

PSHEbrighton: Questions to Queen's Park By-election Candidates

Safeguarding, scrutiny and accountability

The Queen's Park by-election follows the resignation of Cllr Milla Gauge, who cited concerns about child protection, safeguarding and Brighton & Hove City Council's approach to gender-related issues. Residents had contacted Cllr Gauge about these matters, as well as concerns relating to sexual violence, safety, dignity and access to appropriate services. Her subsequent attempts to persuade the Council to take what she regarded as necessary action were unsuccessful.

You can read Cllr Gauge's resignation statement [here](#).

PSHEbrighton is inviting every candidate standing in the Queen's Park by-election to answer the same seven questions. Our purpose is to enable residents to understand and compare candidates' positions on safeguarding, democratic accountability, legal compliance and the responsibilities of elected councillors.

Candidates are asked to provide concise answers of no more than 150 words per question.

1. Milla Gauge's resignation

Cllr Milla Gauge resigned after saying that she could no longer reconcile her responsibilities as a councillor with her concerns about child protection, safeguarding and the Council's approach to gender-related issues.

Do you believe the concerns she identified warrant further scrutiny by Brighton & Hove City Council? If elected, would you support such scrutiny?

2. The WellBN investigation

The NHS patient-safety investigation into WellBN identified serious failings and potential harm involving children and young people receiving gender-related care.

Do you believe the Council should now examine whether the findings raise wider safeguarding lessons for its own services, education responsibilities and partnership arrangements? Or do you regard the NHS investigation as bringing the matter to an end as far as the Council is concerned?

3. An independent safeguarding review

PSHEbrighton and local parents have called for an independent review of pupil safeguarding in relation to Council services, policies and schools.

Do you support such a review? If not, what evidence or circumstances would you regard as sufficient to justify one?

4. Professional curiosity

Professional curiosity is a fundamental principle of effective safeguarding: credible concerns should be examined, connections considered and possible patterns investigated rather than individual parents being expected to establish harm before an organisation acts.

Do you believe Brighton & Hove City Council has demonstrated sufficient professional curiosity in its response to concerns raised by parents and others about gender-related policies and their possible safeguarding implications? Why, or why not?

5. Equality Act compliance

Following the Supreme Court judgment in *For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers* and the subsequent revision of the EHRC Code of Practice for services, public functions and associations:

What do you believe the Council's responsibility is to ensure that its policies, guidance and services comply with the Equality Act 2010? Would you support scrutiny of existing Council policies to establish whether any require amendment in light of the current legal position?

6. The responsibility of a councillor

Do you believe a councillor's responsibility is limited to responding to concerns brought to them by individual constituents, or does an elected councillor also have an independent responsibility to identify and scrutinise matters affecting the wider ward — including potential safeguarding risks that have not yet been raised with them personally?

7. Political independence

If elected as a member of a political group:

Would you be prepared to challenge your own group's position where you believed that safeguarding, legal compliance or the interests of your constituents required you to do so? If so, in what circumstances would you regard such a challenge as necessary?

PSHEbrighton will put the same questions to every candidate and will publish all responses received, subject only to reasonable editing for length and clarity. Candidates who do not respond will be identified as having received the questionnaire but not submitted a response.

Our intention is not to prescribe candidates' answers, but to give Queen's Park voters an opportunity to compare their positions on questions of safeguarding, scrutiny, legal compliance and democratic accountability that have become central to this by-election. Please send us your answers as soon as possible and before 12 noon on Monday 14th September.

Thank you.

Kind Regards,



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