

## [Countdown to Conference: Update from the FCC and amendments selected for debate](#)

The Federal Conference Committee met on Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> March to review the amendments, emergency motions and topical issues submitted for Spring Conference. We also discussed the most recent guidance with regards to COVID-19, and a few other reports back from the Federal Board.

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## [Planning to speak at conference? Here's what you need to know:](#)

Speaking at conference can seem like a daunting process at first, but it's really easy – and it's your chance to make your mark on the party and party policy.

What's more, some debates are very much decided by what the speakers say.

Here's what you need to know before speaking at conference:

- [How debates work](#)
- [How to complete a speaker's card](#)

When you're ready, you can also submit a speaker's card online here:

<https://www.libdems.org.uk/speakers-card>

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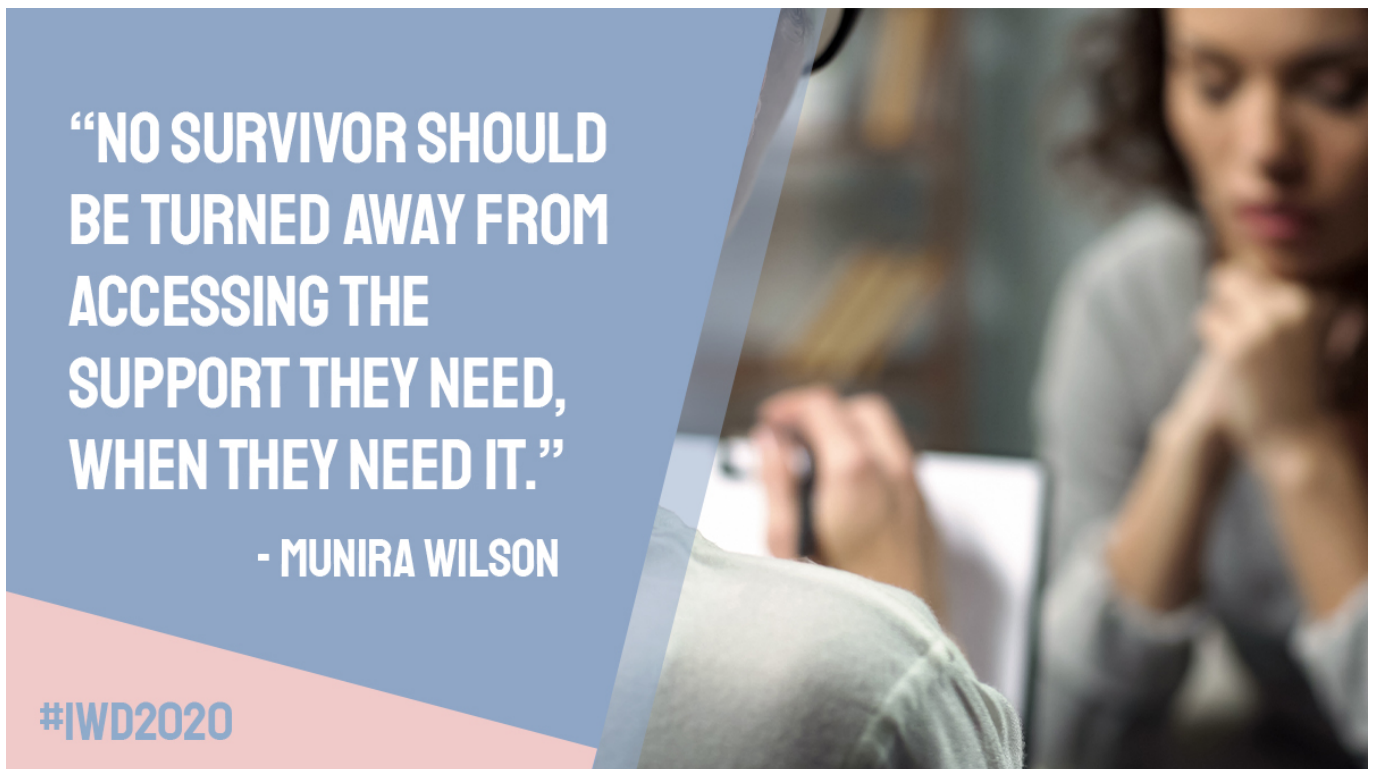
## [IWD 2020: Providing specialist support](#)

## for survivors of sexual violence

Making access to support services a right for victims of sexual violence and abuse a right was one of the recommendations of the [2018 APPG on Sexual Violence](#).

**Yet two years on**, and throughout the UK survivors are **still being told** that they have to be added to **shamefully long waiting lists**, or that **waiting lists are closed**. The situation is abhorrent.

The Istanbul Convention says there should be at least **150 Rape Crisis Centres** in England and Wales, but currently there are **only 44**.



**Fern Champion**, a campaigner fighting to enable all survivors of sexual violence to access specialist counselling services, said that:

*“Survivors of sexual violence have been let down time and time again by a series of governments who have failed to take the **under-funding** of rape support services seriously. Two years ago I found myself **unable to get onto a rape crisis waiting list** and it is utterly shameful that there are **still women in that position today.**”*

Cases like that of Fern Champion show the **shocking reality**: the level of funding for rape crisis centres and refuges is **completely inadequate**, leaving survivors **vulnerable**.

**The Tories’ failure to act** to improve the system shows **callous disregard** for those people affected by domestic violence and abuse.

No survivor of sexual abuse or domestic violence should be left without access to specialist support.

Today, [@munirawilson](#) is introducing a Bill that would make this vital support a right, not a privilege. Learn more <https://t.co/cPB6p07I3T>

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [March 10, 2020](#)

**No survivor of sexual abuse or domestic violence should be left without access to specialist support.** This is non-negotiable and my Bill would make it a right, not a privilege.

I am urging the Government to show **real leadership**, take this Bill forward and ratify the Istanbul Convention – signed in 2012 – as a matter of **urgency**.

#### Victims of Abuse (Support) Bill

*A Bill to establish a **right** to specialist **sexual violence and abuse support services** for victims of sexual, violent and domestic abuse; and for connected purposes.*

No survivor of sexual abuse or domestic violence should be left without access to specialist support. This is non-negotiable and **this Bill would make it a right, not a privilege.**

I hope to see the Conservatives take forward my Bill in supporting these vulnerable women have **the best chances in life.**

Liberal Democrats will **continue to fight** to secure a guarantee of specialist support for anyone affected by domestic violence or sexual abuse.

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## [IWD 2020: Recognise misogyny as a hate crime](#)

With reports of sexual assault, rape and violence against women on the rise, it is simply unacceptable that convictions for sexual violence are at a

record low.

**Tens of thousands of women report crimes to the police each year which are motivated by misogyny, but they are not recorded as such.**

Plan International estimate that 66% of girls and young women have been sexually harassed in public.

As the laws stand, women are unprotected by the failure to classify misogyny as a hate crime.

**It is time this Conservative government show they are taking violence against women and girls seriously.**

It's estimated that 66% of girls and young women have been sexually harassed in public.

With [@Wera\\_Hobhouse](#)'s Bill to recognise misogyny as a hate crime, we can help give survivors confidence that the police are taking the issue seriously. [pic.twitter.com/m6nyKwYGQy](https://pic.twitter.com/m6nyKwYGQy)

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [March 9, 2020](#)

I am introducing a Bill that would make misogyny a hate crime so that those who have subjected to this gendered violence and harassment can have confidence that the system will give them the support and justice they need:

*Hate Crime (Misogyny)*

*Bill to make motivation by misogyny an aggravating factor in criminal sentencing; to require police forces to record hate crimes motivated by misogyny; and for connected purposes.*

By making misogyny a hate crime, we could understand how misogyny influences crime in requiring police forces across the UK to keep a record. **And where the motivation of misogyny is provable, crimes could be prosecuted more severely.**

In 2020, misogyny should not be tolerated by anyone. It is time for a culture change.

This legislation would not only give our police the tools to make our streets safer for women, but **send a strong message that everyday sexism must and can be stamped out.**

Recognising misogyny as a hate crime would help give survivors reassurance that the police are taking the issue seriously.

In 2020, misogyny should not be tolerated by anyone. It is time for a culture change.

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## [10 Awesome Lib Dem Women](#)

**Jo Swinson**



An MP at the age of 25, a Government Minister at 32, and elected Liberal Democrat leader at 39, Jo Swinson has packed a lot into her first four decades.

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