

SORTING THE BROKEN WESTMINSTER SYSTEM

This election gives us a rare opportunity to begin to repair what is an increasingly broken political system in the UK. We need to make clear to those who wield power that they do so only with the consent of the people. Almost every aspect of the system needs an overhaul.

That includes an effective power of recall for MPs.

We will continue to work with others, across the political parties, to deliver a system that gives real power to voters to remove MPs who have forfeited the trust of their electors.

We also badly need a fair voting system for UK elections. The electoral system means political focus is on the interests of a small number of swing voters in marginal seats, and that has meant the economic and social needs of areas like the north of England, Scotland, the West Midlands and Wales have been forgotten.

The SNP supports the Single Transferable Vote, a system that makes sure every vote and every part of the country counts.

Of course, the second chamber of the UK parliament is not even elected and continues to have hereditary members who have a greater say in the future of Scotland's defence or welfare system than the elected members of the Scottish Parliament. The SNP believes the House of Lords should be scrapped and replaced with a fully elected second chamber.

Given the successful inclusion of 16 and 17 year olds in the independence vote the Scottish Parliament is legislating to ensure they also have the vote in Holyrood

Lobbying and charities

We support strict rules on lobbying but believe that campaigning charities should be allowed straightforward access and restrictions on their activities as 'non-party campaigners' should be removed.

elections. **We believe 16 and 17 year olds should be given the vote in UK general and European elections** and will work with future governments to secure this change

Promoting equality and protecting human rights

Scotland's new First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, has given a very clear signal of the need to have more equal representation of men and women in public life. The Scottish Cabinet is one of only three cabinets in the developed world to have an equal number of men and women and, with the necessary powers devolved, we will take forward proposals to ensure 50 per cent female representation on public boards.

We will press for the same step to be taken for UK wide public bodies and will also encourage the new UK government to work with the private sector to increase the number of women represented at the most senior levels in our major companies.

We will support the tightening of the law on maternity discrimination, with legislation introduced within the first year of a new UK government.

We have also called for early action on Equal Pay audits for larger companies to ensure women are getting the salaries they are entitled to. We will demand that section