

# **Liberals Must Fight For Trans Rights**

**13 November marks the beginning of Trans Awareness Week.**

Started in 1988, this week is for amplifying the voices of trans people, and for advocating an end to the discrimination and prejudice that trans people still face today. The week ends with Trans Day of Remembrance, on 20 November, which honours the memory of the lives of trans people whose lives were lost to violence and bigotry that year.

For many trans people COVID-19 has only added to the sense of a life on-hold awaiting treatment.

**Throughout the year trans people have faced a number of challenges.**

The coronavirus, which has hung over us all this year, has impacted minorities disproportionately. As LGBT+ LD highlighted back in March, this has been especially true for trans people.

An overwhelmed NHS has cancelled many, many appointments to deal with COVID-19: access to hormones, therapy and surgery for trans people have all been impacted. In a system where waiting lists can be years-long even without a pandemic, for many trans people COVID-19 has only added to the sense of a life on-hold awaiting treatment.

**And then there has been the bitterly disappointing scrapping of Gender Recognition Act reform.** Despite three years of promises and consultations from successive Conservative governments – which in turn whipped up a storm of anti-trans hatred and misinformation – the Government in September gutted its plans to reform the GRA.

We are calling on Liberal Democrats up and down the country to join us in standing up for the rights and dignity of all trans people.

The vast majority of respondents to consultations called for self-ID, the removal of the spousal veto, and allowing non-binary people to gain legal recognition. Instead, all we got was a suggestion to take the process online and to offer a slight discount.

**The government's changes do little to protect trans people or their dignity.** Gendered Intelligence at the time summed the reforms up well: “reforming a piece of legislation which is fundamentally broken cannot mean slapping a discount sticker on it and expecting great results”.

These two huge policy areas have dominated much of 2020 for LGBT+ activists – **but there are many other areas of concern for trans people.** For example, recent studies have highlighted how trans people are at once more likely to

be highly educated than the average person, but also significantly more likely to be unemployed or live in poverty.

We have challenges in our own party to remedy, also.

Our leadership contenders this year were united in their defence of trans rights, which have been embedded in our manifestos for years. We have adopted a formal definition of transphobia, and at Conference this year we passed a motion to make trans and nonbinary members more able to participate in our party. However, the debate at the conference shone a light on the transphobia that still exists in our party. **Our party may be at the forefront of the fight for trans rights** – but we cannot be complacent with ourselves.

In spite of the challenges the trans community are facing there is hope.

That's why we are calling on Liberal Democrats up and down the country to join us in standing up for the rights and dignity of all trans people.

**Trans rights are human rights. Non-binary people are non-binary, trans men are men, and trans women are women. These sentences are not contentious in our party.**

In spite of the challenges the trans community are facing there is hope.

The recent United States elections—which saw more and more LGB people get elected to congress—also saw LGBT+ rights campaigner and the National Press Secretary for the Human Rights Campaign, Sarah McBride, become the first State Senator-elect in US history who is openly trans.

**Progress and justice are not inevitable – but they are possible. It is our job, and the job of all liberals, to make it so.**

– *LGBT+ Executive*

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## **[Time is ticking for a united approach to keeping families safe at Christmas](#)**

With people across the United Kingdom desperate to be home safely with their families this festive season, **I was glad to hear that all four governments have listened to Liberal Democrat calls to work together on how this can**

happen.

With many families split across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland we need clarity this Christmas: conflicting measures introduced by the respective governments of the UK nations will simply cause further confusion and complications.

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## **[The Government must stop stalling and hold China to account](#)**

Time and again the Chinese Government has shown its utter disdain for the Joint Declaration.

The disqualification of elected lawmakers in Hong Kong is reprehensible and marks **another step in China's work to end democracy and freedom on the peninsula.**

The 'one country, two systems' is disappearing before our eyes.

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## **[Watch: Ed Davey and Munira Wilson in conversation with Mayor of Liverpool Joe Anderson](#)**

On Wednesday 11th November, Liberal Democrat Leader Ed Davey and Liberal Democrat Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Spokesperson Munira Wilson took part in an open meeting with Mayor of Liverpool Joe Anderson and other representatives from Liverpool City Council.

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## [The Immigration Bill has passed, but our fight goes on](#)

It will end EU free movement on 31st December – taking away the rights of British people to live, work and study across Europe, and the rights of EU citizens to come here to do the same.

The Bill itself doesn't set out what will come after free movement ends. But we already know that **Priti Patel's immigration plans will be a disaster for the small businesses that power the UK economy.**

These Tory plans will lead to huge shortages in key sectors like construction and hospitality, where employers are already struggling to survive the coronavirus pandemic.

This Bill takes away the rights of British people to live, work and study across Europe

And they will make the existing social care crisis even worse.

**Liberal Democrats have fought at every step of the way** to save free movement, oppose the Tories' destructive immigration plans, and protect the rights of British citizens living in Europe and EU citizens in the UK.

We opposed the Bill, while also leading cross-party efforts to amend it to protect citizens' rights, including by providing EU citizens with physical proof of 'Settled Status' – rather than the digital-only system the Home Office is pursuing. Sadly, the Conservatives rejected our amendments.

**But our fight doesn't end here.**

EU citizens in the UK have been living under a cloud of uncertainty for far too long. They are our families and friends, our colleagues and carers. **They must have the right to stay.**

Those who have risked their health to look after us during this pandemic should be welcome to live here

So we are already gathering support for a private member's bill, tabled by Christine Jardine, that will automatically guarantee the rights of EU citizens to stay in the UK – and give them physical proof.

Moving forward, Liberal Democrats will continue to oppose Priti Patel's destructive policies and **work to build a fair immigration system that works for our economy and treats everyone with dignity and respect.**

That's why we're also **fighting to give all NHS and care staff from other countries the right to stay.**

They have risked their health to look after us during this pandemic. They have put their lives at risk for people in our country, and they should be welcome to live here.

No one who has fought to save lives in Britain during this emergency should be forced to leave.

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