

# Local lockdowns by stealth are completely irresponsible

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Matt Hancock should have made clear the changes he was making to guidance in **advance** and **communicated it to the public and local officials**.

He needs to **make clear the situation immediately** to Parliament.

Clarification on the new rules in these areas is now needed, not only for residents but for those that would normally travel to the affected areas.

People cross these invisible boundaries every day for medical appointments or to go shopping.

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The Government **urgently** need to make it clear whether they should avoid travelling to or through these areas and under what circumstances this is now permitted.

It is now **critical** that the thousands of **key workers** that travel to these areas everyday, but live elsewhere, **should be made eligible for vaccination**.

Surge vaccination in these areas for residents is key to slowing the spread of the virus but to slow it further **it must be extended to anyone who works there too**.

The Govt changing policy by stealth in Hounslow following rise in Indian variant is irresponsible. My constituents work, shop & go to school there. They need clear guidance on what they can & cannot do. [@nadhimzahawi](#)'s answer was vague & I'll be pressing for more clarity [pic.twitter.com/afJcLcCmkQ](https://pic.twitter.com/afJcLcCmkQ)

– Munira Wilson MP (@munirawilson) [May 25, 2021](#)

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# One year on from George Floyd's murder

Today marks one year since George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, was brutally murdered by a police officer on the streets of Minneapolis.

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The past twelve months have brought watershed moments.

The Black Lives Matter movement rose to prominence around the world.

It inspired many of us to have difficult but important conversations about race – **myself included**.

And in April, Derek Chauvin was found guilty of George's murder.

Although Chauvin's guilty verdict is a step in the right direction, **we are still a long way from achieving racial justice**.

As Minnesota's Attorney General Keith Ellison said, we should not call this *"verdict justice... because justice implies true restoration. But it is accountability, which is the first step towards justice."*

It's clear **there is still so much to do** – and that this is not a uniquely American problem.

We will keep working to combat racism – whether conscious or unconscious, individual or institutional – wherever we find it.

Here in the UK, **far too many people's lives are blighted by discrimination, inequality and injustice**.

From the appalling Windrush Scandal and the disproportionate impact of the Covid pandemic to the over-representation of Black and mixed-race people in prison, there is still so much more we all must do to address institutional racism.

I'm proud that **Liberal Democrats exist to fight for justice, liberty and equality**.

And at our Autumn Conference last September, we passed a motion entitled

'Racial Justice Cannot Wait' that affirmed that Black Lives Matter and our commitment to achieving racial justice.

We are continuing our campaign to abolish the Conservatives' cruel and discriminatory Hostile Environment, end the disproportionate use of Stop and Search, and establish a comprehensive Covid-19 Race Equality Strategy.

And we will keep working to combat racism – whether conscious or unconscious, individual or institutional – **wherever we find it.**

We mustn't let George Floyd's memory fade.

**We must hold onto the outrage we felt at his murder, and continue to channel it into action for positive change.**

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## **Priti Patel has failed to get a grip on the UK's broken immigration system**

No amount of tough talk and bluster from the Home Secretary can hide the fact that she has **utterly failed** to get a grip on the UK's broken immigration system.

Priti Patel has been talking tough about immigration for ages, while failing miserably to make the system fairer or more effective.

Years of Home Office failure, coupled with hostile policies and rhetoric from successive Conservative Home Secretaries, have **shattered public confidence.**

Instead of fixing the broken system, Priti Patel is pressing ahead with **damaging plans** that will create more chaos and make it harder for British employers to recruit the workers they need.

She talks about a new 'digital border', but apparently forgot to mention that the existing project is years behind schedule and more than £170 million over budget.

And she is **refusing** to provide safe and legal routes for vulnerable refugees to come to the UK, even as she invokes our proud tradition of offering

sanctuary to those in need.

Priti Patel has been talking tough about immigration for ages, while **failing miserably** to make the system fairer or more effective.

As she said today: **enough is enough.**

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## **I welcome the Israel and Hamas ceasefire – but now it's time to tackle the big issues head-on.**

**Sixty six children have died since the outbreak of violence last week.**

We cannot afford yet another return to a status quo which will only lead to more innocent deaths in the future.

Every death was completely preventable.

And while a ceasefire is welcome, we cannot return to a status quo.

We need to take meaningful action now to **prevent innocent deaths in the future.**

The potential evictions, demolitions and settlement expansions in the West Bank – which are breaches of international law – **must be stopped.**

The status quo arrangements in Jerusalem must be restored.

It is vitally important that the Palestinians are able to fulfil their democratic right through **new elections including all Palestinian parties.**

In this context, Hamas, as well as the Israeli authorities, must forgo violence and oppression and allow a **legitimate political process to be pursued.**

The UK Government must work with the international community to facilitate the reconstruction of negotiations.

To address these issues, we need a process – but meaningful peace talks have

not meaningfully taken place for years.

So it is now time for the UK Government to work with the international community to facilitate the reconstruction of negotiations, negotiations which must take place between two equal partners.

Above all, there must be an injection of new hope into a conflict which has been hijacked by the extremes.

The strongest card the UK can play is to **recognise the state of Palestine**, which will ignite the flames of hope and bring greater balance to future negotiations.

**I urge the Government to do the right thing.**

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## [International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia 2021](#)

**The theme of this year's International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) is resisting, supporting and healing together.**

Pre-pandemic there were reports that hate crimes were on the rise.

As we start to emerge from the coronavirus pandemic, it perfectly encapsulates many of the needs of LGBT+ people in 2021.

It's now a cliché to say that our "return to normal" can't be a return to the way that things were before, but it's true.

Pre-pandemic there were reports that hate crimes were on the rise, homophobic hate crimes up 19% year-on-year and transgender hate crimes up 16%.

As we start to head back out again, we need to be mindful that **things need to change.**

Resisting homophobia, biphobia and transphobia is essential both at home and abroad.

Domestically, trans people face a **barrage of obstacles and harassment** in our media, and have been routinely **let down** by our government.

In ILGA-Europe's latest ranking of LGBT+ rights in the region, the UK has fallen from its top spot to just 10th position owing to failures in this area.

On the topic of legal gender recognition and bodily integrity, **the UK ranks a miserable 19th.**

We need to keep pushing for **reform of the Gender Recognition Act**, which LGBT+ Lib Dems have written about at length [here](#).

Internationally, we need to keep up pressure on other governments to pursue a much more liberal approach.

Resisting homophobia, biphobia and transphobia is essential both at home and abroad.

That's not just something that takes place at international summits, but through supporting activists on the ground and at local level too, as many Lib Dem Councillors are doing via our [Protect Our Twins campaign](#) in response to abuses against LGBT+ people in Poland.

But that's not all – we also need to keep up the case for a **pro-LGBT+ and humanitarian asylum policy.**

Many of us were horrified last week to read the devastating case of Alireza Fazeli Monfared who was killed just days before he was due to leave Iran.

**The UK must play its part and be a safe haven for those in need.**

**Supporting LGBT+ voices**, be they in our media, politics or community is vital too.

**In too many workplaces, LGBT+ people still face barriers.**

As reported in Stonewall's reported in 2018 report, more than a third of LGBT+ people have hidden the fact that they're LGBT+ at work for fear of discrimination, and nearly two in five bi people aren't out to anyone at work.

In addition, there is evidence for a shocking LGBT+ pay gap to the sum of almost £7000 a year.

This problem is compounded when other factors like **gender, race** and **disability** are added in.

Fighting for the rights of LGBT+ people, particularly in this area, is a real bread and butter issue.

And in our media and in our politics **we need to confidently support our trans siblings who are under sustained attack.**

An attack on one part of the LGBT+ community is an attack on all of us.

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For the past 12 months health has dominated our headlines and national conversation like never before.

So how can we incorporate healing and caring into our fight against intolerance?

We can start with campaigning for better access to **inclusive and respectful health and social care** for all LGBT+ people.

This could apply to trans and non binary people interacting with the care service, to LGBT+ people feeling the need to go “back in the closet” as they enter elderly care.

This is an upcoming generational challenge, and we need to ensure dignity for all is at the heart of social care reform.

Similarly, we need to keep pushing for **better mental health and homelessness support** – two areas that particularly impact LGBT+ people.

We can all play a part in challenging homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

As the Albert Kennedy Trust’s latest report makes clear, there is much to be done – **but also much that sits within our power to do.**

From challenging prejudiced attitudes among our friends and family and to showing your solidarity to advocating for the big changes we need to see, we can all play a part in challenging homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

**Progress is not inevitable. but fighting for it is hardwired into our liberal values.**

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