

EQUALITY FOR ALL

LGBTIQ GENERAL ELECTION MANIFESTO 2015



Green Party
for the common good

EQUALITY FOR ALL

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) rights have come a long way since the turn of the millennium. The advent of marriage equality, fertility and adoption rights and the scrapping of Section 28 have done much to ensure LGBTIQ people are treated as equal citizens.

Yet there is still much to do. Homophobia, transphobia and biphobia have not yet been extinguished from society. Many issues remain, for government and society, and also internationally.

The Green Party has always been at the forefront of the LGBTIQ rights movement, and was the first party in the UK to call for marriage equality. We are now proudly pushing forward on trans rights, rights for LGBTIQ refugees and action internationally for LGBTIQ people.

Caroline Lucas has been a tireless advocate for equal rights in parliament. She has led calls for compulsory LGBTIQ-inclusive sex education in schools and fought against loopholes that meant same-sex spouses did not receive equal pension rights. Caroline has also condemned the Spousal Veto – where trans individuals require written permission from their partner to change gender identity - and fought hard for a Gender Identity Clinic in her constituency.

This May voters have a real chance to push forward the Green Party's progressive agenda, re-elect Caroline and send more Green MPs to parliament.

Benali Hamdache

Green Party Equalities Spokesperson

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EQUALITY FOR ALL

LEGISLATION

Marriage equality was an important step in LGBTIQ rights, but there is still more to do to protect the rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in society. The Green Party would strive to ensure that no LGBTIQ person faces discrimination, violence or unequal treatment.

We would introduce new laws to:

- Make equal marriage truly equal. Same-sex partners should be entitled to exactly the same pension inheritance rights as any other couple.
- Apologise to and pardon all 50,000–100,000 people convicted of consenting adult same-sex relations under anti-gay laws that have now been repealed.
- Combat homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic violence by ensuring uniform legislation against all forms of hate crime.
- Reduce Employment Tribunal fees so that everyone can afford justice in cases of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia at work.

Greens will also push for consultation on reducing the 12-month blood donation deferral period for men who have sex with men, based on individual risk assessment where the donor is identified to be not at risk of passing infections into the blood supply.

EDUCATION

Too many LGBTIQ people have their school life marred by homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying. More do not receive the LGBTIQ-inclusive education they need to navigate life. By improving education and challenging bullying every student would be given the chance to succeed in life and be well-resourced enough to look after their health and wellbeing.

The Green Party would:

- Provide mandatory HIV, sex, and relationships education – age appropriate and LGBTIQ-inclusive – in all schools from primary level onwards.
- Require every school to have an anti-bullying programme that explicitly combats homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying.
- Ensure every teacher is a qualified teacher, skilled up to provide an LGBTIQ-inclusive education and look after pupils' wellbeing.

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REFUGEES

The UK has proved to be a safe haven for many LGBTIQ EU and non-EU citizens seeking a welcoming place to live. Free movement of people across the EU should be celebrated as giving an opportunity for LGBTIQ Europeans to leave less accepting societies and build a life where they are treated fairly.

Beyond the EU too many LGBTIQ people face violence, persecution and intimidation because of their gender identity or their sexuality. Many flee horrific experiences only to find a hostile asylum process in the UK. LGBTIQ refugees too often find their initial applications incorrectly rejected, only to be accepted on appeal.

The Green Party recognises the need for:

- An immediate moratorium on deportation of LGBTIQ refugees until the system is reformed.
- The end of indefinite detention of refugees waiting for their claims to be processed.
- The right of appeal and legal aid. Every refugee should get a fair hearing.
- Allowing refugees to work whilst their application is under review.
- The full implementation of recommendations made by John Vine, former Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, which include:
 - Full training for border agents so they can sensitively ascertain refugees' identity and past experiences
 - End sexually explicit questioning
 - Ensure an evidence-based process is used to assess claims

TRANS RIGHTS

In the fight for LGBTIQ rights, trans people have been left behind. The government must do more to improve the wellbeing of trans citizens and ensure institutions like marriage are trans-inclusive. We support the right for trans people to access services, hospitals, toilets, changing rooms and other gendered spaces that match their affirmed gender.

The Green Party would:

- Improve access to medical services and gender identity clinics.
- Remove the Spousal Veto so that trans people can acquire their gender recognition certificate without having to obtain permission from their spouse.
- Strengthen hate crime legislation and public education to tackle accepted norms of harassment and abuse of trans and non-binary people, especially of trans women.
- Improve access to services for young people seeking to transition.
- Tackle unemployment in the trans community by increasing access to adult learning, increasing funding for those who want to start a business, and encouraging applications for such funding from more diverse backgrounds.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

While the situation has improved for LGBTIQ people in many parts of the world, too many LGBTIQ people live in fear of violence and are marginalised from society. The UK government has not done enough to encourage other countries to recognise the rights of LGBTIQ people. For too long we have tolerated the outrages of dictatorships that discriminate, marginalise and kill LGBTIQ citizens.

The Green Party would push for action on LGBTIQ rights globally by:

- Challenging criminalisation, discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ people in other countries and working in solidarity with campaigners there.
- Using the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court to prosecute regimes that commit outrages against LGBTIQ citizens.
- Ending the sale of weapons and military equipment to regimes that violate human rights.
- Deploying sanctions against regimes that violate international human rights standards.
- Pressing the Commonwealth to grant accredited status to a Commonwealth LGBTIQ Association and to urge all member states to end the criminalisation of homosexuality and to protect LGBTIQ citizens against discrimination and hate crime.

CULTURE

LGBTIQ clubs, bars and venues are often hugely important focal points for the community. For many years they were the only safe place LGBTIQ people could meet each other. Sadly, particularly in London, a number of LGBTIQ venues face closure as developers seek to turn valuable community spaces into housing.

The Green Party would act by:

- Giving local authorities more power to protect against change of use and demolition of local venues.
- Giving communities more power to obtain protected status for venues.
- Protecting the rights of small scale pubs and bars to put on live music and acts.

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AUSTERITY

Cuts to the NHS, welfare services and public services all disproportionately impact the LGBTIQ community. The Green Party opposes these devastating cuts and would ensure that public services remain well funded and for the common good.

We would:

- Propose the NHS Reinstatement Bill to reverse the creeping privatisation of the health system. Cuts to the NHS make it harder for trans people to access gender reassignment services, weaken HIV prevention services and restrict access to mental health services.
- Increase funding for HIV prevention services.
- Ensure local government receives enough funding to protect specialised services such as those focused on issues around sexual health, domestic violence services and LGBTIQ young people.
- Protect the welfare state and preserve the vital security net many LGBTIQ people rely on.

INTERSEX RIGHTS

The Green Party fully supports the rights of all people born intersex to self-determination, bodily integrity, and personal autonomy in all medical decisions made about them.

We support intersex being recognised as a protected status in current UK equality legislation as a first step toward securing legal protections against discrimination for everyone born intersex.

The Green Party would strive to support intersex advocates as they work toward ensuring that it is made unlawful for clinicians or medical practitioners to enact sex assignment interventions or treatments on infants and young children that can be deferred until such time as an individual is able to give their informed consent.

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ASEXUAL RIGHTS

The Green Party recognises that asexuality and aromanticism are part of the diverse range of human experience. The Green Party rejects any stigmatising of these characteristics as bad for individuals, or bad for society.

We understand that these characteristics are thoroughly misunderstood by society; we will aim to include details of them in general education so that asexual and aromantic people can flourish in society.

DIVERSITY IN PARLIAMENT

Parliament needs to be more diverse. At the moment, there is a severe lack of ethnic minority, LGBTIQ, disabled and women MPs in parliament. Our electoral system entrenches many white male candidates into safe seats, but introducing proportional representation would improve diversity.

The Greens are fielding at least 44 LGBTIQ candidates, which is a strong step forward. Our LGBTIQ Greens group is also an active force in the party, pushing forward LGBTIQ rights and supporting candidates.



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