

# Postponing our Leadership Election

Not only are we going through what could become the country's biggest crisis since 1945, but we're also entering a very new world that will persist once the immediate crisis is over.

I'm proud of what we have achieved so far by championing NHS workers and pressing the Government on issues such as offering a better deal to the self-employed.

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## 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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## [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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## [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.**



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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## **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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