

Historical convictions for same-sex sexual activity to be wiped

The Home Secretary will extend the government's disregards and pardons scheme to ensure that anyone convicted or cautioned for consensual same-sex sexual activity, under discriminatory laws that have since been abolished, can apply to have them 'disregarded' – meaning it would be wiped from their criminal records and not required to be disclosed.

An automatic pardon will be extended to all individuals whose cautions and convictions are disregarded under the scheme.

While people have been able to apply to have historical same-sex sexual cautions and convictions disregarded since 2012, government is taking action to widen the scope of the current scheme which is too narrow. Present laws set out a specified list of offences which can form the basis of an application, which are largely focused on the repealed offences of buggery and gross indecency between men.

Via an amendment to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, the government will scrap this specific list and broaden eligibility of the scheme to encompass any repealed or abolished civilian or military offence that was imposed on someone purely for, or due to, consensual same-sex sexual activity.

The amendments will also enable those who have died prior to the amendment coming into force, and within 12 months after the amendment coming into force, to be posthumously pardoned.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

It is only right that where offences have been abolished, convictions for consensual activity between same-sex partners should be disregarded too.

I hope that expanding the pardons and disregards scheme will go some way to righting the wrongs of the past and to reassuring members of the LGBT community that Britain is one of the safest places in the world to call home.

The Home Secretary is grateful to Lord Cashman and Lord Lexden for raising this important issue during the bill's committee stage.

Conditions must still be met in order for a disregard and pardon to be granted, including that any other party involved must have been aged 16 or over and the sexual activity must not constitute an offence today.

The government has already passed 'Turing's Law' in 2017, returned medals of

LGBT veterans and apologised for the archaic ban on LGBT diplomats in the civil service.

There is an [application form and guidance notes](#) on applying for a disregard and pardon of convictions for decriminalised sexual offences.