

Insert here a biography to be circulated by the Selection Committee to the relevant affiliated organisations and CLP branches. Please note this biography must fit one side of A4.

Dear Friends

I write this to be considered for selection to stand as the Labour Party Candidate for Rochford and Southend . I have years of experience on the receiving end of Government policy as a Carer, as well as giving back to society both as an employee and as a Volunteer setting up projects, groups and organisations. As a young carer I experienced the reality of the Tory Government's harsh policies on the vulnerable. As a giver I have experienced the struggles that voluntary groups go through to provide help as demand outstrips supply. I have seen the anguish caused here in Cambridge where Food Banks are unable to help all those in need. Due to the further Welfare cutbacks last year to single parent families and the disabled, I am in the process of setting up a Clothes Bank to help struggling families through the winter.

My experiences in politics began as a teenager in Bradford, campaigning in the male dominated constituency of Bradford West to get women's voices heard. I was elected as the Women's Officer and received much encouragement from the then Welsh MP Max Madden, with whom I worked with in a voluntary capacity for many years. I was a campaigner against the Poll Tax under the Thatcher Government. More recently I have been raising money for the Rohingya Appeal with a National Charity and I am currently setting up the Ethnic Minority Forum in Cambridge. I am a delegate to the next Regional Conference, as well as an Executive Committee Member and delegate to the GC. I am a member of Unite the Union and the London and Eastern Regional Disability Officer for Unite. Currently at local level I am the elected BAME Officer (Black Asian Ethnic Minority). I am also a Director of a Voluntary Organisation called 'Connect' which specialises in Disability and other Welfare Policies. This was set up in response to the Government's austerity measures, to help the most vulnerable by supporting them with home visits, attending appeals and help with Personal Independent Payment (PIP) assessments. Decisions have been overturned due to intervention from Connect before they get to the Tribunal stage, as this is very distressing for the claimants and very time consuming with no guarantee of a positive outcome.

I am currently a Member of Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) and support many other student campaigns in Cambridge. As a member of the Trumpington Residents' Association (TRA) I have recently been campaigning to keep open the Fawcett Family Centre, a vital resource in the heart of the residential community, with many agencies under one roof, such as a GP, a social worker and counselling. Should the Council close it, services will be dispersed throughout different areas of the city, causing difficulties to many residents without access to affordable transport.

Last winter I campaigned to have the streets gritted for free. I felt the charge of £94.50 per grit bin every few streets was unacceptable when residents are already paying high Council Tax and sometimes Parish Tax as well. Ungritted streets left vulnerable people stranded and access for Meals on Wheels and the Ambulance Service compromised. I even bought bottles of salt myself as a temporary measure. After a year of hard work, my campaign was successful and grit bins will now be provided free of charge. As they will not provide staff, I am organising volunteers to do the gritting this winter.

I am currently campaigning for changes to the working hours of the Houses of Parliament to make them more conducive to a work-life balance. I feel this would encourage more people like myself to consider becoming an MP. I am also campaigning to have MP's personal details to stay confidential and for safety mechanisms to be put in place to protect them during their Surgeries. Although Social Media has its advantages, the negative side, particularly the trolling of female MP's needs to be looked at.

I would like to conclude by saying that my life has been one of many experiences, some good and some bad. But one thing I have learned is that pooling together as a team whether in a community group or constituency is when you get results. Coming together, dedicating our time and commitment for the goal ahead, is only when that goal can be achieved. I hope that the Constituency of Rochford and Southend and I will be able to work together to change lives for the better. *In Solidarity!*

Maysarah Shafi (Bame Officer Cambridge CLP) "A dream you dream alone is only a dream a dream you dream together is a reality" (Lennon and Yoko Ono)

Date form completed: 11 October 2017