

Dear LWN,

Thank you for your questions to NEC candidates.

My answers are as follows:

Will you defend the principle and implementation of All Women Shortlists, and commit to a Labour manifesto pledge to change the law to extend these to mayoral, local government and police and crime commissioner elections, and to ensure their use is legal until parity is sustainable without them?

Yes

Will you ensure Labour publishes data about the diversity of its candidates in all elections, in accordance with section 106 of the Equality Act?

Yes

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

Yes

What actions will you take to ensure Labour tackles a culture of sexism and misogyny from the grassroots up?

I would support disciplinary action if women in the party are subjected to sexist and misogynistic abuse or discrimination by other members, just as I would in cases relating to other protected characteristics such as race.

Will you sign LWN's campaign to #KeepTheGoodStuff from the Covid-19 crisis and reduce barriers to women's political participation by introducing a degree of long-term virtual access to Labour Party meetings and events? Sign here: <https://www.lwn.org.uk/keepthegoodstuff>

Yes - have signed

Will you support the annual continuation of the Jo Cox Women in Leadership Scheme, which has successfully empowered women to stand for office and act as agents of positive change in their local parties, communities and workplaces?

Yes

What steps will you take to improve the diversity of Labour Party staff in senior and strategic roles?

The NEC isn't directly involved in staff recruitment other than for the General Secretary, but it can set targets for and monitor the diversity of all staff and particularly senior staff and ask to review recruitment advertising (e.g. targeting of under-represented groups), composition of interview panels, policy on shortlisting, employment policies such as parental leave etc should that monitoring reveal the party is failing to recruit and retain a diverse senior staff.

Will you ensure that Labour women have a formal voice at every level of the party, and that a meaningful and engaging Women's Conference takes place every year?

Yes

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

Yes

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 pledge giving a legal right to baby leave for all forms of elected office?

Yes

Best wishes,

Luke Akehurst