

Cabinet Secretary pledges to stand against inequality, violence and abuse on International Women's Day

Leading a debate in the Senedd, the Cabinet Secretary said:

“The first International Women’s Day took place over 100 years ago. Since then it has grown into a truly global event – a day when the achievements of girls and women are recognised irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, language, culture, wealth or politics. It is an excellent example of how people can come together, as one, for a common cause.

“Shining a spotlight on inequality and presenting the stark evidence that exists to show how women are still being treated unfairly can only facilitate meaningful change. Men have a duty to speak out on inequality, violence and abuse. We need an International Women’s Day because those battles are not yet won. Until that time comes, I’m proud to stand with those who call out the abusers, the sexists and the denigrators of women – whoever they may be and wherever they may peddle their poisonous misogyny.”

The theme for International Women’s Day in Wales this year is ‘Creating an Equal Future’ and the Cabinet Secretary highlighted action the Welsh Government is taking to enhance the lives and opportunities of girls and women across Wales.

He said:

“Creating an Equal Future” chimes well with the Welsh Government’s aims and commitments. From tackling poverty, delivering a more diverse pool of decision-makers in public life, lessening the pay gap, supporting women back to work after having children and tackling violence and abuse, our Equality Objectives ensure that action is focused on the areas which disproportionately affect women and the other protected groups.

“We must recognise the importance of men playing their part in working for gender equality. We all have a part to play. Without men as committed allies, and supportive partners in this quest led by women, genuine change will not happen. The positive impacts of gender equality are good for all of us, our families and society as a whole.

“We must also stand together against domestic abuse and other types of violence against women, which can have devastating and long-

lasting consequences. The key is to change attitudes and get the message across that violent behaviour is not acceptable in any circumstances, and will not be tolerated in our society.

“This is a day to celebrate the achievements of women. We are not complacent – there is more to be done before we can claim to have ‘created an equal future’. But Wales has much to be proud of and we stand committed to supporting women and girls to aspire and achieve.”

Tories and SNP need to listen on the budget



By Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale MSP

Tomorrow, Tory Chancellor Philip Hammond will continue to pursue his failed austerity agenda.

Time and again, the Tories have been shown up for failing to grow our economy.

Real wages are down, while the cost of living is up. Hard-working families are being squeezed, while the Tories refuse to ask the richest in society to pay their fair share.

It is society's most vulnerable that are paying the price of Tory failures. And Theresa May's pursuit of a hard Brexit will only make the situation worse.

Mr Hammond will continue to try to balance the books at the expense of the worst-off, while his boss simultaneously wrecks our economy by pulling us out of the single market.

It doesn't have to be this way.

The last Labour government presided over the longest period of sustained economic growth since the Second World War. We delivered tax credits and the minimum wage, to name just a few policies designed to help – not punish – hard-working families.

That is the kind of agenda Philip Hammond should be pursuing – and I have written to him setting out Labour's demands.

With austerity having failed and Brexit a profound threat to the Scottish and UK economies, a change of course is not just necessary – it is vital.

I want to the Tories to:

- Reverse planned welfare cuts.
- Do more support for our North Sea oil and gas industry.
- Take action to end the anomaly by which the police and fire services in Scotland are required to pay VAT, at a cost of around £35 million a

year.

Policies that disproportionately affect women and lead to increases in child poverty are fundamentally unacceptable. That's why he should reverse planned social security cuts.

But here in Scotland, we also have the powers to take a different path. Our Scottish Parliament has the ability to make the richest pay their fair share. But we know that Nicola Sturgeon – the anti-austerity champion of the 2015 General Election – has been found out.

Where she could tax the richest, she has chosen to cut £170million out of local services. Where she could invest in education, she instead argues for a tax-cut for first-class air passengers. Where she could focus on building a fairer, more progressive society, she instead obsesses over breaking up the UK.

The SNP has turned the Scottish Parliament into a conveyor belt for Tory austerity, with a government whose only aim is to drive a wedge between us and our nearest neighbours.

I will always fight austerity economics and nationalist politics – be that from the Tories or the SNP. I will always stand-up for hard-working families, because that's what Labour politicians do.

It was pressure from Scottish Labour that finally forced the SNP into action over the bedroom tax. Thousands of people are better off in Scotland today because we never gave up the fight, despite nationalist reluctance.

Just last week, I put forward our plan to use the new powers of the Scottish Parliament to top-up child benefit – a move that could take 30,000 children out of poverty.

These are the kind of policies Labour will fight for.

I hope Philip Hammond and Nicola Sturgeon sit-up, take notice and realise there is a better way.

This article first appeared in the Daily Record

[Press release: Colin Allar's response to the recent ofsted inspection of Oakhill STC](#)

Colin Allar's, YJB Chief Executive, response to the recent ofsted inspection of Oakhill STC

Colin Allars, Chief Executive of the YJB said:

“The improvements Oakhill STC has made on academic achievement, resettlement and staffing have been positively recognised by the inspection teams.

“It is clear, though, that more needs to be done to effectively address the levels of violence and other concerns raised in this report.

“We are working with the provider to raise their performance so that the expected standards of service and care are met fully.”

Note to editors

Read the report on the [Ofsted website](#)

Press release: Church Commissioner Appointment: Suzanne Avery

The Queen has appointed Suzanne Avery as a Church Commissioner.

The Queen has approved that Suzanne Avery, BA, be appointed a Church Commissioner for three years effective from 2017 in succession to Harry Bimbo Hart, who resigned on 31 December 2016.

Suzanne Avery began her career in corporate banking and quickly moved in to real estate and housing. She worked for NatWest in senior roles culminating in leading the mid-market real estate & construction finance business in 2002.

She was then appointed as head of the RBS Real Estate and Retail Group in 2004 and went on to hold various managing director roles at RBS, including Managing Director of Real Estate Finance Group & Sustainability and was responsible for the REITs, private equity and institutional funds, London Estates and private property companies.

She was chair of the London Real Estate Finance Board and from 2008, a member of the UK Real Estate Management Committee, responsible for strategy, governance and management for the Real Estate Finance Division, a £25 billion portfolio with 400 employees.

Green Party: Grammar school expansion is height of evidence-free

polycymaking



Green Party

7 March 2017

*** Jonathan Bartley: “Theresa May should be getting rid of current grammar schools – not paving the way for new ones.”**

The Green Party has accused the Government of “evidence-free policymaking” after the announcement that the budget will pave the way for new grammar schools.

Research from the Sutton Trust has found selective schools benefit those who are already advantaged the most, while failing to serve the needs of those who most need support. [2]

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

“This is the height of evidence-free policymaking that we know will entrench inequality in an already divided society.

“If Theresa May was serious about making sure every child has a good school place she would be getting rid of current grammar schools – not paving the way for new ones.

“The evidence shows grammars benefit the already advantaged and fail those who need the most help. Instead of ploughing money into selective education the Prime Minister should be investing in our state schools and creating far more places than this scheme will provide.

“We need education policy that gives every single child the best education possible – not just those whose family can afford a tutor.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-39183815>
2. <http://www.suttontrust.com/researcharchive/poor-grammar-entry-grammar-schools-disadvantaged-pupils-england/>

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