

Dear Labour Women's Network

Please accept my apologies for leaving it a week before I responded to your queries. As you will all know, I am standing as candidate for the National Executive Committee. This will be the second attempt at NEC Selection for me. The first attempt, I now look upon as an apprenticeship into the role. The process itself posed many challenges from members of all varieties.

Unfortunately for me; some of this was rather uncomfortable. As a woman, who has spent my life campaigning for equality; being confronted with questions that were unacceptable to today's Labour Party was unpleasant.

Many of the queries that I faced related to topical queries such as Brexit and the NHS. I stood as candidate for disabled representation at all elected levels of the party. This involved embroiling myself within the Equality Act 2010 and its subsequent legislative responsibility. I took part in surveys and helped to promote the Democracy Review (Disability) for Project 125 and Disability Equality Act Labour (DEAL). This was truly enlightening and I can honestly say that many of the issues surrounding persons with disabilities; both within and out of our party, are parallel to LWN priorities.

As a result; I can say with confidence that I will defend the principle and implementation of All Women Shortlists and commit to a Labour Manifesto to change the law to extend these to mayoral, local government and PCC elections. During my campaign last time I was appalled at the response from members that suggested these were unnecessary. More education and discussions need to take place within all levels of the party. This will hopefully ensure that members can make informed decisions in future and get behind Labour Party priorities.

I am worried about the boundary changes in future as they seem to disregard the importance of keeping current MP's in situ. A result of which may see some of our fabulous Women MP's competing for the same seat. This is unacceptable and will subsequently damage the progress made within our party. It is important that diversity data regarding the Labour Women's Network candidates is published by Labour in future elections. However; this may not be a simple task to begin with. The party needs to adhere to data protection and the new Government Data Protection Legislation Regulations (GDPR) when it does so. Therefore, the NEC will need to lead on this to ensure this runs smoothly. Guidance will need to be published.

As candidate last time, I was bombarded with questions that hinted at sexism and transphobia. In order to respond to this, I used my knowledge about party rulebook and the Equality Act (2010) legislation. I will fiercely defend the principle of equality and recognise that sexism needs to be highlighted to the NEC. We cannot allow ourselves to bury our heads in the sand and wait for the next revelation by press and media sources.

It is also important to recognise the need for a complete independent complaints procedure that is able to deal with sexual harassment from first contact to final outcome. This seems to be non-existent or incomplete at present.

Sexual harassment also merges into disadvantage within our party, in as much as it appears to be financially damning to be a woman. This could be in many ways. It is not just a simple policy of making sure everybody is equally paid each month. Women members are often faced with additional responsibility outside of politics. The issue of 'work life balance' could present itself by

1. Penalising women if they have childcare responsibly
2. Misunderstanding the need to work remotely
3. Penalising women for taking maternity leave
4. Not campaigning enough to help WASPI women

Whilst campaigning last time; I used the statement 'Nothing About Us, Without Us' to highlight the need for disabled representation at all levels of the party. This basically meant that disabled members do not want other people to make decisions for them. They want to be part of the decision-making process. The same policy is also important for LWN representation. We do not want to be on the side-line, watching male orientated boards making the decisions and gaining all of the kudos. I will pledge to make sure that the importance of this policy is highlighted to NEC.

In my own constituency, I have heard complaints about certain male members being sexist in their attitudes to women members. By singling out certain women, it appears at face value to be accommodating. However, the very nature of this approach simply means it is patronising. It is therefore important to bring an end to all male panels and gendered language within Labour Party rhetoric. During the last Leadership challenge, I was upset that Angela Eagle stepped down as candidate. Therefore, I feel strongly that future challenges need to have at least one female candidate that is fully supported through the process by the wider party, whatever the cost.

Labour groups need to diversify. We need to ensure that NEC enforces a shake up of current practices. This was evident during my last campaign regarding times of meetings, the access to buildings and the general language regarding the insistence of Equality Act (2010) legislation. This legislation is key when enforcing the 'reasonable adjustments responsibility'. This responsibility could help when insisting on Labour Group acceptance of 'baby leave' as our party needs to value diversity. It cannot discriminate against family life any longer. Our members are entitled to do the jobs that they are qualified for. It is not acceptable for us to accept menial jobs or jobs that do not fully take advantage of our skills. Therefore, the NEC needs to ensure that this is written into best practice.

I think that I have covered all of the questions posed to NEC Candidates in this letter. Please get back to me if you require anything further from me. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you that I received 7,551 and 7 CLP nominations at my last attempt. However, this time I have received 16 CLP nominations. I am hoping that this is an indication of my eventual success. Equally, please consider voting for me and talking to colleagues about my aims.

With Kind Regards and in solidarity Sisters,

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