee, and I will be working with state, regional chairs, branch development officers and membership development officer to implement those recommendations. I have began the work on this by setting up a direct slack channel of people mentioned above, as well as made arrangements to come to the upcoming English YL and Scottish YL executive meetings to discuss how the learnings I have from conducting this survey and its results can help each region to better engage with their members. I have also offered to attend the Welsh YL executive meeting.

Key areas I will be focusing on: **outreach to members**, **regional social events**, **regional action days** and **building relationships** with local and regional parties.

Getting YL on the radar

Apart from working on the membership report, I have also been in touch with LDCRE about the work YL has been doing as well as having the YL conference advertised on the monthly diversity newsletter from LibDem HQ. I have chased up on LDCRE if we can send a representative to their executive.

Being visible

Beyond my main responsibilities as REDL, since the last conference we have seen a local election and a general election. I have been on the ground door knocking for both, organised action days for South Cambridgeshire constituency, and attended the general election count. I have also joined the Cambridge LibDems at the annual pride parade, showcasing the diverse membership of LibDems.

Knowledge sharing

I have been in regular contact with the new Women's Rep to share logistical lessons on running a survey and offered my support to help YL recruit, retain more women members. I will also be in touch with regional chairs during the upcoming meeting about helping more women get onto regional executives.

Racial Equity Diversity Liberation Officer's Report on Membership Experience

Analysis of survey results

Participant demographic breakdown

A total of 50 responses were received for the survey from Young Liberal members. Of the respondents 16.3% are ethnic minorities, 55.1% LGBT+, 16.3% woman, 10.2% from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, 28.6% disabled, 4.1% carer, 8.2% care-experienced and 18.4% are from under 18s. 50 response rate was a predetermined benchmark to conduct an interim analysis to produce some useful recommendations and insights, which would hopefully boost confidence in membership that actual changes will happen if people do fill the survey. The survey is limited as previously stated by the selection bias that we would not reach people who otherwise would not get more involved in Young Liberals and the limitations associated with using a survey is accepted but nevertheless it is decided that should not stop us from conducting the survey.

Involvement in the party

The top three responses were local party (75%), Young Liberals (62.5%), and university branches (27.1%). Local parties seem to be where many of our members are active and university branches seem to deviate from expectation that many of our members will be engaged in university branches/ equivalent. This could be due to lack of active branches (only 4 responses were received from the 29 accredited Young Liberal branches) and disengagement between federal level activities with branches. Attempts were made to reach out directly to university branches which doesn't seem to have worked so far.

Motivation to join the Liberal Democrats

Alignment of ideology, policies, Brexit, friends, human rights, devolution and civil liberties were amongst the top reasons why members joined the Liberal Democrats.

Length of membership

[Figure 1](#)

There is a strong contingency of members joined for less than 1 year and more than 5 years. It's promising that we are attracting new members to be engaged in this survey, however the smaller percentage of members joined for 2-4 years does pose a question if members are becoming disconnected with Young Liberals after joining for 2 years. An alternative explanation is that we have spikes in membership around 2019 and Brexit as a single issue and we are now attracting engaged new members due to run up to the general election.

Quantification of members experience

[Figure 2](#)

[Figure 3 and 4](#)

Most of our members have a good experience in YL so far, however those with terrible experiences might have left the organisation thus no one scored 1 in this section. In terms of transferable skills there is a bimodal distribution of where people think how much they gained in terms of skill sets. We should explore further the relationship between gaining transferable skills sets and positive experiences within YL in the next stage of analysis.

How to improve engagement

- Socials outside of conference
- Appeal to under 18s within the organisation
- More emails reachout about events and opportunities in member's local area
- More ways to connect with other like minded people
- Socials during conference
- More options for graduates and those outside universities
- Local meet ups and more engagement from the regional chairs
- Improve communication about what YL is doing (a better way to communicate without Facebook and sparse emails)
- Welcome packs for new members explaining how YL works
- Easier way to sign up to the mailing list
- More surveys and online things people can take part in
- Flexible scheduling for working people to campaign
- Inclusive conference and reduce the intensity
- Provide more information, especially local to member's area

Above is not a comprehensive list of all the comments left by members but many of them are reoccurring ones or sentiments echoed in others' comments. Key takeaways are about communications both from local regional teams and national leadership, opportunities to meet up outside the conference, and cater towards the different needs of under 18s and graduates.

Positive and negative experiences

Members commented about their positive and negative experiences within YL. In the positive experiences many mention about the welcoming nature of YL, professionalism, being involved in work, and many credited their positive experiences with student societies in YL branches. Negative experiences centred around conferences too focused around bureaucracy and administrative matters, competitive atmosphere and harassment.

What could YL offer more to you as a member?

- More online training events
- More active and responsive outside conference

- More regular opportunities for networking, trainings and socials
- Opportunities in the wider party
- More opportunities to meet other LibDem members in the local region
- Increase communication and assistance to branches
- Organise action days in area without an active YL branch
- Reaching out personally to members
- More membership engagement
- More things for older YL members

Much of the sentiments echo strongly with the earlier segment that people want to see YL offer more events outside conferences and more opportunities to meet others, training and socials especially within the region.

What is the one thing that YL should do right now to help you to get more involved (internal elections, activities, campaigns etc)?

- More frequent email updates on YL events people can get involved in
- More publicised campaigns on specific issues
- Easier to network with other YLers in the same region
- Help to find available opportunities to get involved in the local area
- More action days, more socials
- More accessible conference in terms of traditions, jargons, and procedures as well as cost
- Reach out more
- Respond more
- Reach out to members personally and informally
- Non-conference events

Reflecting on YL as an organisation

This report invites the YL executive committee to consider the purpose of YL as an organisation. We are a campaigning organisation, we are a policy creating organisation, we are also an organisation for socialisation and networking, information hub, training and development. The feedback from the members expressed desires that YL ought to offer more for its members across many areas of its function as an organisation. With a big gain in parliamentary seats as a party, we will become more visible and attract more members to join. It is vital that we get the basics right to recruit and retain our members to build up a stronger youth presence in the party and as a campaigning force.

Key recommendations

- A joined up shared strategy between federal YL, state YLs and regional YLs on what we can offer to our members in response to their demands. From membership recruitment, to new members and to existing membership.
- More regular events outside of the main conference (social, networking, speaker, training etc)

- Better engagement directly with members and more frequent and informative updates on opportunities around them.
- Regional chairs/ committee reach out to new members/ dormant members via phone/emails to explain how YL & the party works and signpost events members can go to.
- Regular action days organised by regional YL team, with a focus on skills building in campaigning canvassing, literature writing, events organisation, fundraising. And develop relationships with local parties to encourage them to stand more young candidates and ally with young people.
- Newer ways to communicate what's happening in YL without relying on Facebook or monthly newsletters
- Improve inclusivity of conference on the technical procedural elements
- Wider variety of events to cater to a broader audience