

LONDON 2016 GREEN PARTY LGBT+ MANIFESTO

London has long stood as a beacon of tolerance for LGBT+ people. For decades people of all sexualities and gender identities have looked to this city as somewhere where they can settle and build a life for themselves.

Today that reputation extends beyond just the borders of this country and serves as an international model of acceptance.

Yet this is not to say that the battle for equality is won. Marriage equality was a huge step forward for human rights, yet in too many settings LGBT+ people still face lack of opportunity, outright discrimination and marginalisation.

The Green Party has always been at the forefront of fighting for LGBT+ rights. We were the first party in England to officially support marriage equality. Our Green Assembly members successfully pushed for the recognition of civil partnerships in London before anywhere else in the country. With Sian Berry as Mayor and more Green assembly members elected to the London Assembly we can continue to fight for a more inclusive London.

We will oppose the gentrification threatening London's scene. We will fight for a central LGBT+ resource centre for London's young people. We will push councils and the GLA to make public services more trans inclusive.

With the power of good ideas and more Greens in City Hall we can bring a real change for London's LGBT+ community.

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COMMUNITY

London's diverse population has worked long and hard to build communities and collectives out of nothing. Striving LGBT frontrunners turned Soho into the bustling and lively space it is today. Activists have helped create the yearly cultural events that are London Pride and Black Pride. It is the LGBT+ community that built up the outcroppings of independent shops and venues that make up the gay villages in Vauxhall, Soho and elsewhere.

Yet these and many other valuable spaces are under threat. The out-of-control London housing market threatens far too many establishments, no matter how successful. Our current mayor has not done enough to support London Pride and LGBT+ venues. The Green Party would take decisive action to protect these venues and events that do so much to sustain local economies and communities.

Greens have already:

- As an Assembly Member Darren Johnson has worked hard to protect small venues and has come up with comprehensive plans on how to protect LGBT and other venues from gentrification.
- As a Camden Councillor Sian Berry supported the ultimately unsuccessful campaign to save the Black Cap, one of the longest running LGBT+ venues in London.

Greens in City Hall will:

- Help communities and local authorities to designate LGBT+ venues as assets of community value and apply other planning protections, to prevent their closure.
- Ensure that the need for housing does not force the closure of LGBT+ venues. We will amend the London plan to ensure that residential developments built next to venues would cover the cost of soundproofing needed for venues to sit happily next to housing developments.
- Guarantee the level of funding for London Pride and work to make it more financially secure. We will also work with London Pride to ensure it has the necessary financial security to ensure it is not financially dependent on corporate tax dodgers.
- As Mayor, Sian Berry will finally attend London Pride after 5 years of Boris' absence. This city's leader cannot be absent in the highest-profile call for equality and acceptance every year.
- Create a LGBT+ community space to serve as a much needed hub for people, particularly young people and an older generation marginalised by commercial venues, seeking information and support in being confident in their sexuality or gender identity.

HEALTH

The LGBT+ community has its own specific health needs and requirements. Yet in this age of ideological cuts the fight against HIV and for good mental health has been side-lined.

Dire local government cuts threaten the future of many sexual health clinics and domestic violence refuges. This year London's only refuge for gay and bisexual men faced closure because of local government cuts, PACE the mental health charity for LGBT+ people closed its doors and sexual health charities have stated they face a funding crisis.

These cuts are not good for the LGBT+ community and represent a fundamental dereliction of public health duties. As Greens we'd bring the power of good ideas to protect public health.

Greens have already:

- Caroline Lucas MP has led the fight for compulsory LGBT-inclusive education in parliament, putting forward a Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE) Bill.
- Caroline Russell, Green Councillor in Islington and a Londonwide Assembly Candidate, successfully passed a motion to make every month LGBT History month in Islington and to improve the borough's sexual education provision.

Greens in City Hall will:

- Establish key services like sexual health and domestic violence refuges as vital London wide services. Instead of a clinic or refuge being dependent on one local council's overstretched budget we'd ensure that these services were adequately funded on a London level.
- Build London's first Aids memorial, to act as a much needed reminder of those whose lives have been lost and a reminder of the fight we still have to battle against HIV.
- Oppose cuts to local government's public health budget and lead the fight on HIV prevention and sex education.
- Support efforts for the preventive HIV treatment programme PrEP to be prescribed on the NHS.
- Work to make sure personal, social & health education is provided in all London's schools, and support efforts by Greens nationally to make this a statutory requirement.

RIGHTS

Fundamentally Londoners believe in equal rights for every person in this city. We have an expectation that at work, at home or out in the street everyone deserves the right to freely live their life.

Nearly every Londoner will find harassment on street, discrimination at work or exclusion from public services intolerable for this city. Yet we should be deeply concerned by the reported increase in LGBT+ hate crimes in London.

Greens have already:

- Helped introduce a scheme for civil partnerships at City Hall in 2000 which paved the way for legislation at a national level and equal marriage rights.
- Jenny Jones AM has been a tireless advocate for good policing and action on hate crime. In 2013 Jenny successfully opposed Southwark Police's plan to remove their liaison officer, despite rising hate crime.
- Darren Johnson AM took a leading role in criticising Boris Johnson's plans to withdraw the GLA from the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

Greens in City Hall will:

- Work with local councils to ensure trans people can be treated with the dignity they deserve and ensure they are addressed with the honorifics (Mr, Ms, Mx) they are comfortable with. All council, mayoral and GLA paperwork should be amended to include Mx as an option for a gender neutral honorific.
- Return the GLA to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. We will work to ensure the Mayor's office and the Greater London Assembly is one of the most inclusive LGBT employers in the country.
- As part of our ethical policy for Transport for London's advertising, ensure that homophobic or transphobic advertising never feature on the city's public transport network.
- Preserve hate crime hot lines specifically for LGBT+ people and related hate crime.
- Address the rise in LGBT+ hate crime by protecting and expanding Safer Neighbourhood policing teams as well as ring-fencing funding for each borough's LGBT Liaison Office.