

Report From Equalities Convener

Fiona Robertson

Over the last year, I have worked hard to make the party as inclusive and equal as it can be. There is a lot of work still to do, though, and the Covid crisis has changed everything.

It is more important than ever that our politics reflects the diversity of our country, and people from marginalised groups are brought to the heart of the work to build an independent Scotland. We are the people most affected by policies, and our voices must be heard. In the midst of a global backlash against progress, I have fought inequality, oppression and harm in whatever way I can, sometimes through public discussion, sometimes through work behind the scenes. I have worked with groups across the party to improve our processes, create opportunities and support people from marginalised groups.

My first order of business was to convene the new Equalities Forum, drawing the strands together so we can support each other. Working with the other members of the Forum has been a fantastic experience and I am so grateful for all their hard work and passion. Working as a coherent group has given us an incredible opportunity to support each other's work and build strategies together, and the next year must consolidate that. We are stronger together and, though opinions may differ, in many areas we are dealing with the same problems and addressing these as a group is more likely to be successful.

I also worked with the party to develop more inclusive candidate assessment and selection procedures, to reduce biases and increase access and opportunities for people from marginalised groups. The groundwork I have put in for this is extremely promising for the coming 12 months as we enter the pre-election cycle for local elections in 2022.

We adapted the Unconscious Bias briefing document I wrote for the Candidate Assessment Committee last year to create a training presentation to be rolled out to all branches. I worked with Rhiannon Spear, the Women's Convener, to train Women's Officers and Equalities Officers to give the presentation.

I surveyed Equalities Officers about how they found their roles and what they felt they needed more support with, and created a "How To Guide" for EOs which will be sent out before the end of my term.

I have dedicated my time, energy and heart to standing up for equalities in the SNP. It has taken some time to develop networks and learn the intricacies of processes and what needs to change to ensure our party lives up to its ideal of creating a fair, decent, equal Scotland. I am immensely grateful to everyone who has helped with this work and for the chance to make real advances for marginalised people.

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