

[“How can you be lesbian and Christian?” How dare the Home Office even ask that?](#)

When human beings are persecuted for their sexuality, their gender identity or their beliefs – or all of these – and forced to flee their homes, we must do all we can to protect them.

The Home Office’s treatment of LGBT+ asylum seekers is appalling

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Author:

[11 days left to be nominated for a Federal Committee!](#)

There are just 11 days left to get your nominations in for the candidates you’d like to see elected to party committees.

If you need a reminder of which roles are up for election, here it is:

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

[Willie Rennie’s conference speech](#)

What an amazing week we have had.

Hearing about our 700 council gains. 15 European gains.

Chuka, Sarah, Angela, Philip, Luciana and Sam joining from the Conservatives and Labour. The Brecon win for the wonderful Jane Dodds against the Conservatives.

It's happening in Scotland too. Councillor Fiona Dryburgh left Labour to join us. And Councillor Mark McGeever left the Conservatives to join us.

And there will be more to come. We are on the up and you better get used to it.

When you look at Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn, the answer has to be Jo Swinson

It's time for the old to make way for the new. When you look at Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn, the answer has to be Jo Swinson. So Boris and Jeremy watch out, Jo is on the march.

We must stop a no-deal Brexit, but we also must stop Brexit. Full stop.

We knew straight away that we would need to escape this looming chaos. And we were right.

The value of the pound has plummeted. The cost of imports is up. Prices are up. The cost of your family holiday is up. The economy sluggish. Business investment cut.

And now we have the current Prime Minister Boris Johnson held hostage – a prisoner – of Nigel Farage.

We see what they are doing. They are doubling down for No Deal. They are expelling their moderates. But in Scotland, no Conservative MPs have been harmed in the making of this dogma.

Not one has rebelled. It's not good enough. **Scottish Conservatives, you have to stand up and be counted like Amber Rudd, or forever be condemned as a waste of Scottish space.**

That is why Liberal Democrats stood firm. We are pro-immigration and pro-business.

We said stop Brexit. Unpopular at first, but we believed that to be right so we stuck to what we believed.

And it is the Liberal Democrats who speak for those millions of people who voted Remain and want to stop Brexit.

My message to those Remainers in Scotland thinking of backing independence is simple: Believe. Have hope. There is another way.

We can keep Scotland in the United Kingdom, and the United Kingdom in Europe

We can keep Scotland in the United Kingdom, and the United Kingdom in Europe.

Some think independence would allow us to escape Brexit. But it will simply add to our woes. All the chaos of Brexit multiplied and multiplied again. We need to learn the lessons of Brexit, not repeat the mistakes.

Our ties with Europe are deep and valuable. Our ties in the UK are even deeper and even more valuable. Cutting those ties with Europe after 40 years is torture. We should only imagine the pain of breaking 300-year-old ties.

And it would be the vulnerable who would suffer most, just like Brexit. So don't cut and run. Don't snatch for independence.

So those people – and more – can rely on the Liberal Democrats to speak for them. We are the only party in Scotland to stand up for the majority of people in Scotland. We are pro UK. We are pro EU. We are progressive.

Scotland should come with us and win that tussle for the soul of these islands. **Be part of the change. Be part of stopping Brexit. Be part of the winning team.**

In the eight years I have led our Scottish party we have achieved for our country:

- We campaigned and badgered the Scottish Government to take extra steps on early years childcare and on mental health.
- We got them to bring in a pupil premium and free school meals.
- We have been the strong liberal voice on the age of criminal responsibility and gender recognition, even when the SNP have lined up with the conservative mindset.
- We worked across parties to increase the powers of the Scottish Parliament as steps on the way to a more federal country.

And we have challenged the SNP when they have tried to impose centralisation on our police and cut the links between the police and the community. **People can't depend on the SNP.**

The SNP have taken their eye off the ball on Scottish public services to focus on independence

They have taken their eye off the ball on Scottish public services to focus on independence.

With the chaotic performance of the Conservative Government at Westminster, the SNP have evaded the spotlight of scrutiny.

But that will change. We are watching you and we are not impressed.

And I tell you this: all the things we want to do for education and mental health; investing in people so they can be all they can be; standing up for liberties; this can't be left to the SNP.

Even when they take our ideas they tend to make a mess of them.

No, this needs Liberal Democrats. **It needs Liberal Democrats to grow stronger still and keep on winning. And to talk about winning.**

And that is my positive, hopeful message to you today. We should be hopeful, forward-looking and excited.

The Scotland and the Britain we can win does not have to be a dismal choice between going back to the unfair country of the past or else on to the divided future the nationalists would like.

At our heart we want every individual to achieve their potential, a country where everyone has a share and a stake in our success.

There is so much we can achieve in our beautiful and diverse country, a force for good in Europe and in the world.

We are winning. We are growing. Our best is still to come.

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Author:

[Jo Swinson's speech to Liberal Democrat conference](#)

Today, Jo Swinson, Leader of the Liberal Democrats closed Conference with a rousing speech outlining her vision for a Liberal Democrat government winning the next General Election powered by the surging Liberal Democrat movement across the country.

Tribute to Paddy Ashdown

We remember a man who was bold, fearless, determined

Jo started with a warm tribute to former Liberal Democrat Leader, Paddy Ashdown following last week's memorial service in Westminster Abbey. Speaking of his incredible energy and passion, she said:

"As I sat last week at his memorial service with thousands of others, we remembered a man who was bold, fearless, determined. A man who brought people together. A man whose impatience to create change was undimmed into his seventies."

The growing Lib Dem movement

To you all I say welcome. And thank you.

She reflected on the success that we've seen in recent months, from our new MSP Beatrice Wishart to our 16 MEPs, 7 new MPs and our 700 new councillors, as well as our tens of thousands of new members. Jo said:

"To you all I say welcome. We all say welcome. And thank you."

Stopping Brexit

Jo then outlined our top priority: stopping Brexit. She outlined the terrible risks the country faces, which will inevitably harm the most vulnerable people in our society the most. Speaking about the scale and gravity of the task ahead, Jo said:

The first task is clear. **We must stop Brexit.**

"The first task is clear. We must stop Brexit. And we are crystal clear: a Liberal Democrat majority government will revoke Article 50 on day one. Because there is no Brexit that will be good for our country. Europe makes our United Kingdom stronger. But Brexit hurts our family of nations."

Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn being both unfit for office

It is very clear that Jeremy Corbyn is Brexit by nature.

Jo repeated her warnings about the terrible future the country faces with Boris Johnson or Jeremy Corbyn in power, with Johnson failing to make any progress with negotiations and Corbyn's tacit support for Brexit. She said:

"People across Britain deserve a better choice than an entitled Etonian or a 1970s socialist. If [Corbyn] had campaigned to Remain in 2016 with half of the energy he put into the 2017 election, we may have seen a different result. Nigel Farage might be Brexit by name, but it is very clear that Jeremy Corbyn is Brexit by nature. We all know that commitment has never been Boris Johnson's strong suit, but it's clear he's determined when it comes to crashing us out without a deal."

Jo on the Environment

Jo also spoke of the imminent threat the whole world faces due to climate change and outlined far-reaching environmental policies to tackle climate change including:

As the placards say, there is no Planet B

- Introducing climate risk reporting
- Creating a new Green Investment Bank to channel investment into green projects and away from fossil fuels
- A programme of tree planting and retrofitting homes to make them more energy efficient
- Significantly expanding the UK's renewable energy infrastructure
- Establishing a UK Citizens' Climate Assembly to drive a national debate about how exactly we will reach net-zero by 2045 – and earlier if possible

Jo explained the critical urgency of these measures, explaining that:

“We will do it all, not because it will create thousands of good new jobs – although it will; not because it will cut energy bills – although it will; not because it will make our country a cleaner, richer, happier nation – although it will. We will do it because we have to. Because, as the placards say, there is no Planet B.”

Jo on tackling Knife Crime

Every time a life like Tashaûn's is cut short, we are failing our young people

Jo spoke about the new approach to tackling knife crime needed, with a focus on prevention and extra support for young people. She spoke of her experience of visiting the site of the tragic stabbing of a 15 year old called Tashaûn to gain an understanding of the causes of knife crime, and of the critical importance of treating violent crime as a public health emergency. She said:

“To win this battle, we need to invest far more in providing young people with good youth services. That's why the Liberal Democrats will give local authorities the funding they need so that they can all provide youth services and re-establish youth workers. Because every time a life like Tashaûn's is cut short, we are failing our young people. And it must stop now.”

Jo on Mental Health

Jo spoke of her pride in the progress Lib Dems made on mental health in the Coalition, and thanked Norman Lamb for his tireless work to improve services. She also outlined just how much more needs to be done, especially around children's and young people's mental health. She said:

A Liberal Democrat government will ringfence funding for mental health services.

“Why should any child travel as much as 339 miles to get a mental health bed? That's from here in Bournemouth to Durham! Why have we as a society decided that that is something we can't change, and that we should just accept it? A Liberal Democrat government will ringfence funding for mental

health services. And we will invest far more heavily in the childhood and adolescent mental health services that communities need.”

The battle ahead

We can change our politics, stop Brexit and win a brighter future.

Jo closed with a message of hope and a rallying cry to everyone with liberal and democratic values across the country. She acknowledged that there is a battle ahead but made it clear that we are aiming for nothing less than winning the next General Election. She said:

“This much I am sure of. The opportunity in front of us is huge. And it is for the taking. We can win. We must win. And to do so, we must build the biggest liberal movement this country has ever seen. Our job is to gather the forces of liberalism, and be the rallying point for change.

Liberal Democrats, we can build the broad, open, liberal movement that our country needs. We can defeat nationalism and populism. We can change our politics, stop Brexit and win a brighter future.”

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Author:

Stop the Home Secretary playing politics with people's lives

The power to strip someone of their citizenship is one of the most serious the Home Secretary possesses.

It should only be taken when absolutely necessary. And only when the national security interest can be proven in court.

Was Javid's decision to strip Shamima Begum's citizenship about the safety of our country or the advancement of his career?

Instead, Conservative Home Secretaries have abused this power for political gain with tragic results.

Think back to February, when Sajid Javid stripped 19-year-old Shamima Begum

of her British citizenship. No one can defend what she did, but were she and her new-born baby really such a threat to national security?

Was Javid's decision about the safety of our country or the advancement of his career?

We demand better.

Shamima Begum and others like her were born and brought up here. The Government must take responsibility when they are radicalised and go abroad to join terrorists.

They should be prosecuted in the UK for their crimes and interrogated to learn exactly how this happens and prevent terrorists from recruiting more young Brits.

That's what the motion we passed at our Autumn Conference, "Deprivation of Citizenship", will ensure.

A Liberal Democrat Government will protect both national security and individual rights.

We will introduce new safeguards so that Home Secretaries must show good reasons for revoking someone's citizenship. A judge will have to decide, on the basis of evidence, that:

- The person obtained their citizenship through fraud, or
- Depriving them of citizenship is necessary for national security.

We will also ensure that the best interests of any children involved are taken into account and that no one is left stateless.

A Liberal Democrat Government will protect both national security and individual rights.

To see the motion in full, click [here](#).

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Author: