

Dear LWN

Please find my answers below.

Dear NEC Candidate,

Congratulations putting yourself forward as a candidate for Labour's National Executive Committee.

The NEC has a considerable role in ensuring we increase women's participation, representation, inclusion and safety in the Labour Party. We would therefore like to invite candidates to answer ten questions about your commitments to Labour women. Labour Women's Network represents a diverse sisterhood of women in the Labour Party, of all shades of red, and does not take positions on internal selections and elections. However, this opportunity will allow you to make public your pledges for Labour women, and help LWN members make an informed decision.

I'm serving my movement and I will work with the broad church on NEC, by using my experience and knowledge, and I am enthusiastic about lobbying for support, of socialist for progressive politics and governance.
In sum, I will work co-operatively, whilst maintaining critical challenge to support effective governance.

1. *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. Labour Groups have to address the impact of more % women to men standing ratio, because currently they will not allow AWS, and therefore a % women have to decide not to stand. This is counter productive. I propose a change to qualify AWS in these circumstances.

2. *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, on balance, I will actively encourage the development of a vibrant LWN manifesto, and I am keen that we do this for the sake of transparency. I worked with the Parliament Project, and I continue to work closely with the 50:50, fawcett society, where we look at addressing gender representation at local regional and Parliament. I am also a School Governor and Muslim woman standing for the LWN elections.

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

Yes. 100% women feel that the confidentiality is important, and highly skilled independent investigations are completed, - so that full opportunity is given for the cases to be investigated and in a timely manner. I am concerned that since high profile cases in the public domain. If we don't, the trust will disintegrate, and so separate case handlers are required to ensure a) we are supporting and b) we are here to serve to lay down rules, and members using outside experts will find out whatever conclusion that is made in neutral conditions, so that others will feel safe to report it without fear of reprisals. All in all, an opportunity to inspect the framework, and if elected as a NEC member, I will draw on all the members feedback, and confirm that this is what the members seek the changes to look like, and publish it.

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

I need to add something here. Code of Conduct. The complaints and disciplinary procedures can and should be used to implement a zero-tolerance of bullying and aggressive behaviours.

Safeguarding and Risk Assessments are accessible on Labour Party Website.

As a politically active woman, I myself have undertaken the safety online by Glitch, I would highly recommend them as I have already implemented some of the learnings and challenged some working practices on WhatsApp.

In essence, I have been able to apply my learnings, and improve the working relationships of members along many platforms, and I have no hesitation to do this on CLP, and ask that the standing orders have these guidelines in effect, where politically active women can reach out to The Executive Committee, Women officers, BAME Officer, Disability Officer, Youth Officer, Campaign Coordinator, and LGBTQi and delegates would agree to these, and take ownership of the declarations, such as be polite, respect different opinions and give constructive feedback if you can, and no abusive language.

To promote the welfare of all members.

To enhance the communication between members and NEC and LP Party Staff.

In closing, unconscious biases are present. As a School Governor and a Muslim Woman I can bring my lived experience to the table.

5. *Will you sign LWN's campaign to #KeepTheGoodStuff from the Covid-19 crisis and reduce barriers to 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, I've signed. We recently had a CLP Zoom where approx 30 people attended. I am having the same conversations up and down the country, that not all members are motivated to use Zoom, in comparison to showing up to a full house CLP meeting. The world had certainly changed since the COVID have impacted us and adopting the new way of working, not sure if it is the timing and schedule that is not appealing to members, or whether it was not advertised on social media, reminder emails, remains a complete mystery. No one size fits all. So we have to work creatively to motivate a) accessibility to email and Zoom b) clashing of zoom meetings c) ask the members what time day they want by conducting a survey, and cold calling. In my constituency, we get notifications of meetings by post!

Therefore, to empower members through communication technology.

6. *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.

As a School Governor and Muslim Woman I cannot reiterate the emphasis of encouraging women to Stand for Office, in all facets of community and political spheres. As Womens Conference Delegate, and Womens Officer in West London Unite Community branch. We as a movement must ensure that a) women are hand held all the way to office, support mechanisms like AWS are in place, funding their campaign!. Running for office can be expensive. How to set up social media profiles, drive them, build a following, how to use the platforms use their algorithms to their advantage.

We need to run Jo Cox more often so that more opportunities are made available, and in conjunction with this lead by Tutor on zoom / Microsoft-teams for case study, breakout rooms and for networking purposes, make slack rooms for cohort circle running 90 min sessions every week for 6 weeks.

Therefore to enhance interconnections with colleagues and members.

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

The party should commit themselves to a % of BAME and Women representation, which, equates to BAME representation and membership within the party, and data will be published.

8. *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?*

I will fight and support to ensure that women, have a formal voice at every level of the party and that a meaningful and engaging Womens Conference takes place every year.

Together we make a difference.

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

Yes. I fully support open to all and that no-one because of gender, race, disability should be disadvantaged in any way.

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

Yes. As a mother of two young girls, this is an area which, I feel particularly passionate about, and I will fully support and indeed fight for those members of the party who have in the past struggled, to reach their expectations as a result of childcare issues.

Regards

Iram Woolley

Thank you in advance for taking the time to answer these questions. Please email your response to contact@lwn.org.uk as soon as possible, with the subject line NEC Answers.

We wish you every success with your election. In sisterhood and solidarity,
Labour Women's Network