

Lay Magistrate Commissioner appointed to the NI Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC)

First Minister Michelle O'Neill and deputy First Minister Emma Little-Pengelly have appointed Mrs Ann McRoberts as Lay Magistrate Commissioner to the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC).

Minister remains committed to funding Real Living Wage for independent sector homecare workers

Health Minister Mike Nesbitt today confirmed the funding position in relation to the Real Living Wage (RLW) for homecare workers.

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Trans Awareness Week

Many trans and non-binary people – in the UK and across the world – face unacceptable barriers to healthcare, employment, education, and public life. In the UK, an estimated 62% – 73% of trans people have experienced harassment and violence because they were identified as trans. Hate crimes have risen

sharply, nearly doubling in the past five years and access to NHS gender-affirming care remains painfully slow at best. No one should have to fight this hard to be treated with basic dignity and respect.

The Liberal Democrats have a proud legacy of leading the fight for LGBTQ+ equality. From repealing Section 28 – the Conservatives’ law which prohibited the “promotion of homosexuality” by local authorities – thanks to a clause moved by Ed Davey, to Lynne Featherstone’s tireless efforts to legalise same-sex marriage, and the former Liberal Democrat MP John Leech securing pardons for those unjustly criminalised for their sexuality, our party has always stood on the right side of history. That same commitment drives us now as we work to ensure that trans and non-binary people enjoy the same rights, respect, and recognition as everyone else.

We recognise and thank our trans members past and present for their invaluable contributions – giving their time and energy to run for elected office and campaigning to make our party and country a more inclusive place.

As we set out in our policy paper Free to Be Who You Are, passed at this year’s Spring Conference, we believe that everyone should be free to live authentically, without fear or prejudice and have full and equal access to healthcare, education, workplaces, and the protections and freedoms every citizen enjoys.

That is why we remain steadfast in our commitment to:

- Reduce the unacceptable waiting times for gender-identity services and ensure access to timely, compassionate healthcare through an informed consent model.
- Reform the gender recognition process to remove the requirement for medical reports, recognise non-binary identities in law, and remove the spousal veto.
- Ban all forms of so-called “conversion therapy” and practices.
- Protect trans people from discrimination in law, workplaces, schools and public services so they can live safely and confidently as themselves.
- Implement a new LGBTQ+ Action Plan to coordinate cross-government work on delivering LGBTQ+ equality.

This Trans Awareness Week, we stand proudly alongside trans and non-binary people across the UK – celebrating their strength, creativity and courage, while recognising how far Britain still has to go. Our fight continues for a country where everyone, without exception, is free to be who they are.

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[Kimmins pledges a flexible parking approach to support city centre trading](#)

Infrastructure Minister Liz Kimmins has pledged support for city centres with a flexible approach to parking management within the Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) across the north.