

[Green Party condemns Conservative MP's comments on homosexuality](#)



28 April 2017

The Green Party has responded to allegations Conservative MP Andrew Turner told college students that homosexuality is 'wrong' and 'dangerous to society' [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

"There's no place for these prehistoric pronouncements in our politics. It's astounding that in this day and age we're hearing reports of an MP spreading such hatred, particularly in a college which should be a place of learning and respect.

"The Isle of Wight deserves so much better from its elected representative. Green Party candidate Vix Lowthion [2] will stand up for a fairer, more inclusive society and champion the rights of all, including the LGBTIQ+ community. Vote Green to kick this bigotry out of Parliament.

"This has come on the same day the Green Party launched its LGBTIQ+ manifesto [3] with promises to protect LGBTIQ+ refugees, provide decent HIV protection and promote rights for intersex and trans people."

Notes:

1. <https://onthewight.com/isle-of-wight-mp-homosexuality-wrong-dangerous-to-society-andrew-turner-students/>
2. Vix Lowthion is the Green Party's education spokesperson and general election candidate in the Isle of Wight, where she is a teacher.
3. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/04/28/greens-to-launch-lgbtiqa-manifesto-in-church/>

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Profit should never be a motive in benefit assessments

Yesterday, in the Scottish Parliament, I ruled out the use of private companies in assessing people for the benefits that will be delivered under Scotland's new social security system.

This was a proud moment. Profit should never ever be a motive in these important assessments and I wanted to let the people who will be relying on benefits know that I had listened to them and was making a clear decision on this issue.

The Government have refused to set out their state pension age plans – McDonnell

John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting on the Government's refusal to set out their State Pension age plans, said:

"Today the Government have refused to set out their plans for the State Pension age before the election, despite the legal requirement to report to Parliament before the 7th May.

"It comes on the back of the Prime Minister's continued refusal to commit to the State Pension triple-lock.

"This is yet more worrying news for pensioners already hit by a squeeze to their living standards. Labour is calling for clarity from the Tories on their plans for the future of the State Pension age.

"Pensioners, and working people, cannot afford not to know the future of the State Pension age.

"This is more evidence that this election is a choice between a Tory party that fails working people and a Labour Party that will stand up for working people and deliver a better, fairer Britain."

Ends

Scotland's female STEM struggle revealed

28 Apr 2017



The SNP need to do more to encourage females into participating in STEM subjects, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

The calls come after latest figures from the SQA show that girls are significantly underrepresented in STEM subjects at Higher and National 5 level.

Of those taking Higher exams, only 9 per cent of engineering science, 27 per cent of physics and 17 per cent of computing students were female.

National 5 level also revealed a lack of female participation – 7 per cent of engineering, 27 per cent of physics and 18 per cent of computing examinees being girls.

Those girls who did take STEM subjects were shown to have performed better than boys – 81 per cent of girls achieving grades A to C compared to 72 per cent of boys.

Scottish Conservative shadow secretary for education, Liz Smith MSP said:

“These statistics are further proof of the extent of the STEM challenge facing the Scottish Government.

“The number of female students entering key subjects is only a very small fraction of the total entries from their male counterparts.

“Therefore, it begs the question about the effectiveness of the Scottish Government’s STEM strategy – a strategy that is already facing criticism from some academic bodies like the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

“Those female students who do enter for STEM subjects generally perform very well indeed, so it is even more disappointing that there are such low entries.

“Almost every report published by the science and technology industries tell us how important STEM subjects are to the future of the Scottish economy and how important women are to these new employment opportunities.

“The Scottish Government has much to do to address these concerns. Scotland needs many more graduates skilled in STEM subjects and women must be a very important part of that.”

Statistics were taken from SQA's Annual Statistical Report 2016 available via this link: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/63001.html>

[Labour's unequivocal pledge to Gibraltar – Emily Thornberry meets Chief Minister Picardo during a two day visit to the territory](#)

Labour's unequivocal pledge to Gibraltar

A future Labour government will guarantee the continued sovereignty of Gibraltar and make its future economic prosperity a priority during the Brexit negotiations. Labour's pledge to Gibraltar came at the end of a two-day visit to the territory by Shadow Foreign Secretary Emily Thornberry.

Ms Thornberry met with Gibraltar's Chief Minister Fabian Picardo, Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia, and other members of parliament. She toured the air terminal and frontier area, and attended the Workers Memorial Day service at the Alameda Gardens. She also met with representatives of Gibraltar's workforce to discuss their views on the post-Brexit economy.

Speaking after her meetings, Emily Thornberry said:

"I have been delighted to spend this time with Chief Minister Picardo, members of his Cabinet, and representatives of Gibraltar's workforce. Ahead of the General Election in June, I have reinforced to all of them that the Labour Party remains unequivocally committed to protecting the sovereignty of Gibraltar and the right of its people to self-determination.

"We are also determined to protect Gibraltar's economy and ensure that its government can continue to create jobs and prosperity in the years to come. Under a Labour government, those principles will never be subject to compromise, bargaining or trade – whether in the Brexit negotiations or beyond – but will instead remain as solid as the Rock itself.

"I also reassured the Chief Minister that – along with London, the devolved administrations, and other overseas territories – Labour will ensure that Gibraltar is closely consulted throughout those Brexit negotiations, so that together we can safeguard economic growth in every region and territory, and get the best possible deal for all British citizens.

"Britain's overseas territories are a fundamental part of our national

history and Labour will always stand up for the rights, interests and self-determination of their citizens, whether that means protecting the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands against anyone who would seek to challenge it, or supporting the right of the Chagos Islanders to return to their homelands in Diego Garcia.”

Chief Minister Picardo welcomed Ms Thornberry’s visit, saying:

“It has been a pleasure to welcome Emily to Gibraltar. She is a good friend and a defender of Gibraltar in Parliament in her role as Shadow Foreign Secretary. Her visit, even during this election period, demonstrates her deep commitment and that of her party, to the people of Gibraltar and our right to determine our own future.”

Ends