

27<sup>th</sup> July 2018

35 Beeston Road  
Nottingham, NG7 2JS

Dear LWN

I am sorry for the late reply, I suspect my filters on my email were overly sensitive.

The Labour Party has a long way to go before we achieve the equality and diversity within the Party, which we hope as a government we will achieve for the nation.

Answering your specific questions:

- 1) Will you defend the principle and implementation of all women shortlists, and commit to a Labour manifesto commitment to change the law to extend these to mayoral, local government and police and crime commissioner elections?

YES,

I will also vigorously defend the position that transwomen are women, and our policy of self-declaration.

- 2) Will you take action to ensure Labour's approach to any boundary changes does not reduce the number of women MPs?

YES,

(i) Where there is a conflict between sitting woman and man MPs who have their seats merged the woman MP should automatically be transferred to the new seat. If a trigger ballot is then called, the new seat should automatically be an AWS.

(ii) For each sitting woman MP's seat which is abolished or made less winnable, an additional AWS seat should be made for vacated safe seats. This should be additional to the 50% AWS for winnable seats.

- 3) Will you ensure Labour publishes data about the diversity of its candidates in all elections?

YES

- 4) What actions will you take to ensure Labour tackles a culture of sexism from our grassroots up?

(i) There has to be zero tolerance of sexist abuse, with immediate action rather than waiting months for a disciplinary hearing. I would urge the NEC to change the rules so examples of sexist and racist abuse lead to an immediate local suspension which then goes through party procedures.

(ii) Similarly, for sexist comments, there has to be a system of immediate warnings (verbal and written) which if continually broken leads to disciplinary actions including immediate suspension.

(iii) CLP officers should receive training via webinars<sup>1</sup> to eliminate overt, covert and unintentional sexism. The CLP officer should complete this training within 3 months of taking office if they have not already taken it. A refresher should be taken every three years. The webinars should be made available to branch officers and activists too. In addition to

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<sup>1</sup> Other accessible forms also to be made available.

tackling attitudes, structural barriers to women's participation in meetings and events should be addressed.

- (iv) For general members there should be a greater emphasis by political education officers on addressing sexism and barriers for women's participation.

- 5) Will you support the introduction of an independent complaints system for sexual harassment, from first contact to final outcome?

Yes, this is absolutely essential. I will go further; the alleged perpetrator must not be allowed to question the victim, and it should be a disciplinary offense within the Party to be part of dog-piling onto victims via social media. A properly trained independent harassment officer is quite capable of putting appropriate questions to the victim to ensure natural justice.

- 6) Will you ensure Labour publishes data about equal pay among its staff, and the diversity officers in senior and strategic roles?

Yes, and the diversity at all levels in the Party.

- 7) What actions will you take to ensure Labour women have a formal voice at every level of the party?

- (i) Women's officers at all levels of the Party should be elected only by those who self-define as a woman.
- (ii) Women's conference should have formal policy making power and appoint scrutineers to Conference Composite meeting.
- (iii) Our manifesto processes for nation and local government should be equality audited.
- (iv) When compiling local government manifestos the CLP women's officers should have the authority to be part of the LCF working groups after consultation with women members about local policy.

- 8) Will you take action to ensure no Labour Party event advertises an all male panel or uses gendered language?

- (i) We need to move to panel and speaker events being gender balanced that are always looking to increase diversity. When there are 3 people on the platform/panel (inclusive of the Chair) one should be a woman. If there are more than 3 people every effort should be made to ensure a panel is gender balanced and data on the gender and diversity of who was invited recorded.
- (ii) Panels should promote BAME, LGBT & disabled women's participation and data on what steps were take to achieve this recorded.
- (iii) No gendered language should be used in any advertising, this is part of the education of CLP and Party officers referred to in the ways to eliminate sexism from the grassroots (above).

- 9) Will you support a change so that in future when there is a vacancy there is at least one woman in Labour's leadership team?

YES.

10) Will you ask Labour Groups to introduce formal parental leave arrangements for councillors, so baby leave is not a barrier to public life, and commit to a Labour manifesto commitment giving a legal right to baby leave for all forms of elected office?

YES, I go further. Labour should commit to provide funding for crèche facilities or childcare for councillors and other public service roles.

Yours truly

Heather Peto