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Dear Resident,

I am writing to women in Brent East about two important matters. Although most issues are not gender specific, there are some on which I would expect women to have particular concerns and strong views, such as womens health and pensions. Your feedback will be very helpful to me in assessing the degree of those concerns amongst women; and I would be grateful if you could complete the attached questionnaire and return it to me at no cost to you at all.

I know that screening for cervical cancer is an issue for many. Four years ago the Liberal Democrats across London ran a campaign to introduce a more accurate smear test. There was a massive response to the campaign and the good news is that an improved test is now being introduced across the country.

Dr Vincent Cable, the Liberal Democrat MP for Twickenham who is leading the campaign, and other Lib Dems have also been pressing for improvements to NHS provision of breast cancer screening and treatment of the disease in Parliament. The service has improved, but many local women continue to have concerns, in particular over delays in diagnosis and access to treatment when it is required.

A second issue, which is highly topical, is that of pensions, both amongst pensioners themselves and younger women planning for the future. ***There are around 6,000 women of pension age in this parliamentary constituency alone.*** The position of women is especially serious since on average they live longer than men and generally have poorer pension provision. Large numbers have lost most of their pension because of reduced rate contributions.

I enclose a short briefing note on pensions together with one on government policy on cancer screening services and a questionnaire on both issues. Please return the survey to me as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

Sarah Teather MP