



The Women's Equality Party,
Studio 18,
Long Lane,
London SE1 4PU
Tel: 0207 407 9230

Email: info@womensequality.org.uk

17 May 2018

Dear Lucy,

Congratulations on your selection as the Liberal Democrat candidate for Lewisham East. I am so proud to have been selected as the Women's Equality Party candidate. I was delighted to see your name put forward, like everyone at the Women's Equality Party who remembers your activism with us. As you know, WE were founded to broaden representation and not only to make change directly but to challenge and encourage other parties to do better. It's great to see this strategy bear fruit in Lewisham, where this looks set to be a race between progressive women.

I am an activist who never imagined myself as a politician, and certainly never expected to be a candidate for Parliament but seeing the impact of government policies I had to put myself forward. Austerity is ripping the heart out of Lewisham's communities and women and minority groups are paying the highest price. The #MeToo movement has exposed the scale of violence and harassment against us, and all across the country women are learning that they are paid less because they are valued less. Lewisham voted overwhelmingly for Remain because we know that Brexit will exacerbate all of these issues unless we forge a new path that puts people before politics.

Some people will say that progressive women shouldn't stand against each other. I disagree. There can never be too many of us making ourselves visible and amplifying the causes we so passionately believe in – it's up to us to set an example to girls and young women as well as boys and young men in Lewisham. Equality is better for everyone, and we all have a part to play.

As you know better than most, equal representation is a core objective of the Women's Equality Party. One reason it is so hard to achieve is the first-past-the-post voting system, which makes it hard for women and minority perspectives to make headway. And as women's voices struggle to be heard, so their experiences are overlooked. WE exist to highlight and dismantle the structural, economic and cultural barriers that hold back women - in schools, workplaces, home and beyond - and put forward the policies needed to tackle inequality.

That's why I'm writing to you with a proposal that I will also extend to other progressive candidates for this seat.

The Women's Equality Party has worked in progressive alliances at previous elections as well as writing into our constitution the opportunity to stand joint candidates. So today I am writing to discuss the possibility of a joint ticket based on your adoption of the following policies in your election manifesto:

- Universal free childcare from the end of parental leave to the start of school, so that families can make real choices about how to balance work and life.
- A single rate of pension tax relief at 25p per pound to stop women retiring into poverty and to increase the benefits of saving for 90% of workers;

- Full decriminalisation of abortion so that women are never prosecuted for terminating a pregnancy;
- Pound for pound investment in social and physical infrastructure, and an assessment of how all spending decisions will impact different groups;
- Fully equal system of nine months parental leave at 90% of pay, to tackle the economic inequality between men and women that has been highlighted by the gender pay gap;
- Access to specialist support and advocacy services in every community for women and girls who experience male violence and abuse, funded via three-year rolling grants.
- An end to the demand for women's bodies through the introduction of a sex buyer's law.

As the Women's Equality Party candidate, I believe that these issues are vital and should be on the ballot paper on 14 June. They could transform not only Lewisham, but the whole economy and society. If you are prepared to accept them - and to state publicly that you will promote and vote for these policies in Parliament - then I would be happy to discuss options.

I love Lewisham. It is my home and I want to see it make history on 14 June by electing an MP who will put equality first. Because equality is better for everyone.

Yours sincerely,

Mandu Reid

Women's Equality Party candidate for Lewisham East