



NATIONAL CONVENTION HANDBOOK 2026

Your guide to the Party

Written by Volunteers for Volunteers



The Party's new home at 1-2 Castle Lane, London, SW1E 6DR
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Every year, supporters leave us gifts in their wills.

This year, they allowed us to do something very special: provide the Party with its first permanent home in two decades.

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This is where the Conservative Foundation comes in. As an independent entity, we underpin the long-term finances of the Party by building an endowment with gifts left in supporters' wills.*

Every gift, no matter how small, helps us win. Every gift is ring-fenced, so you can rest assured that your money will always be used solely for the benefit of the Party.

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THE CONSERVATIVE FOUNDATION

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*Legacy gifts are IHT exempt

theconservativefoundation.co.uk

Our Purpose – why are we here?

As Officers of the Party, it is our responsibility to ensure that all parts of the Party are working as one team to deliver an effective campaigning organisation, to secure election of Conservatives at all levels of government in order to implement conservative policies.

Grow membership » Raise money » Campaign » Get Conservatives elected

We must do this by fighting elections, running effective campaigns, raising funds and recruiting members, not only on our own patch but also supporting in places where we can have most impact.

This Handbook is here to help you understand your role, and signpost you to the information and contacts to help you to be effective.

NATIONAL
CONVENTION
HANDBOOK
ONLINE



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TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this Handbook, 'National Conservative Convention' is also abbreviated to 'NCC' and 'National Convention'.

In general, the term 'Association' in this Handbook also covers Federations.

INTRODUCTION



Julian Ellacott

Chairman of the National Convention

We volunteers are vital to the renewal of our Party, working hard day in, day out campaigning on the doorsteps, retaining and recruiting members, raising funds, selecting candidates, and doing everything else that keeps the Party alive on the ground.

The National Convention is here to represent all of us: sharing best practice, working jointly at local, Area and Regional level, and making members' voices heard by the Board, Parliamentary Party and CCHQ.

The purpose of this Handbook is to show us all how we fit into the wider Party structure, and what's expected of our roles. It outlines the key activities and responsibilities of Association, Area and Regional Officers, and a diary of what to do when. It should be essential reading for anyone in those roles – or anyone wishing to stand for them in future.

Ultimately this helps us all, and makes the Party a more effective campaigning organisation.

Your responsibilities – and the support available to help you

Taking on an officer role, at any level, means carrying out its duties in an active, enthusiastic and effective manner. With the information available in this Handbook and the various items signposted from here, there is no excuse for not knowing what is expected of you.

INTRODUCTION

But equally, you are not an island – you’re part of a structure where others support you, at Association, Area, Region and national level, so please do reach out and make yourself known. If you hit a problem you can’t resolve, escalate it – to your Area, Region or National Convention Link Officer.

All Convention members should automatically receive the weekly Member Services bulletin and monthly National Convention update by email, which both include important updates. If you’re not receiving them, please contact one of us and we’ll get you signed up. There are also national WhatsApp groups for senior volunteers, sharing updates and good practice – contact me if you’d like to join.

My experience

My fellow Convention Officers introduce themselves on the following pages, and we work as a team on your behalf. For my own part, I’ve been an active volunteer for over 25 years – as an Association and Area Chairman in the South East (and 19 years as a councillor), then Regional Chairman in the South West. I was elected a Vice President of the National Convention in 2023, and became Chairman in September 2024. The Voluntary Party is my passion, and it’s a privilege to be your Chairman.

Thank you

Thanks once again to Geoff Baylis and Marjorie Baylis MBE for their help in updating this Handbook, and to the Conservative Foundation and PPC Ltd for their generous sponsorship. If you have any comments or feedback do just email me, so that we can improve it further next time.

Thank you for all you do for the Party. Each of us only has a limited time in our roles, and our aim should be to hand over our respective parts of the Party to our successors in better shape than we inherited them.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julian". The signature is stylized with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

julian.ellacott@conservatives.com

Regional Link Officer for: London, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland

<https://www.conservatives.com/organisation/national-convention>

OFFICERS OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION



John Belsey **President and Conference Chairman**

John is honoured to have been elected as President of the National Convention for 2026/27 after having served two years as Vice President. John has been a member of the party for 30 years and has previously been a Regional, Area, Association and Branch Chairman. Currently co-chairman of the Membership Committee, John is also our Voluntary Party lead for campaigning and Associations' finances.

John is a chartered accountant and former Deloitte partner who now runs his family's sports insurance business. Growing up in Kent and after working in the Middle East for a few years, John lives in West Sussex where he is a Town and District Councillor and he had the privilege of being Mayor of East Grinstead for 2025/26. Very engaged in his community, John is chairman of governors of a local primary school and chairman of charity HerMove helping promote girl's and women's participation in sport, he also leads his local Sussex bonfire society. Although John doesn't get much free time, he enjoys playing most sports, especially tennis - he is also a chess fiend having previously played for Kent at both junior and senior levels.

Link Officer for the following Regions: North West; Eastern

john.belsey@conservatives.com



Stewart Harper **Vice President**

Stewart was born in Essex but he has lived in Yorkshire for 20 years. He was Regional Chairman in Yorkshire from 2020 to 2023, supporting the response to the parliamentary boundary review and countless local government elections, as well as three Westminster by-elections. He was the Party's Parliamentary Candidate for Leeds North West in 2019.

Stewart worked in the Higher Education sector for most of his career, has been a School Governor and is now a non-executive director of a Multi Academy Trust. A major passion of Stewart's is education and its ability to transform lives. He set up his own business in 2019 and now works in education, the NHS and in the private sector - with expertise in governance and compliance.

In his spare time he is a sports fan and enjoys watching his son playing sport of any kind. He also enjoys reading when he has the time!

Link Officer for the following Regions: West Midlands; North East

stewart.harper@conservatives.com

OFFICERS OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION



Ahmereen Reza OBE Vice President

Ahmereen is a director of a Land Venture Finance initiative, advancing UK growth through private investment in tech, renewables, and infrastructure. Raised in Asia and New York, her global career spans New York, Tokyo, Karachi, and Boston. She now lives in London with her family and their Labrador.

She serves as Vice Chairman of the Conservative Policy Forum (CPF), Chair of CWO-Diversity, and Vice Chairman of Conservative Friends of Pakistan. A committed Conservative for over 20 years, Ahmereen has led both policy and grassroots roles, previously serving as a CPF Area Leadership Champion, GLA London List candidate (2021), and Parliamentary Candidate for Birmingham Hodge Hill (2017).

Alongside her professional work, Ahmereen has led charitable initiatives, serving as a Non-Executive Director at a housing association and co-founding DIL UK, championing social mobility opportunities for the underserved. She was awarded an Order of the British Empire in 2020 for her service to DIL UK, interfaith, political and public service.

Link Officer for the following Regions: South West; South East

ahmereen.reza@conservatives.com



Richard Lawrie Vice President

Richard has held a range of roles across the Conservative Party, including Association Chairman, Area Officer, and was Regional Chairman for North-East England from 2021 to 2024. Following the end of his term as Regional Chairman, he served as Deputy Regional Chairman (Political).

He has stood in local elections on numerous occasions, as a parliamentary candidate for City of Durham, and in the last European parliamentary election, giving him wide experience of campaigning and party organisation at every level.

Born in Lincolnshire, Richard has lived in County Durham for over 20 years. He works in NHS education and training, overseeing libraries, knowledge services, and education centres within his Trust. Richard is also active in his local community, serving as a Parish Councillor, and is a Trustee of his local museum. An historian by training, in any free time he has, he enjoys reading and a trip to an historic site.

Link Officer for the following Regions: Yorkshire & The Humber; East Midlands

richard.lawrie@conservatives.com

ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

Schedule 7 of the Constitution sets out the purpose of the Association, which reinforces directly the Party's overall purpose, and is broadly as follows:

To develop and maintain an effective campaigning organisation; nominate and secure the return of Conservative Party candidates at elections at all levels of government, and raise the necessary funds to do so.

A detailed role description for the Association Chairman is available, along with similar for DCPs and DCMFs – links to these documents are given on page 10. The information below is less formal, based directly on feedback from successful Association Chairmen.

KEY POINTS:

- The Chairman of an Association or Federation is also the Registered Treasurer with the Electoral Commission, which makes you legally responsible for ensuring that all financial returns required by the Party's Compliance Department are made, that donations made to the Association are permissible, and that annual accounts are filed.
- In terms of Association activity, ultimately you are the one that makes things happen! The initiative in keeping the Association running properly is with you. Use it wisely.

REMEMBER THE THREE Rs:

RULES

- Read and understand your Association rules (they are derived from Schedule 7 of the Constitution, but you may have your own local version – contact CCHQ's Member Services to obtain a copy (if you don't already have them as part of a handover from your predecessor).
- Send them to your Executive Council colleagues – it helps for them to know the rules (don't keep them in the dark)

ROLES

- Ensure that your officer roles are clear – use the standard ones by default (and make sure you share the role descriptions) but don't be afraid to adjust responsibilities if need be – as long as they are clear
- Find round pegs for round holes – not just for the formal officer roles but also others who can help with ad hoc tasks/projects
- Task management – find a good, shared method for keeping track of who should be doing what (officers and staff), including action lists following meetings. Chase people up firmly and regularly right from the start – after a while people will police themselves and you won't need to chase them

RELATIONSHIPS

- Strong relationships are critical to the success of the Association – politics is a people business

ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

- Your key stakeholders are the officers, Executive Council members, councillors, branches, staff (local and CCHQ), other volunteers, and Area/Region officers.
- Invest time in your relationship with your MP/Parliamentary candidate (and any staff they have) – especially to nip any problems in the bud.
- Attend Council Group meetings, at least occasionally, for any councils covered by the Association (you are entitled to do so).
- Staff:
 - First and foremost you are their line manager, so the relationship is formal – performance management is vital.
 - Create the right atmosphere around them – for example protect them from poor behaviour by volunteers.
- Always give and take – you cannot give orders to volunteers, so you need to be flexible.
- Create and use opportunities to socialise – e.g. before or after Executive meetings, invite people to have dinner or a drink together.
- Associations are fundamentally centripetal – you need to be the "glue" that keeps people together.
- Don't take sides in disputes – you need to be a neutral arbiter to resolve situations.
- If there are hard conversations to be had, it is the officers that have to have them (or at least ensure they are had).
- Succession planning (for your own and other roles) is vital – you don't want all your good work to be wasted.

BEYOND THAT:

- Ensure you have a clear Strategy Plan:
 - The Rules require it, but it really does help you as an officer team to prioritise and cut through the fog of the day to day issues that will otherwise take over.
 - It should also set out where the officers can act under delegated authority.
 - It should underpin the staff's objectives.
 - Use the "Defining an Association" checklist to find out broadly where you stand compared to the "ideal" Association (check the National Convention website or ask one of the National Convention officers).
 - Include a budget, consistent with the strategy.
- Focus on doing well in the Association Health Check – it hits all the key buttons in making the Association successful.
- Communicate and share good practice with neighbouring Associations – e.g. sign up to each others' mailing lists so you can see what's going on, invite each other to Executive Council meetings to observe.
- Use tools to help make life easier – WhatsApp, Campaign Toolkit, Google Forms, online banking, task management tool, etc.

ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

The Executive Council

The Executive Council has responsibility for the Association, whereas the Management Team only has the day to day running of it. It is essential that it is properly constituted with its members prepared to challenge at frequent meetings, be fully involved in the direction of travel and scrutinise the use of the Association's funds. The Executive Council represents the members.

Tips for creating a successful Executive Council team:

- Use a round table - involve people - don't treat them like an audience and address them from a top table
- Maintain a clear and up to date Executive membership list, which you also use for signing in to meetings – it saves a lot of potential problems. Also clarify who are voting and non-voting members
- Invite professional staff where possible/necessary, also remember standing invites to your Area Chairman
- Ensure officer reports are short and circulated in advance. Take them as read at the meetings and just take questions (always have a few key ones yourself to keep people on their toes and to get the questions flowing)
- Update on Strategy Plan, financial and performance reporting - all are vital
- Keep good minutes - decisions and actions clear. Appoint a good Secretary
- Socialise before/after the meeting
- Invite outside guests occasionally - guest speakers, neighbouring Association Chairmen, CCHQ staff, to share ideas and show members the bigger picture – it reduces the risk of silo'd thinking
- Update Executive Council members on key points by email between meetings (or nowadays by interspersing formal in-person meetings with short Zoom updates)

Tips for an effective Management Team (which consists of the Chairman and elected Officers):

- Meet regularly - put dates in the diary straight after the AGM (monthly is good, even fortnightly during busy periods) and stick to them
- Many of the same points above for the Executive Council also apply to the Management Team - keep notes of action points, hold people to account for them, socialise after meetings, etc.

ASSOCIATION DEPUTY CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

THE ROLE OF THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN POLITICAL

- Co-ordinate all the campaigning activities of the Association.
- Instigate a programme of surveying and canvassing throughout the constituency and **throughout the year**.
- Work with the Conservative Council Group to implement a campaigning strategy for local elections and by-elections.
- Brief and train members and volunteers in preparation for local and national elections.
- Target the Association's resources to make the maximum political impact.
- Encourage the regular production and distribution of Conservative newsletters.
- Put in place campaigns on local issues throughout the constituency.
- Support the selection of Local Government Candidates using the latest rules.
- Always be scouting for potential candidates at all levels of representation.

THE ROLE OF THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN MEMBERSHIP & FINANCE

- * Prepare a balanced annual Association budget.
- * Provide regularly updated accounts, control of expenditure and payment of invoices on time.
- * Present annual verified and certified accounts at the Association AGM.
- Be aware of and comply with PPERA (Compliance) Regulations.
- Set an annual programme of central Association Fundraising, finding speakers and venues, varying price of events.
- Organise fighting fund appeals for every Election.
- Use VoteSource to ensure member records are up to date, accept/reject new members, membership recruitment, chase lapsed members, look on Toolkit for updated guidelines.
- Talent spot future officers and have awareness of the skills on offer from the members and how the Association can deploy them.
- Continuously look for new membership applications and check the social media activities of the prospective new members before approving them.

Those items above marked '*' are potentially Treasurer roles, but if there is no Treasurer then it falls to the DCM&F to undertake them.

IMPORTANT READING FOR ALL OFFICERS

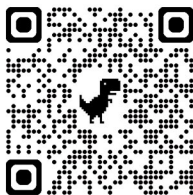
The QR codes on this and the next page point to a number of important documents and other tools, which are essential in many cases.

Do remember that you are not alone: your Area officers are always available to provide guidance and a helping hand as you get to grips with your new role.

Further documents and templates (as well as a multitude of campaign literature templates and campaigning items for purchase) can be found on the **Campaign Toolkit** website, which you can log into using the QR code here. Non-campaign related documents will also be available on MyConservatives, once it has been fully launched - see page 16.



From the very start, it is important to bear in mind the purpose of the Association and what defines its success. The “**Association Healthcheck**” document provides benchmarks for what an Association should be doing, and the Officers of an Association should always see their own role in the context of delivering the aims of the Association.



**The First 100 Days
of being a new
Chairman**

**The Successful
Association
Chairman**



**Strategy Plan
Template**

**How to be a
Deputy Chairman
Political**



**Guide to your
Executive
Council**

**How to be a Deputy
Chairman Membership
& Finance/Fundraising**



IMPORTANT READING FOR ALL OFFICERS



VoteSource
account
setup



Parliamentary
Candidate
Selection
Rules



Safeguarding



Local Government
Application Form



WhatsApp
Group
Guidelines

The Constitution



Parliamentary
Candidate
Selection -
Association
Checklist



Local Councillor
Selection Rules



Parliamentary
or Mayoral
Candidate
Application Form



Data
Protection
Guidelines



The Code of Conduct

The Party expects basic standards of behaviour from its members, regardless of the positions they hold, and the Code of Conduct is the document that sets out these standards and the process for making and dealing with complaints.

Report It

Our MPs, Councillors and volunteers should expect to go about their campaigning activities without fear of abuse, harassment, threat or physical harm. Should any occur, it should be reported to the police at www.police.uk and to the Party via report.it@conservatives.com



ASSOCIATION

AREA

REGION

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ASSOCIATION OFFICERS' YEAR

Many of the responsibilities of Associations, Areas and Regions fall into a routine cycle through the year – which this table is intended to capture. Note that this is not intended to be an exhaustive list and that this is only a guide – many items can happen a month or two either side of that shown here!

THE ASSOCIATION OFFICERS' YEAR	
JAN	Hold an early Management Team (MT) meeting to get the year moving: a) Ensure the Treasurer is going to have the Annual accounts prepared by the end of the month. b) Ensure any branches have paid across any surplus funds, and also that they have scheduled their AGMs (to happen before the Association AGM). c) Call an Executive Council in February to approve the accounts. Invite the Area Chairman. d) Ensure all candidates are selected for any elections in May. e) Review events calendar for the whole year, ensuring several events are planned, interweaving Branch & Association events of varying expense, and one big formal dinner. Agree the AGM date (if not already agreed). Put together a 'handover list' for your successor if you are retiring from office.
FEB	Hold MT meeting to discuss the next AGM. Hold Executive Council meeting to: a) Approve the accounts and send them to financialcompliance@conservatives.com ASAP. b) Finalise campaign plans, any late selections and budgets for any elections in May.
MAR	Intensive election campaigning.
APR	Intensive election campaigning.
MAY	Booking for Party Conference should be open, so publicise to your local members and encourage them to attend. Local elections (usually). Post-election debrief for candidates and key activists – document lessons learned.
JUNE	AGMs can be held any time from the start of January until the end of June. Immediately after that takes place: a) Ensure that an Area Officer notifies Bluebook of any officer changes at the AGM.

THE ASSOCIATION OFFICERS' YEAR	
JUN cont.	b) MT to work on the Strategy Plan, get it approved by the Executive Council within 28 days of the AGM, and send to the Area Chairman. c) Ensure your Executive is properly constituted and those who failed to turn up to meetings previously are replaced. d) Schedule MT and Executive Council meetings for the year ahead, up to (and even including) the next AGM. e) Consider co-opting a Volunteer Engagement Officer to work with your members, look for deliverers and scout for candidates. f) Engage with your YCs (those under 30) to appoint an Association YC Chairman.
JULY	Engage with your CWO Area Team to look for CWO members to start a branch (if you don't already have one). Engage with your local CPF to arrange regular meetings over the coming year (or if you don't have a local CPF, contact the national CPF team to help you set one up). Ideal time to approve/select candidates for the following May's elections (if not already completed).
AUG	
SEP	Organise a meet up at Party Conference for those attending from the Association.
OCT	Start the run-in to the May elections – ensure all candidates are selected and start regular candidate meetings/training sessions, involving CCHQ Field staff. Hold an Executive Council.
NOV	
DEC	Christmas event(s) – good opportunity to raise funds and thank volunteers.
	Routine Activities: Hold Monthly Management Team Meeting. Hold Executive Meetings at least quarterly.

AREAS AND THE AREA CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

REGIONS AND THEIR AREAS

SCOTLAND (Regional Councils being the closest equivalent to Areas)

- East Regional Council Area
- North Regional Council Area
- West Regional Council Area

NORTHERN IRELAND

NORTH EAST

- Cleveland & Durham
- Northumberland, Tyne & Wear

NORTH WEST

- Greater Manchester
- Merseyside
- Lancashire
- Cumbria
- Cheshire & The Wirral

YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

- North & East Yorkshire
- West Yorkshire
- South Yorkshire

EAST MIDLANDS

- Nottinghamshire
- Derbyshire
- Lincolnshire & Rutland
- Leicestershire & Leicester
- Northamptonshire

WEST MIDLANDS

- Shropshire & Herefordshire
- Staffordshire
- Warwickshire & Worcestershire
- Heartlands
- Black Country

WALES

- Mid & West Wales
- North Wales
- South East Wales
- South West Wales

EASTERN

- Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire
- Hertfordshire
- Essex
- Norfolk & Suffolk

LONDON

- South East
- South West
- South
- North
- North West
- East
- Lea Valley

SOUTH EAST

- Hampshire & The Isle of Wight
- Berkshire
- Oxfordshire
- Buckinghamshire
- Surrey
- Sussex
- Kent

SOUTH WEST

- Bristol & Gloucestershire
- Wiltshire & Swindon
- Dorset
- Somerset
- Devon
- Cornwall

AREAS AND THE AREA CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

What are Areas?

In rural parts of the country, Areas tend to correspond to counties, or in some cases they take in two counties. Cities may be covered by one Area, or a number of Areas, depending on size. See previous page for a list of all the current Areas.

The Area Management Executive ("AME") comprises the elected Area Officers, and is responsible for fulfilling the responsibilities of the Area.

The Area Council comprises the AME members plus the Chairman and two other representatives from each Association (with additional representatives for Federations).

What are the functions of Areas?

Part VI of the Party Constitution sets out the roles and responsibilities of Areas and sets out how the respective officers at this levels are elected.

The roles of the Area Officers

- The Area Chairman's primary role is to co-ordinate, motivate and support the Association Chairmen in their Area, and to lead the other Area Officers.
- To support Association Deputies in their roles, in their speciality – DCM&F to DCM&F and DCP to DCP.
- To be aware that an Area Role means travelling across the Area to meet Association Officers face-to-face, attend their meetings and to support Association events.
- To understand it is supporting the entirety of the Area with your experience and not just to replicate at Area what is done at Association level.
- To establish Local Government Approvals Committee/s and to maintain a list of approved applicants.
- To be aware of Data Protection Guidelines compliance.

DCP to support selection of candidates by Associations in the proper manner and ensure selections start well into the year before they are held. To encourage and support year round campaigning across the Area, and mutual aid, to ensure Voting Intentions are always being collected.

DCM&F to support Associations with fundraising, by helping to find speakers and giving 'how to' advice. To ensure that all Associations are aware that their accounts are to be in by the deadline and not after. To know about guidance in relation to Financial Compliance. To encourage Associations with chasing lapsed members and growing membership.

AREAS AND THE AREA CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

The best Area teams do the following:

- Set an annual Strategy Plan (just like Associations are required to do).
- Hold regular Area Management Executive meetings (typically monthly).
- **Hold regular Area Council meetings in addition to the Annual Area Council meeting, including the Area CWO Chairman, Area YC Chairman, local CPF Chairman and relevant CCHQ staff (for at least some of the meetings).**
- Allocate each Association to one of the Area officers, so they can build a close relationship (but not their home Association, to avoid conflicts).
- Attend (between them) all Executive Council meetings of Associations in their Area.
- Regularly (at least once per month) contact their counterparts in their Associations, one on one or as a group (i.e. Area Chairman with Association Chairmen, Area DCP with Association DCPs, Area DCM&F with Association DCM&Fs) – to foster good relations, share good ideas and pick up on emerging problems early.
- Arrange annual Area dinners and/or Area Conferences.
- Attend (between them) a good number of Association events across the Area, demonstrating visibility and support.
- Proactively monitor and chase up selection of local government candidates.
- Monitor key statistics on their Associations – e.g. membership numbers, VI collection.

MyConservatives.com

Your gateway to development courses,
information about your own membership,
for officers to manage their Association's
membership, local campaigning
& social events and much more.

***This will be rolled out from
October 2026.***



AREA CHAIRMAN'S YEAR

THE AREA CHAIRMAN'S YEAR				
JAN	Hold an early AME meeting (and/or meetings of Association DCPs and Association DCMFs). Start completing Area accounts (if the Area has its own funds). Plan for and co-ordinate any potential campaign support for the May elections – those Associations without their own elections supporting those with elections. Ensure an Area Officer attends each Association AGM within the Area. Press Associations to set dates for their AGM. Plan an Area Council Meeting for election/year planning. Prepare a 'handover pack' for your successor if you are retiring from office.			Handbook. Ensure the new teams are aware of Toolkit to find supporting documents.
		APR		
		MAY		Hold Area Council Meeting for post-election debrief. After local elections, start pressing those Associations with elections the following year to start approving and selecting candidates.
		JUN		Hold an Area Council Meeting.
		JLY		
FEB		AUG		Schedule the Annual Meeting of the Area Council.
		SEP		Hold the Annual Meeting of the Area Council: • Ensure that a Regional Officer notifies Bluebook of any officer changes. • AME to work on the Strategy Plan within 28 days and send to the Regional Chairman. • Open nominations for and appoint an Area YC Chairman.
MAR		OCT		Ensure an Area Officer attends each Association Executive Council within the Area.
		NOV-DEC		
				Routine Activities: Monthly AME Meeting.

ASSOCIATION

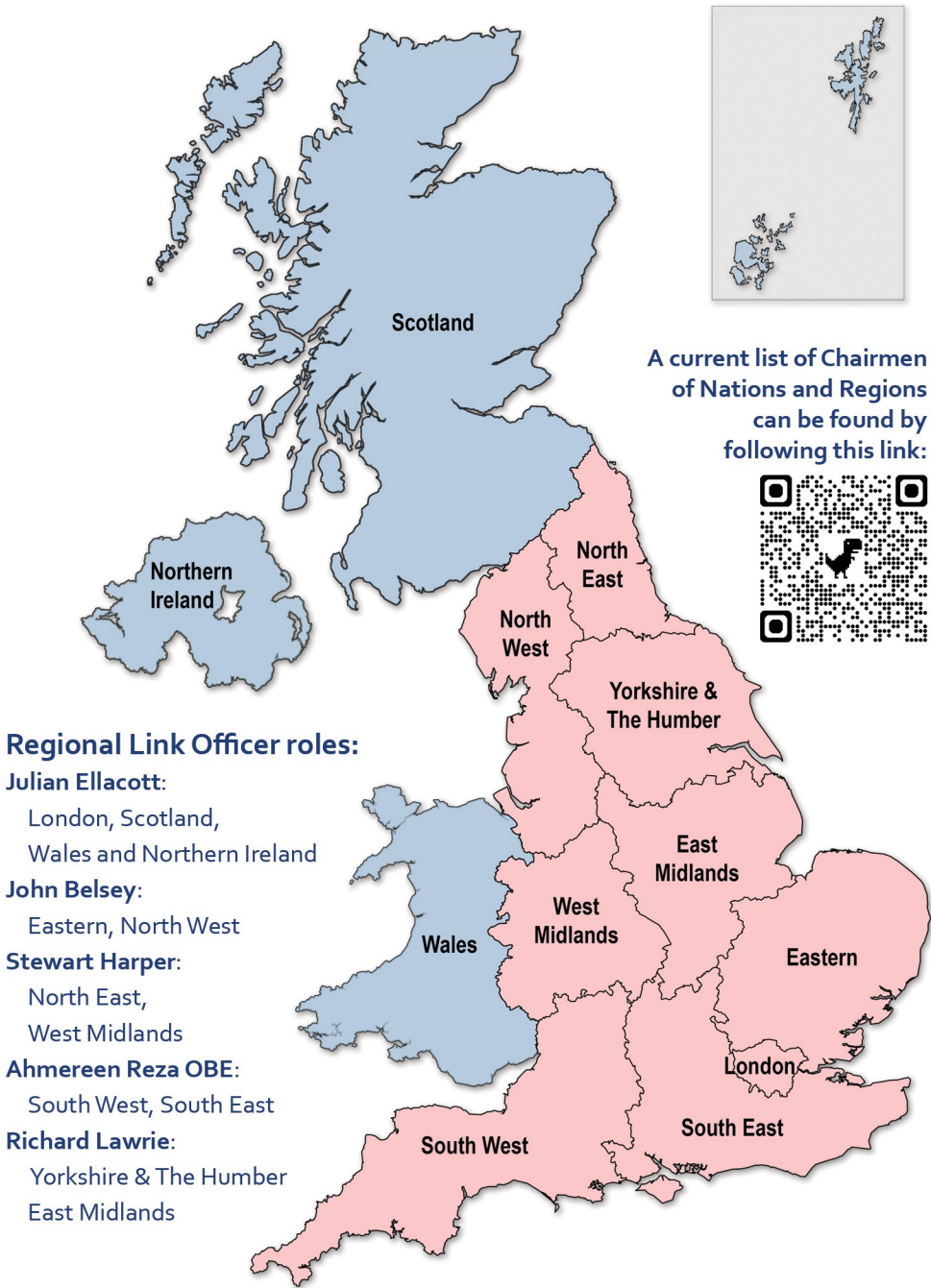
AREA

REGION

NAT.CONVENTION
& BOARD

CCHQ

REGIONS AND THE REGIONAL CHAIRMAN'S ROLE



Regional Link Officer roles:

Julian Ellacott:
London, Scotland,
Wales and Northern Ireland

John Belsey:
Eastern, North West

Stewart Harper:
North East,
West Midlands

Ahmereen Reza OBE:
South West, South East

Richard Lawrie:
Yorkshire & The Humber
East Midlands

REGIONS AND THE REGIONAL CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

What are Regions?

In England the Regions are the same as UK government regions and they vary in terms of the numbers of Areas and Associations they each cover. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are not formally part of the Regional structure, having their own arrangements instead, but in many respects the same principles/functions apply.

What are the functions of Regions?

Part VI of the Party Constitution sets out the roles and responsibilities of Regions and sets out how the respective officers at this levels are elected.

The Regional Officers are responsible for:

- Coordinating candidate selections and campaigns for elected roles and other functions covering more than one Area within the Region, including local government and Mayoral roles, in accordance with rules set by the Board.
- Ensuring the strategy of the Board in relation to Parliamentary boundary changes is implemented.
- Organising Region-wide fundraising events and conferences.
- Monitoring the performance of Area Executives and promoting liaison between them.
- Undertaking activities to recruit applicants to become candidates, for election at all levels.
- Providing a means of resolution of disputes or grievances within or between Associations, including the investigation of breaches of Association Rules, and considering appeals from local government candidate selections, in accordance with rules set by the Board.
- When so requested by the Board, providing assistance in the event of performance failings by Area Management Executives.
- Promoting liaison between the Area Officers within the Region.
- Introducing and promoting initiatives across the Region in any matters as requested by the Board from time to time.
- Instigate Region-wide training.

REGIONS AND THE REGIONAL CHAIRMAN'S ROLE

Regional Boards

These have been established for all English Regions (other nations already have the equivalent) as the primary forum within which all parts of the voluntary party within the Region, along with senior CCHQ staff, coordinate with each other.

Membership consists of the Regional Officers, the Area Chairmen, the CWO Regional Chairman, the YC Regional Chairman, and the CPF Regional Ambassador. Other attendees comprise the CCHQ Head of Field for the Region, the National Convention Link Officer, and others co-opted for their specific skills.

The Regional Boards meet at least quarterly, reviewing KPIs for the Region and receiving reports from the Areas. Notes/actions/updates from the Regional Board should be sent to all Area and Association Officers on a regular basis (at least quarterly), and potentially also to all members in the Region.

The best Regional teams do the following:

- Set an annual Strategy Plan (just like Associations are required to do).
- Hold regular Regional Management Team (MT) meetings (typically monthly).
- Hold regular Regional Board meetings
- Allocate each Area to one of the Regional officers, so they can build a close relationship (but not their home Area, to avoid conflicts).
- Attend (between them) all monthly Area Management Executive meetings in the region.
- (At least once per month) contact their counterparts in their Areas, one on one or as a group (i.e. Regional Chairman with Area Chairmen, Regional DCP with Area DCPs, Regional DCMF with Area DCMFs) – to foster good relations, share good ideas and pick up on emerging problems early.
- Arrange annual Regional dinners and/or Regional Conferences.
- Hold occasional meetings of all Convention members in the Region (usually online), with key speakers/updates and an open forum for Convention members to air issues.
- Attend (between them) a good spread of Association and Area events across the Region, demonstrating visibility and support.
- Monitor key statistics on their Areas – e.g. membership numbers, VI collection.
- Ensure co-ordination in advance of cross border elections, e.g. PCCs and Mayoral elections.

REGIONAL CHAIRMAN'S YEAR

THE REGIONAL CHAIRMAN'S YEAR				
JAN	Hold an early Regional Management Team meeting. Plan to hold Regional Board meetings and Convention meetings throughout the year Start completing Regional accounts (if the Region has its own funds). Plan for and co-ordinate any potential campaign support for the May elections – those Associations/Areas without their own elections supporting those with elections. Remind Area Teams to press for Association AGM dates to be held before 30th June. Press for dates for the Area Conference. Prepare a 'handover pack' for your successor if you are retiring from office.		End June - remind Area Teams for dates of their Annual Meeting of the Area Council in September.	
		JLY		
		AUG		Liaise with Link Officer to discuss Regional AGM date for October/November.
		SEP		Ensure a Regional Officer attends and oversees each Annual Meeting of the Area Council.
		OCT		
	Hold Regional elections. Immediately after they take place: • Ensure that a National Convention Officer notifies Bluebook of any officer changes at the AGM. • Regional Team to work on the Strategy Plan within 28 days of the AGM, and send to the National Convention Officers. • Open nominations for and appoint a Regional YC Chairman.	NOV		
FEB				
MAR				
APR		DEC		Routine Activities: • Monthly Regional Team meeting • Hold at least quarterly Regional Board meetings (including Area Deps, CWO Area Chairmen, CPF Reps and Area YC Chairmen) plus staff. Have more regular meets with the Area Chairmen and Regional Team.
MAY	Region-wide post-election debrief.			
JUN	Regional DCP to remind Areas to press ahead with selection of candidates for next round of local elections in the following year.			

ASSOCIATION

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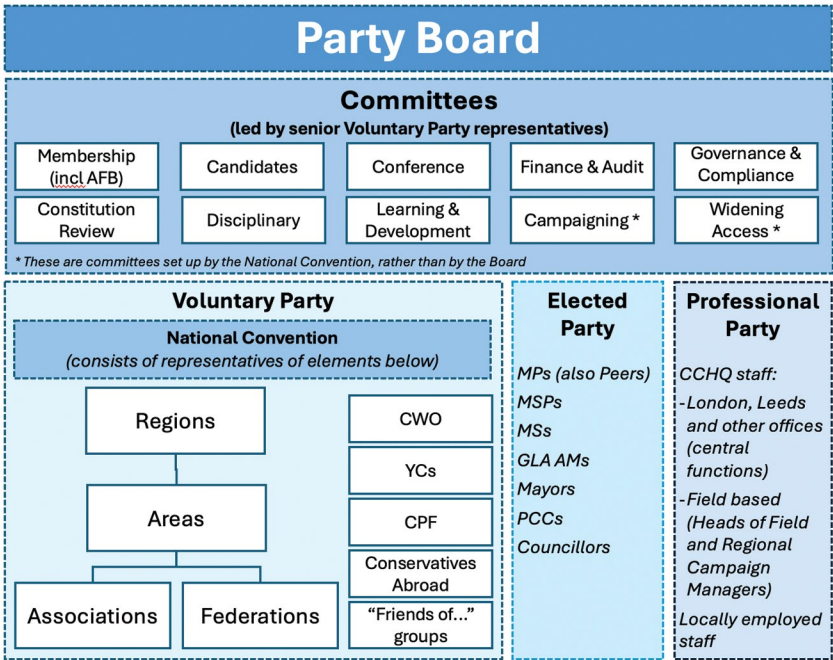
REGION

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PARTY STRUCTURE

In simple terms, the Party has three main components - the Voluntary Party, the Elected Party and the Professional Party, all overseen by the Board (on which all components are represented). This is illustrated in the diagram below, and expanded on in the subsequent sections:



The following are some of the more important groups which make up the Voluntary Party, beyond the main party structures:

Conservative Women's Organisation (CWO)

The CWO's aims are to encourage women to join and progress within the Conservative Party, and to stand for elected roles both within the Party and outside.

Young Conservatives (YCs)

The Young Conservatives is the official youth section of the Conservative Party for members under 30, and has been representing the interests of young people for over 100 years.

Conservative Policy Forum (CPF)

The Conservative Policy Forum aims to find the world-changing, era-defining ideas and shape the policies of tomorrow.

For further information about these and the other groups which make up the Conservative family, such as the "Friends of" groups, visit: www.conservatives.com/organisation



What are the responsibilities and composition of the Party Board?

Part IV of the Constitution sets out the powers and composition of the Board – “There shall be established and maintained a Board of the Conservative Party which shall be the supreme decision-making body in matters of Party organisation and management.”

Part IV sets out the (extensive) responsibilities of the Board, and includes the generic power “to do anything which in its opinion relates to the administration and management of the Party.”

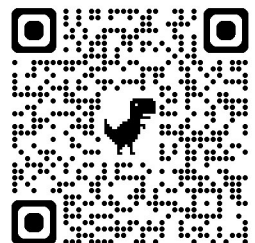
The **Composition of the Board**, as set out in clause 12, is as follows:

- Party Chairman
- Deputy Chairman (National Conservative Convention Chairman)
- Deputy Chairman
- Four other Officers of the National Convention
- Chairman of the 1922 Committee
- Chairman of the Association of Conservative Peers
- Chairman of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party
- Chairman of the Welsh Conservatives
- Chairman of the Conservative Councillors’ Association
- Treasurer of the Party
- Senior member of professional staff
- Three further MPs
- Two further members

The Secretary to the Board, who is also Secretary to the National Convention, is Roger Pratt CBE, who can be contacted via **national.convention@conservatives.com**

The current list of Board members can be found here:

www.conservatives.com/organisation/party-structure-and-organisation



PARTY COMMITTEES

These Committees undertake detailed work and make proposals to the Board. Given the limited space available this is a high level overview; for more information contact the relevant National Convention Officer(s):

- **Membership (incorporating Association Board of Finance)** – this recommends the annual subscription level and makes other recommendations relating to membership matters.

Co-Chairmen: John Belsey, Michael Winstanley OBE

- **Candidates** – this recommends selection rules, for all levels of elected role, to the Board, and oversees the resulting process.

Chairman: Clare Hambro

NC Officer member: Julian Ellacott

- **Conference** – this oversees the organisation of Party Conference.

Chairman: John Belsey

Other NC Officer members: Julian Ellacott, Stewart Harper

- **Constitution Review** – this oversees the review of the Party's Constitution.

Chairman: Julian Ellacott

Other NC Officer member: Stewart Harper

- **Finance & Audit** – this oversees the Party's financial performance and the annual audit, Electoral Commission reporting, as well as property and legal matters.

Chairman: Julian Ellacott

Other NC Officer members: Stewart Harper, John Belsey

- **Governance & Compliance** – this oversees the Party's compliance with obligations such as safeguarding, data protection and protection from threats such as cyber crime.

Chairman: Ahmereen Reza OBE

Other NC Officer member: Richard Lawrie

- **Learning & Development** – this oversees the Party's learning, development and training strategy and the tools to deliver them, across voluntary, professional and elected wings of the Party.

Chairman: Stewart Harper

Other NC Officer members: Julian Ellacott, Richard Lawrie

- **Disciplinary** – this comprises a range of experienced, trusted volunteers who form panels to hear individual disciplinary cases, independent of the other Party structures.

Chairman: Dr Richard Williams

- **Widening Access** – this is a new Committee, which monitors data on the characteristics of members in leadership roles across the Party, and works with the voluntary party to encourage wider participation.

Chairman: Fleur Butler OBE

NC Officer member: Julian Ellacott

What is the National Convention and what does it do?

The Convention is the body which represents Associations, and therefore in turn, all members and volunteers. Its roots go back to 1867 (see page 28 for more about its history).

Details of the Convention's formal responsibilities are set out in Part V of the Party Constitution, which you can access directly via this QR code:



In summary, the following comprise the membership of the National Convention, giving a total size of around 850 members:

- Chairmen of Associations
- Chairmen of Federations and their Constituency Officers
- Elected Area Officers (ie not co-opted)
- Regional Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen
- Elected members of the Party Board, Scottish Management Board and Welsh Board
- The three immediate past Presidents of the Convention and two past Chairmen of the Convention
- Representatives of the Recognised Organisations e.g. the Conservative Women's Organisation
- Immediate past Regional Chairmen

The members of the Convention elect the five Convention Officers to the Board each year. The members of the Convention also elect the Voluntary Political Director of the CPF every 3 years (currently Frances Lasok, elected in March 2025).

The Convention meets each year at the start of Conference, and typically also in person on one other occasion during the year in person, with a number of online meetings throughout the year. This provides members of the Convention the opportunity to raise issues, and hear from and ask questions of the Convention Officers, Leader and Party Chairman directly.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

National Convention Officer Roles

The National Convention Officers each look after the following areas of responsibility, and should be used by Convention members as points of contact on these topics:

Leads for specific Committees/Boards:

Campaigning	John Belsey
Candidates	Julian Ellacott
Conferences	John Belsey
Constitution Review	Julian Ellacott
Finance & Audit	Julian Ellacott
Governance & Compliance	Ahmereen Reza OBE
Learning & Development	Stewart Harper
Membership (& Association Board of Finance)	John Belsey

Leads for other topics:

Affiliates/"Friends of" groups	Ahmereen Reza OBE
Association performance/healthchecks	Julian Ellacott
Compliance Officer	Stewart Harper
CPF	Ahmereen Reza OBE
CWO	Julian Ellacott
"Inside CCHQ" (senior volunteer visits to CCHQ)	Stewart Harper
Promoting Shadow Minister visits and Speakers' Bureau	Richard Lawrie
Properties/trusts	John Belsey
Safeguarding	Stewart Harper
Social media/digital	Stewart Harper
Technology & Software (incl Project Symphony and Bluebook data)	Stewart Harper
Volunteer Recognition	Richard Lawrie
YCs	Ahmereen Reza OBE

National Convention Link Officers

Each Region has a **National Convention Link Officer** whose purpose is:

- To attend Regional Board meetings, and other meetings at appropriate intervals (eg Area meetings)
- To be an escalation point for issues from Regional Chairmen (or from Area Chairmen or even Association Chairmen, if they feel they are unable to raise such issues with their own Regional Chairman).
- To scrutinise and sponsor supported status proposals to the Board, and liaise with Board Representatives once Supported Status is in place to ensure progress.
- To support campaigning and fundraising in the Region, as far as practicable.

Link Officers for Nations/Regions:

Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, London	Julian Ellacott
North West, Eastern	John Belsey
North East, West Midlands	Stewart Harper
South West, South East	Ahmereen Reza OBE
Yorkshire & The Humber, East Midlands	Richard Lawrie

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A HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION



A brief history of the NCC by Lord Sharpe of Epsom OBE, Chairman, National Conservative Convention 2018-2021

Since 1867 the Conservative Party has been built on solid national foundations. The National Union of Conservative & Constitutionalist Associations held its first meeting on the 12th November of that year. Its foundation pre-dated that of Central Office by three years.

The name 'Conservative Party' was commonly used by a variety of local associations and registration societies from the time of Sir Robert Peel's 'Tamworth Manifesto' of 1834, but the party had no national organisation. That changed in the space of three years under reforms approved by Disraeli. The passing of the Second Reform Act of 1867 increased the size of the electorate by almost 90% as large numbers of working-class men were given the vote for the first time. The purpose of the National Union was to persuade the newly enfranchised to vote Conservative and its foundation marked the first time that the party had a coherent national structure. It was remarkably successful and by 1874 over 400 local associations had affiliated. Conservative Central Office was established in 1870 and this basic model of the Conservative Party has endured, more or less intact, to the present day.

In keeping with Peel's original manifesto the party has, of course, had to reform to survive over the years but the present National Conservative Convention, established under William Hague's leadership in 1998, does not differ very much in spirit or intent from the 1867 original. The Associations group within Areas, the Areas within Regions and the officers of all those structures, plus the 100+ year-old Conservative Women's Organisation, elect the National Officers – three Vice-Presidents, a President and a Chairman – all of whom sit on the governing board of the party and populate the various sub-committees. The Chairman of the NCC chairs the board in the party Chairman's absence.

The party's constituent parts were designed with one aim, to convince people across our United Kingdom to vote Conservative. The Convention still exists to ensure that the members, grassroots, volunteers, activists – whatever we are called given the fashion of the day – retain a significant voice in how our country is run, how we are represented in parliament and how our national narrative develops.

The principles behind the National Convention remain much the same as when the National Union was founded back in 1867 – Conservative Associations across the country have their autonomy recognised and preserved and all have an

A HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

equal voice at the Convention and therefore the top of the party. That is entirely consistent with Peel's manifesto – he opposed unnecessary change, fearing a "vortex of perpetual agitation." I am confident that the National Convention will survive current and future vortices and thrive for many more years to come.

However as vortices go there is no doubt that 2024's was severe. Whilst the leadership election which followed our defeat enabled a degree of debate over the future direction of the party, including measures to reform various structures, I would caution about blaming process too much for our travails. The more important debate, which is now happening under Kemi as part of our Policy Renewal, is the conversation about Conservative principles and policies. Get that right and I am confident that we will win again.

Presidents and Chairmen of the National Convention

Presidents

1998-1999: Graham Park CBE	2013-2014: Charles Heslop OBE
1999-2000: Brian Hanson CBE	2014-2015: Robert Semple CBE
2000-2001: Raymond Monbiot CBE	2015-2016: Steve Bell CBE
2001-2002: Jean Searle OBE	2016-2017: Gerry Yates OBE
2002-2003: Caroline Abel-Smith OBE	2017-2018: Lord Sharpe of Epsom OBE (Andrew Sharpe)
2003-2004: Don Porter CBE	2018-2019: Thomas Spiller OBE
2004-2005: Richard Stephenson OBE	2019-2020: Pamela Hall OBE
2005-2006: Paul Marland	2020-2021: Andrew Colborne-Baber OBE
2006-2007: Stephen Castle	2021-2022: Debbie Toon MBE
2007-2008: Simon Mort OBE	2022-2023: Fleur Butler OBE
2008-2009: Jeremy Middleton CBE	2023-2024: Peter Smallwood OBE
2009-2010: Baroness Pidding CBE (Emma Pidding)	2024-2025: Michael Winstanley OBE
2010-2011: Charles Barwell OBE	2025-2026: Stewart Harper
2011-2012: Fiona, Lady Hodgson CBE	2026-2027: John Belsey
2012-2013: Paul Swaddle OBE	

Chairmen

1998-2000: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts CBE (Robin Hodgson)	2012-2015: Baroness Pidding CBE (Emma Pidding)
2000-2003: Lord Taylor of Holbeach (John Taylor)	2015-2018: Robert Semple CBE
2003-2006: Raymond Monbiot CBE	2018-2021: Lord Sharpe of Epsom OBE (Andrew Sharpe)
2006-2009: Don Porter CBE	2021-2024: Lord Booth (Peter Booth)
2009-2012: Jeremy Middleton CBE	2024-2027: Julian Ellacott

CONSERVATIVE CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS (CCHQ)

CCHQ (formerly Conservative Central Office) is the central, professional body within the Party. As shown in the structure diagram earlier, it is distinct from the Board (which appoints CCHQ’s senior staff), and from the Convention. Its main functions and internal structure are, broadly speaking:

Lord (Mark) McInnes CBE CEO and National Campaign Director (and link to Leader’s Office)				
Executive	Political	Campaigning	Operations	Finance
Chairman’s Office International Conference Events Senior Advisers Treasurers team Candidates team	<u>Josh Grimstone</u> (Director) Media Conservative Research Department Policy Renewal Programme	<u>Brian Jarvis</u> (Director) Field Team (see next page) Insights & data Digital, social media & advertising	<u>Amy Bastow</u> (Deputy CEO) Member Services Project Symphony Compliance	<u>Tom de Clerck</u> (CFO) Finance Training/HR IT Property
Party Imprint: <u>Sheridan Westlake OBE</u> Registered Treasurer: <u>Sheridan Westlake OBE</u> Data Protection Officer: <u>Megan Tucker</u> Nominating Officer: <u>Megan Tucker</u>				

CCHQ and Field staff can be contacted via: *firstname.lastname@conservatives.com*

The primary contact email addresses for the main CCHQ teams are:

- Party Chairman: **chairman@conservatives.com**
- Campaign activity: **opposition.watch@conservatives.com**
(for sending opposition literature to)
- Campaign Toolkit: **toolkit@conservatives.com**
- Bluetree (relating to Conservative Party websites): **support@conservativewebsites.org.uk**
- Member Services (Membership and Votesource support): **memberservices@conservatives.com**
- Signing up for Conservative Research Department briefings: **briefing@conservatives.com**
- Media enquiries: **press@conservatives.com**
- Candidates’ Team: **candidates@conservatives.com**
- Finance: **finance@conservatives.com**

CONSERVATIVE CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS (CCHQ)

Campaign Academy (Queries relating to training):

campaignacademy@conservatives.com

Organisation of Conferences: conference@conservatives.com

Election Law and Compliance: election.law@conservatives.com

dataprotection@conservatives.com

financialcompliance@conservatives.com

Conservative Councillor's Association (CCA):

cca@conservatives.com

Speaker's Bureau:

lesley.taylor@conservatives.com

Field Team Zones

CCHQ campaign staff in England are allocated to zones, as set out in the map below. Scotland and Wales have their own teams under respective Directors - for Scotland this is James Tweedie; for Wales the position is currently vacant (Brian Jarvis can be contacted until an appointment is made). The Head of Field is the lead member of CCHQ staff in their zone, and they are supported by a number of Regional Campaign Managers (RCMs) who each look after one or more Areas, liaising with local staff and volunteers.

ZONE NORTH

North West, North East and
Yorkshire & Humber

Head of Field

[Mike Nicholls](mailto:Mike.Nicholls@Conservatives.com)

[Michael.Nicholls@](mailto:Michael.Nicholls@Conservatives.com)

Conservatives.com

ZONE MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA

East Midlands, West
Midlands, and East Anglia
(Cambridgeshire and
Peterborough, Norfolk and
Suffolk)

Head of Field

[Simon Jevon](mailto:Simon.Jevon@Conservatives.com)

Simon.Jevon@Conservatives.com

ZONE SOUTH

South West, Hampshire,
Sussex, Oxfordshire,
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire

Head of Field

[Hayward Burt](mailto:Hayward.Burt@Conservatives.com)

[Hayward.Burt@](mailto:Hayward.Burt@Conservatives.com)

Conservatives.com

ZONE LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES

London, Essex,
Hertfordshire,
Bedfordshire,
Surrey and Kent

Head of Field

[Max Hopfl](mailto:Max.Hopfl@Conservatives.com)

Max.Hopfl@Conservatives.com

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