

Mayoral Area: West of England

Party: Conservative

Candidate name: Samuel Williams

Twitter: @Samuel4WECA

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

Having worked closely with social workers and related professions I am acutely aware of the vital role they play in our communities. It is clear to me that social work is all too often under resourced and importantly the wellbeing of social workers below what we ought to aspire towards. Whilst social work does not directly fall under the responsibility of the West of England Mayor it is absolutely my commitment that we develop a region in which healthy, happy and well resourced communities, families and individuals are supported by healthy, happy and resourced social workers and those in related professions. If elected I will be working closely with education, skills and apprenticeship providers to ensure that training provision is available and that a workforce for the future is equipped.

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?

Yes. Whilst I recognize the multifaceted work of social workers I am particularly motivated towards supporting families to thrive and see every child raised in a loving home. It is my view that healthy children, raised in healthy families become healthy and thriving citizens. I have a plan for supporting such work and I hope to be able to work with social workers to deliver it. I will work closely to government at all opportunities to champion the work and outcomes of social workers.

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

Yes. It is a vital work area for our communities and whilst ongoing costs are not directly a part of the Combined authority responsibilities. Working towards well resourced recruitment, education, and retention initiatives are. If elected I will be delivering a programme of work around retention post covid as well as delivering further investment into educations and skills training.

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

Yes. It is my aspiration that the west of England becomes and model of E and D in employment, business leadership and social leadership. As part of this I will be looking to launch a leaders of the future mentorship programme as well as continuing to deliver leveling up programmes across the region

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

Yes. ensuring that everyone has equality of opportunity is central to conservative values and my commitment to the region. For that reason I will be delivering a significant scheme of work on employment, training and skills.

However I have worked for many years both within the UK and overseas in tackling poverty and I recognize that poverty is far from simply the absence of money and therefore I will work to grow aspiration, boost opportunity and work with government to tackle systemic imbalances that perpetuate poverty.

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

Yes. Homelessness is an issue I've spoken openly about wanting to tackle and support those in need. I recognize that the challenge is great, providing homes is part of the solution but so is providing the significant support services and I am committed to working with councils, government and support services to meet the needs.

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

The Mayor co-ordinates investment across the region, and is responsible for allocating hundreds of millions of pounds of central Government money and further investment to deliver better transport, training, housing and investment in jobs and the economy across the West of England. The Vaccine Rollout has been such a success and the Mayor of the West of England will set the direction for the future of our region as we continue to recover from Covid-19 – we cannot risk our recovery by not voting in the right leader in the elections on the 6th of May.

As a local businessman and charity leader, I'm passionate about energising our region to increase opportunities and quality of life for all. With a spending package of almost 500 million over the next 5 years:

I will invest over £100 million over the next 4 years to secure the recovery of our skills and business. Safeguarding our economy, facilitating growth and delivering improved skills training for high value jobs by launching new a 'Collaborative Future Work and Skills Programme'.

I will deliver at least 6 new train stations and crucial rail improvements; and launch pioneering new hi-tech 'on-demand' urban and rural transport services, as part of an overhauled regional mass transit system.

I will meet our regions development needs by building homes and communities for the future focusing on the significant brown-field re-development opportunities in our towns and cities, whilst protecting our beautiful rural areas and precious greenbelt.

Now is not the time to risk our recovery. Now is the time to secure our future progress.