

Vote Sharan Virk for Racial Equity, Diversity and Liberation Officer.

Since Brexit we have seen the sharp rise in attacks and discrimination against people of colour and minorities across the UK. The last few years have only seen this violence grow with no tangible efforts from the government to address the issue. The Alderdice Review demonstrates the party wide failings when it comes to representation for ethnic minority communities within the Liberal Democrats and this is echoed in Young Liberals.

To create real change when it comes to the involvement of ethnic minorities, YL must prioritise education and learning at all levels from specialists and scholars. For us to tackle this issue, we must first prioritise it! Sadly, this has not been the case.

I want to change that.

Safety

A safe space needs to exist in YL for people of colour and minorities to allow for solidarity and community not burdened by the need to constantly advocate for themselves. Resources need to be made available for the Executive to ensure fairness and inclusion so that members are treated appropriately and with intentional integrity.

Educate and Empower

None of this is possible without education and learning made available for all those involved in YL. Education and resources for the Executive as well as the members to facilitate better knowledge when it comes to the barriers and realities that minorities and POC face. This means discourse around intersectionality, colonialism, microaggressions, bias and privilege. I want to ensure these are prioritised and not shied away from.

Accountability over Punishment

People say these topics are “delicate” but that is not the case. We need to foster an environment of self-reflection and learning. Acknowledging your privilege or lack of awareness, and accepting the harm this has caused, is the first step in working to make sure it does not happen in the future. These conversations require nuance, emotional intelligence and listening, not to reply, but to learn.

Why me?

I have firsthand experienced the discrimination and microaggressions that POC, in particular, women of colour, face. I have always seen the Liberal Democrats and YL as the party to represent minorities and though at times, our policies reflect that, our membership and elected officials do not. We need to challenge and break that disconnect. As a member for nearly a decade, I have the experience and voice to do that.

Vote Virk for REDL.