



LGBT+ Labour Questions - Angela Rayner Response

1. What have you done in your time as a Member of Parliament and prior to your election to improve the lives of LGBT+ people?

My support for LGBT+ people precedes my time as an MP.

Although I am not LGBT+ myself, I have felt a deep kinship with the community since I was a young woman.

I have been open about my past, and how I felt judged for being a mum at sixteen. I can say, hand on heart, that I never felt judged by LGBT+ friends. I felt loved and welcomed. That meant the world to me, and I owe so much to the LGBT+ community of Greater Manchester as a result.

I have tried my utmost to be a good ally to the community, and to return that solidarity – especially in my role as Shadow Education Secretary.

In that role I fought hard to make sure we have compulsory LGBT+ inclusive sex and relationship education, because I know just how much education can transform all our communities. I want all our young people to grow up informed about sex and relationships so they can understand and celebrate difference, and not be scared or divided by it. I made the argument for this many times in the Commons, the media and within the party.

Done well, truly inclusive sex and relationship education can go a long way to dealing with homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools.

I've also been an outspoken opponent of transphobia in all its forms. I have publicly criticised transphobic rhetoric, sometimes sadly, in our own party, and certainly in wider society and the mainstream media. You can read what I've said before on this here:

- [Let's Look Out For And Support Trans People Facing Bigotry](#)
- [The way we talk about trans people today reminds me of Margaret Thatcher's vicious Section 28](#)
- ['The Law Isn't Working' – Angela Rayner MP On the Gender Recognition Act](#)

I was proud to address the TUC LGBT+ Workers' Conference in 2019.

I was very happy to support Conor McGinn MP's amendment which led to the introduction of same sex marriage in Northern Ireland as it just couldn't be right that whilst the Northern Irish government was inactive, LGBT+ people in Northern Ireland could not access same sex marriage.

I have signed up to LGBT+ Labour's '10 pledges' as well as the Labour Campaign for Trans Rights.

2. As Labour Deputy Leader, what is the first change in legislation you would campaign on to improve the lives of LGBT+ people?

There are many important legislative changes which need to be made to improve the lives of LGBT+ people in this country and around the world. I will keep campaigning to ensure that legislation respects the dignity of LGBT+ people. This includes eliminating the remaining differences between marriage and same sex marriage and improvements in marriage legislation to allow trans people to use the terminology which best fits their gender identity.

It's absolutely shameful that in the UK, it is a postcode lottery on whether people can access PrEP, with Scotland leading the way, yet in some places it only being available on a trial. I know those trials are extremely hard to get on to. We do not need a further trial period; we need a full roll-out of PrEP to anyone who wants to use it, subject to appropriate medical advice.

I support reform of the Gender Recognition Act and support people's right to self-define their own gender without intrusive psychiatric reporting. Although at the time it was introduced the GRA was groundbreaking, it is now clear that reform is needed to give people more dignity through the process. The length of time the process takes and the cost needs to be reduced as well as changes like making it possible for people to identify as non-binary.

I also want to fight for improved access to mental health services generally but we know the cuts and lack of access have a disproportionate impact on LGBT+ people and this must be addressed. Mental health services can be a matter of life and death, and people should be able to access the help they need when they need it.

Also, healthcare provision for trans people in the UK is completely unfit for purpose, it needs proper investment and a clearer right to access. We need to remove the barriers that unnecessarily stop trans people from leading the lives they want to. This needs to recognise that every trans and non-binary person's needs are different and it's not always a medical intervention which is required, there may be other types of support needed.

However, if I had to choose one it would be to ensure the roll out of sex and relationship education is as inclusive and well-funded as possible. I'm pleased that after years of our campaigning, the government is now introducing sex and relationship education. But without proper investment, education and training for staff, including newly qualified teachers, the roll out will be ineffective.

I know that sex and relationship education is only going to be effective with knowledgeable and confident staff delivering it. If it's delivered badly it can almost be worse than none at all. The same goes for dealing with LGBT+ bullying in schools. Staff need the time and the resources to deliver it properly. Ultimately education is necessary to tackle ignorance, prejudice and discrimination.

3. How will you root out incidences of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia alongside all other forms of discrimination in the Labour party?

I take a very strong line against discrimination in whatever form it takes. That's why when I was at Unison I ensured that Unison members on the leaked BNP list were thrown out.

It is why when Roger Godsiff, the former MP, supported anti-LGBT+ campaigners, I immediately reported him to the Labour whip and ensured disciplinary action was action.

Complaints against Labour party members for discriminatory behaviour need to be dealt with swiftly. It's simply unacceptable for someone to be waiting years for the outcome of an internal investigation.

As Deputy Leader, one of my priorities will be to ensure that complaints are dealt with more quickly, transparently and with clear outcomes. We need to ensure members have full faith in the Party's complaints procedures. It is clear that an independent process is required to restore trust.

I would also work with the LGBT+ Labour team to draw up and deliver a dynamic programme of education that we can roll out to as many members as possible.

4. How would you ensure that an increased number of diverse LGBT+ people are selected to represent the Labour Party at all levels of local devolved and national elected office?

Representation is extremely important to me. In my work at Unison I was at the forefront of developing self-organised groups to encourage under-represented people to organise together. That is why LGBT+ Labour is so important and needs to have the required resources and be included in Labour party decisions on LGBT+ issues.

One of the lessons we learnt from the general election last year was that the Labour party can't just go into communities and tell them what we think they need. We need to support activists and leaders to come through from communities and the same applies to people from the LGBT+ community. In the same way as we need more working class voices, more BAME voices, more disabled people's voices, we also need more LGBT+ voices speaking up for the issues that affect you. This must include intersectional voices who identify as part of more than one community and the additional barriers those LGBT+ people may face due to ethnicity or disability for example. The fact that we have never had an openly trans or non-binary MP shows us how far we need to go.

So if I am elected Deputy Leader of the party I commit to not only continuing to speak up loudly on LGBT+ issues but also working with LGBT+ Labour on how we increase representation of LGBT+ people in elected office, right across the country.