



LGBT+ Labour Questions - Keir Starmer 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?

Fighting for justice and equality, including for the LGBT+ community, has been at the heart of my career before entering Parliament - and would be at the core of my mission as UK Labour Leader at home and abroad.

I have voted consistently in favour of LGBT+ equality at every opportunity since I became an MP – from extending same-sex marriage to Northern Ireland, to the proposals to make LGBT+ inclusive education a mandatory part of the curriculum.

I have consistently defended and fought for our laws promoting equality and human rights, including voting against repealing the Human Rights Act and to retain the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Prior to entering Parliament, I championed and supported the legal battle to secure the right for LGBT+ people to serve in the military as a barrister. And, as I said at the Pink News Awards last year, of the things I was proudest to do was work with the Human Dignity Trust, which challenged laws across the Commonwealth which penalise people for being LGBT+, including working directly with individuals in Jamaica.

It is a great tragedy to me that one of the many negative consequences of colonialism was the dumping of our own then repressive criminal law on many countries – leaving a terrible legacy today.

I am hugely proud of what successive Labour Governments have achieved for LGBT+ people at multiple levels – but there is so much more we can and must do.

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

Two of the most crucial current legislative and policy changes I would hold the Government to account on will be on pushing them to implement long-awaited and needed reforms to the Gender Recognition Act to introduce a self-declaration process, and legal recognition for non-binary gender identities; and ensuring the full implementation of LGBT+ inclusive Relationships and Sex Education. I would also fight for a complete ban on, and the prosecution of those involved in, so-called “gay conversion therapy” and for hate crimes against the LGBT+ community to be considered aggravated offences.

As Brexit happens I will fight to ensure there is no regression of the legal rights and protections that exist for the LGBT+ community, and that we defend instruments like the Human Rights Act and the European Convention on Human Rights.

There are also many other smaller legislative changes that could make a difference, for example reviewing the requirement for gender markers in official documents, and for example introducing an 'X' category to enable non-binary people to be recognised.

We have to recognise however that legislative or policy change while necessary, is not always sufficient. We need for example to ensure the necessary funding, training and support to deliver LGBT-inclusive Relationships and Sex Education, and ensure we properly equip schools and teachers to deal with bullying of LGBT+ pupils. Our police and justice system must also have the training and resources to adequately investigate and prosecute those who target the LGBT+ community in person and online.

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

I have zero tolerance for any form of discrimination in our party – whether directed at the LGBT+ community or any others. That leadership must come from the top and be reflected in our party from our senior elected representatives, through our party officials to our constituency and membership structures. And it requires to underpin it, a fully independent complaints and compliance process that commands the confidence of LGBT+ members and deals swiftly and robustly with cases when failings are found.

I would work closely with LGBT+ Labour and commit to meet and listen to them personally on a regular basis, to understand the concerns and experiences of LGBT+ members, and to ensure that homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are rooted out – and that inclusion and solidarity are our hallmarks. I will also seek for example to listen closely to BAME and disabled LGBT+ members, to take steps to ensure our party is fully inclusive in all respects.

Put simply, you will not be welcome in the Labour Party I lead, if you refuse to make others welcome, include or support them because of their sexuality or gender identity.

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?

Our party must reflect the country it seeks to lead, and the Governments it intends to form at all levels.

That means ensuring we have the processes and procedures in place to ensure the widest, and most diverse range of LGBT+ candidates selected, in winnable seats, which reflect the true diversity of our country and communities.

I would work with and build on the excellent work of LGBT+ Labour, and many of our Trades Unions, to support, encourage, select and elect LGBT+ candidates at every level of elected office, and representative roles within our party structures.

Labour and the Trade Union movement have made huge strides in securing elected representation for the LGBT+ community over the past three decades, but it is long overdue that we don't yet for

example have a Trans or Non-Binary Member of Parliament, and that representation from the BAME LGBT+ community and other intersectional minorities, is equally not what it should be.

We can and must do more, as part of an ongoing review of our candidate selection procedures to ensure we put this into practise.