

New initiative launched to elect more women and BME candidates

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The Scottish Conservatives are to launch a new initiative to elect more women and BME candidates to Holyrood.

Ahead of International Women's Day this week, the party will launch a commission headed by Baroness Nosheena Mobarik to ensure the greater gender and ethnic diversity in the party's ranks at the next Holyrood election.

It will be build on successful campaigns such as Women2Win Scotland – launched last year by party leader Ruth Davidson.

Speaking today, Ruth said that the party needs to demonstrate greater diversity in order to become “a government for Scotland.”

She said that the revelations in recent weeks about sexual harassment and racism had been “catastrophic for politics and public life in general” – and that all political parties now needed to show they were prepared to act.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson MSP said:

“We want to restore trust in our public realm – to show that Scottish politics can meet anger with answers.

“To be a Scottish government that truly represents people in every town, city and village in the country.

“That looks and sounds like the people we serve.

“And we need to act.

“Let's confront this head on.

“The last few months have been catastrophic for politics and public life in general.

“The appalling treatment of women in public life has been exposed for all to see.

“And here in Scotland, I applaud Anas Sarwar for bravely exposing how we are still afflicted by casual racism.

"Political parties must uphold the highest standards.

"But the truth is that no party can stand up right now and say, hand on heart, they are not tainted.

"Every party needs to act. And that includes us.

"And by the time of the next Holyrood election, the Scottish Conservatives need to show we've got it.

"That we understand the need to change.

"So I can announce today that, under Nosheena Mobarik, we are setting up a new Commission with a specific remit.

"We will ensure that our BME community is represented in person on our benches in the next Parliament.

"And, complementing the work of Women2Win Scotland, we will ensure that more women are selected in winnable seats and regions too.

"Let the message be clear: Scottish Conservatives value, need and want the contribution of everyone in Scotland.

"Let's show we understand – that if we don't sort this out, we won't become a government for Scotland.

"We won't be the truly national party we aspire to become.

"And that we won't deserve to either."