

#GE2019 – SNP and LibDems complain over TV debates

The Liberal Democrats have lodged a formal complaint to ITV for excluding Jo Swinson from their election debate and warned that “failing to have Liberal Democrats in the debate is misrepresenting the current political reality”.

In a letter to ITV Chief Executive, Dame Carolyn McCall, the President of the Liberal Democrats Sal Brinton said “voters of this country deserve to hear from a Remainer on the debate stage, not just from the two men who want to deliver Brexit”.

The letter goes on to raise section 6.2 of the Ofcom Broadcasting Code which states that ‘due weight must be given to the coverage of parties and independent candidates during the election period’ and ‘broadcasters must take into account evidence of past electoral support and/or current support’.

The letter follows the Liberal Democrats launching a petition with the hashtag ‘Debate Her’ calling for Jo Swinson to be in the debate. The petition states “Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn are running scared of debating the woman leader of the strongest party of Remain.”

Commenting on the prospect of legal action by the Liberal Democrats to secure a place in the TV debates, to the exclusion of the SNP, the SNP’s Business Convener Kirsten Oswald said: “It is utterly outrageous for any broadcaster to include a minor party like the Liberal Democrats and to

exclude the SNP – who secured nearly three times as many seats at the last election, and whose current support suggests will continue to be the third largest party in Westminster.

“We have made that clear to Sky, whose proposed debate is a democratic disgrace, and to ITV – and we are considering our next steps. In all of this, one thing that is clear, is the utter hypocrisy of the Lib Dems who are happy to see a larger female led party of remain excluded in their own self-interest as part of a typical Westminster stitch-up.”