

Dear Joanne,

I will absolutely stand up for the pledge on Women's Aid for the upcoming General Election.

Liberal Democrats are very proud of what we achieved for women's rights in Coalition, but recognise that there is still a very long way to go. We will continue to fight to end gender inequality. I intend to support women's rights by being a voice of women in Parliament and locally by championing causes which add publicity to the issues faced by so many women and girls. I will do this by ensuring that there is adequate support for victims of domestic abuse and gender-based crimes, prioritising protection for those who are vulnerable and by campaigning for the equal rights we ought to have by now, but are so often lacking.

In Coalition we introduced mandatory gender pay gap reporting to name and shame those companies that weren't paying employees equally for equal work. We will continue to fight against income inequality and expand mandatory pay gap reporting to cover BAME pay-gaps. Additionally, we will provide better back-to-work support to get a million more women into work by 2025 and we will expand Shared Parental Leave with an additional 'use it or lose it' month to encourage fathers to take time off with young children. We will work to ensure equal representation in politics: we will make Parliament more family-friendly, and establish a review to pave the way for MP job-sharing arrangements. In light of the US government's dangerous and anti-science attacks on international programmes of vaccination and family planning, which impacts disproportionately on the health of women and children, Liberal Democrats will seek to protect global spending on these essential provisions. We are also very concerned about the impact of Brexit on women. Many important protections such as the right to 52 weeks' maternity leave and rights to annual leave are currently based on EU law, and many of these rights have been upheld at the European Court of Justice. Liberal Democrats will fight to ensure that these entitlements are not undermined. Liberal Democrats will fight to end violence against women and girls. We will review the investigation, prosecution, procedures and rules of evidence in cases of sexual and domestic violence and will aim to end female genital mutilation worldwide within a generation.

I do hope that I have offered you enough information on my position, but if you would like to speak to me directly, please do let me know as I would be happy to support you.

Warm regards,

Becky Thomas - Liberal Democrat candidate for Sherwood