

[Welcome Sarah!](#)

Our party is going from strength to strength.

We now have more than 116,000 members, as well as almost 15,000 registered supporters.

Our team in the House of Commons is growing too. A little over a week ago, we welcomed Jane Dodds as our newest MP.

Today, we welcome another addition to our team. Dr Sarah Wollaston.

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Author:

[Boris Johnson is breaking promises to EU citizens. Already.](#)

I can think of about 350 million reasons why a promise from Boris Johnson isn't worth the paper (or bus) it's written on.

The Government promised that the rights of EU citizens wouldn't change after Brexit. So did Vote Leave – many of whose senior figures are now Government officials.

But now we're hearing that if Brexit happens, the Government plans to make EU citizens pay to use the NHS.

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Author:

[My first week as an MP](#)

As I spent my first week in Westminster on my induction programme, in the forefront of my mind is that **there are less than 80 days until Boris Johnson tries to take us out of the EU without a deal.** So, of course, my first priority was to learn my way around so I am able to find Boris Johnson like I said in my victory speech:

Jane Dodds, Liberal Democrat winner of the Brecon and Radnorshire by-election vows to confront Boris Johnson in victory speech#BreconByElection
[#BreconandRadnorshirehttps://t.co/e4Eya51F19](https://t.co/e4Eya51F19)
pic.twitter.com/K3u9U0HiPN

– BBC Wales News (@BBCWalesNews) [August 2, 2019](#)

Entering parliament as a new MP, the sheer size and sense of history of the place is overwhelming. Corridors that seem to go on for miles, walking underneath Big Ben, and working out which lift goes where is something I still need to come to terms with.

Boris Johnson needs to hear about the real effects his Brexit plan will have and he needs to stop playing with the lives of people across the country.

Part of my induction was a tour, learning which line I go in to vote yes or no and how to find the department to help me with tabling an amendment and a motion. But what hit home was being escorted into the chamber from behind the Speaker's Chair, walking past the green benches and a real sense of duty struck me. **I'm here to represent the people of Brecon and Radnorshire and give them a voice in our country's highest body.**

I wasn't able to find Mr Johnson this week, so the hunt continues. But when I do find him, I'll tell him in no uncertain terms that he needs to meet with Welsh lamb farmers. He needs to hear about the real effects his Brexit plan will have, and **he needs to stop playing with the lives of people across the country.**

It's simple. Take no-deal Brexit off the table.

So there's much to do, and now I know my way around, I'm going to find Mr Johnson wherever he is hiding. And then I'm going to do what I am there to do; be a voice for people in Brecon and Radnorshire.

I look forward to the work ahead!

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Author:

[Celebrating Eid](#)

For those who have taken part in Hajj, this is a season of new beginnings and

Muslims across the globe will be taking time out to reflect on the significance of their faith in their own individual lives.

Sadly, we are witnessing a horrifying rise in Islamophobia which is often accompanied by exclusionary, right-wing nationalism. Islamophobic tropes are becoming commonplace and attacks on Muslims have been espoused by the man who has just become our Prime Minister. This is unacceptable. We must confront this poisonous rhetoric which, if left unchecked, will permeate our communities in the most extreme and hateful ways.

As Leader of the Liberal Democrats, I will continue to defend our country's liberal values and will redouble our Party's efforts to defeat discrimination in all its forms.

As we celebrate Eid, let us let us recognise the enduring and valuable contributions of Muslim communities across the country and let us refuse all attempts to divide our nation.

My warmest wishes to all those celebrating. Eid Mubarak!

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Author:

[Eid and Hajj, a time for togetherness](#)

This year, [Eid ul-Adha](#) (The Festival of Sacrifice) begins on Sunday 11 August and end on Thursday 15 August. It is the second Eid occasion during the Islamic year; the first, Eid-ul-Fitr, marks the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

[Eid ul-Adha](#) signifies the end of the [Hajj Pilgrimage](#) – the world's largest annual pilgrimage to Makkah – and is a time for Muslims around the world to share, help others and be thankful, whilst remembering those who are less fortunate.

I was sent many messages from Muslims taking their leave as is the custom before one embarks on the pilgrimage of Hajj. Messages from an affluent Arab, a Syrian woman fighting cancer supported by the generosity of her local community to fulfil her one last wish, a volunteer from the Grenfell tragedy, many constituents from my borough and my own personal farewell to my brother and his wife.

We make this journey of a lifetime to Makkah to remember many things, but in the end we are all human beings and that compassion is the only emotion that can truly build humanity as it should be.

We celebrate Eid with family and friends, gathering to socialise and enjoy

food, and we give money to charity to assist those in need. It is also an opportunity to interact with non-Muslims and share the purpose of Eid and its significance, whilst helping to dispel myths surrounding Islam and tackling Islamophobia. True Islam is a peaceful religion, which sadly has been hijacked by a minority of extremists of every faction and has had a hugely negative influence on public perception of Muslims.

[Media reporting about Islam](#) and Muslims is also alarming. A 2018 study revealed that 59% of all articles associated Muslims with negative behaviour and over a third of articles misrepresented or generalised about Muslims, with terrorism being the most common theme. 43% of all broadcast clips also associated Muslims with negative behaviour.

Is it any wonder that some Muslim communities are accused of not integrating when they are viewed with suspicion and isolated as a result? To quote the words of former Prime Minister, David Cameron, "Integration is a two-way street." And as [Sir Peter Fahy](#) said, "Integration is not about extremism". Nevertheless, the situation is not helped by comments from people like Nigel Farage – one of the most prominent Brexit advocates – who previously made many [inflammatory comments](#) about Muslims.

According to the anti-fascist group Hope's annual [State of Hate](#) report, more than a third of people in the UK believe that Islam is a threat to the British way of life.

As a Muslim, I have often been told that soon all UK banks will be controlled by Sharia law – this is offensive to me in the same way that a member of the Jewish faith finds the Rothschild bank slur offensive. There is no difference in the hurt caused or the hatred spread.

We should be celebrating the positive impact that Muslims have on our nation. They make a significant contribution to the UK economy and more are emerging as prominent figures in politics, particularly women who have had greater struggles in fighting against stereotypes and adversity to become successful and prominent citizens; people such as Nobel Peace Prize winner, Malala Yousafzai; Great British Bake Off Winner, Nadia Hussain, and Mishal Husain, leading presenter for BBC. Young British Muslims are also becoming more liberal, but no less religious, as it appears that they are "finding ways to reconcile British culture with religion."¹

As a child who grew up in the late 70s and early 80s in Kent where there were very few Muslims, my childhood was a great deal about connecting faith and people. Recollections of harvest time – and the gifts and sharing of food from that harvest – mirrored the giving of alms from my own faith and of my mother getting my basket of food ready for the elderly on our school visit.

I do remember my mother dressing our neighbour in one of her saris for a wedding and celebrations during Eid. I remember that our white neighbours brought food to our home when my mother lost her father. I remember that there were moments that all my identities became submerged into one, of compassion and understanding, that of peace and friendship.

Eid is a time to celebrate life, forget our differences and join together as a community.

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