

[Thank you to the NHS](#)

The NHS takes care of us and keeps us safe every day.

Coronavirus is affecting every part of our lives and is already putting a huge strain on the NHS and NHS workers. We want to say thank you to the people working so hard to keep us all safe.

We are so lucky to live in a country where we have access to such high-quality healthcare that's free at the point of use. It's saved countless lives and, over the coming weeks and months, it's going to save many, many more.

To everyone working in the NHS and in our social care system: every doctor, nurse, carer, paramedic, health care assistant, manager, cleaner, administrator, pharmacist, those on the front-line and those keeping the NHS working behind the scene – thank you.

The best thing we can do for our healthcare staff right now is to follow the official NHS advice. That means staying at home if you're not a key worker, keeping your distance in supermarkets, and quarantining yourself when you're showing symptoms.

Not all of these are easy steps to take – but **we owe it to our NHS to help them help us.**

We are also circulating a letter of appreciation to NHS staff, to show our thanks to them for putting themselves at risk to keep us all safe.

If you'd like to add your thanks, you can do so by signing the card:

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Author:

[How to help in a lockdown](#)

This week, the UK has gone into lockdown to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Those of us who can are staying at home and adapting to a new way of life, where we work from home, have hobbies at home and socialise only through video calls.

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Author:

We must support the self-employed

Last week, the Government set out a package of financial measures to support UK workers, **highlighting just how threatening coronavirus is to our economy and our society.**

As soon as these measures were announced, Liberal Democrats stated our concerns that far too little was being provided to help the self-employed through this crisis. **Days later, and no new support has been announced by the Government.**

Each day the govt fails to protect the self-employed, many get closer to irreparable damage to their livelihoods.

We, with cross-party support, have written to Rishi Sunak calling for urgent action to support the 5 million self-employed people in the UK. <https://t.co/nDU6VF8zMS>

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [March 24, 2020](#)

There are five million self-employed people in the UK. These are our construction workers, our childminders and our delivery drivers.

Each day that we fail to take action to protect the self-employed, **millions of people remain worried and unsure of how they are going to support themselves or their families.** Leaving them with no reliable safety net is unacceptable.

Ministers cannot keep hiding from the insecurity these individuals have been put in by the coronavirus crisis. **It is not good enough to say it is “operationally difficult” to pay them.**



GOVERNMENT MUST PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT **FOR EVERYONE.**



The Liberal Democrats have put down amendments to the Government's coronavirus legislation to support the self-employed. They are:

- **increasing the weekly rate of Statutory Sick Pay from £94.25 to £220**
- **guaranteeing 80% of self-employed individuals' earnings, up to £35,000**

By subsidising salaries for workers, guaranteeing incomes for the self-employed and boosting sick pay we can ensure that we are not only protecting our economy, but our society. **That is why we are also urging the Chancellor to back a Citizen's Income, and quickly, to ensure those most in need have financial security.**

Leaving self-employed people with no reliable safety net is unacceptable.

While assisting the self-employed does create more challenges than with PAYE employees, **the Government must surely err on the side of caution and get help out to people, rather than find reasons and excuses for doing nothing, or too little.**

There are clear gaps in what the Chancellor has announced and the Liberal Democrats will continue to push for these measures to be taken forward so that no-one gets forgotten as this crisis continues.

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Author:

Short term prison sentences for women don't work

The Government's analysis shows that they lead to higher rates of reoffending than community sentences. The President of the Prison Governors Association has described them as "pointless". They need to end for both men and women.

But we also need to recognise that prison is especially damaging for women.

Most women in prison are vulnerable people. The majority experienced abuse as a child, and many are survivors of domestic abuse as adults.

Self-harm rates in women's prisons are almost five times the rate in men's prisons and rising

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Author:

I have high hopes for the next three years – let's get to work!

It's been just weeks since Brexit ended my brief term as an MEP, but today I'm very happy to announce that I've been elected as Chair of the Federal People Development Committee.

I wouldn't be where I am today without the outstanding training and support offered by the party.

Like many of you reading this, **I'm a relative newcomer to politics and to the Lib Dems**. I joined in 2016, so I think I bring a fresh perspective to this role as a newbie. I'm eager to help the party expand and improve on its strategy, structures and processes for recruiting, engaging and activating members.

Although it's been a short time, I'm no stranger to campaigns, at any level. In addition to winning election to European Parliament last May, I currently serve as a Hertfordshire County Councillor and stood for Parliament in 2017.

I think that I'm a good example of what is possible if you engage a new member and provide the right resources. I wouldn't be where I am today without the outstanding training and support offered by the party.

Just a few months after joining I was able to attend my first party conference. I spent nearly the entire time in training sessions. Clearly I got a taste for it, attending my first ALDC Kickstart weekend a few months later with other members of my local party. Since then I've been lucky enough to attend more conferences and more training events. Our face-to-face training opportunities are unparalleled – but the percentage of members who can access that face-to-face training is minuscule. We haven't been quite as strong at providing other forms of training and resources. That's something I'm keen to change.

The Liberal Democrats are already leading the way in modern campaigning, and I look forward to supporting this in my new role.

In the past four years, our party membership has boomed, meaning that newbies now outnumber long-time members. **We need, now more than ever, to quickly develop the knowledge and skills of a larger number of people than ever before.** Add to that the fast-changing landscape of UK politics and new and innovative ways to engage voters, and it's clear that we can't just do what has worked in the past. The Liberal Democrats are already leading the way in modern campaigning, and I look forward to supporting this in my new role.

Outside of the Liberal Democrats, I have spent 25 years in the corporate world, and 10 years training and lecturing, including developing learning content both for face-to-face and online learning. I have also led a large voluntary organisation. I can't wait to bring this experience to the role and to work closely with both staff and FPDC members to take our people development strategies, structures and resources to the next level. We have an outstanding committee, including a diverse mix of perspectives and experiences. **I have high hopes for the next three years – let's get to work!**

Members of the FPDC, serving a three-year term, are:

- Abi Bell
- Barbara Gibson
- Bess Mayhew
- Jon Ball
- Lisa Maria Bornemann
- Mary Regnier-Wilson

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Author: