

Mayoral Area: London

Party: Liberal Democrat

Candidate name: Luisa Porritt

Twitter: @LuisaPorritt

1. *If elected, how will you champion social workers in your area?*

Liberal Democrats recognise that London has the highest vacancy rate for social workers in the country. Some recent immigration changes have not helped recruitment, but more widely the only way to ensure that social work is properly valued is through higher support and recognition of the profession, including proper funding. The impact of Covid on staff morale has also been very difficult and the Mayor should recognise and support this.

2. *Directly-elected Mayors can use their position to effectively champion national issues on behalf of their constituents. If elected, will you use your influence to raise issues relating to social work with national Government?*

The Mayor of London should use the opportunities which exist in terms of access to Ministers and access to the media to ensure that social workers and their profession are properly heard. In London is little evidence that any Mayor since 2000 has really done this

3. *If elected, will you (when suitable) make representations for the investment in social work recruitment, education, and retention initiatives?*

Yes. London is a wonderful and diverse city but for social workers to be recruited and retained here we need to make homes affordable and make our air clean to breathe.

4. *If elected, will you promote equality and diversity in your area?*

Yes. It is vital that the inequalities and levels of severe poverty in London are properly recognised. Often these relate to high housing and childcare costs, meaning we have the highest levels of child poverty in the country. Sadly the narrative at a national level in relation to the 'levelling up agenda' is to overlook many of the social problems facing London.

5. *If elected, will you seek to tackle poverty and the causes of poverty in your area?*

Yes. My priority is to tackle the housing crisis as poverty is directly linked to expensive and poor quality housing. I want to use the opportunities which Covid-19 has created to turn unused office space into high quality and genuinely affordable homes in the heart of the city. I also want to maximise the opportunities of people spending more time in their local areas to reinvent high streets, so they are places where people work and live with coworking spaces and affordable childcare. A locally led economic recovery is crucial.

6. *If elected, will you seek to tackle homelessness and the causes of homelessness in your area?*

Yes. I will end homelessness using the Housing First model from Finland where secure accommodation is given alongside holistic support. I will create a London Housing Company to get London's 25,000 empty homes back into use.

7. Please write no more than 300 words on what you would like our members to know about your candidacy.

The Liberal Democrats and I have a plan to Take London Forward.

It's a recovery plan with a big focus on three basic needs for Londoners: Jobs, Homes, and Clean Air.

From increased online shopping to more people working from home, London will be changed by the pandemic.

Our plan to Take London Forward embraces change and sets out how London can have an exciting future with quality jobs, affordable homes and clean air to breathe.

Jobs:

London has been hit hard by the pandemic and we need urgent action to create jobs and get our businesses thriving again. I will:

- Reinvent Our High Streets.
- Introduce a London Apprenticeships Hub.
- Support Small Businesses and the Self-employed.

Homes:

London has had a housing crisis for too long. To solve it, we need bold ideas and to take more control of building the homes we need.

- Establish a London Housing Company to deliver affordable homes directly
- Convert empty office space into high-quality, affordable homes.
- Fight for cladding scandal victims
- End Homelessness for good.

Clean Air:

Having Clean Air to breathe is a right. I will clean up our air with strong action to make our transport system green and rewild London. I will:

- Scrap the polluting £2bn Silvertown Road Tunnel project
- Introduce a smart and fair pay as you go road pricing system
- Invest in green transport, from new cycling routes to extended tube lines
- Rewild London with Green roofs and and green walks