

PM's speech at the Pride reception: 2 July 2019

Welcome, everyone.

This is the third Pride reception that I have had the pleasure of hosting.

And it is always a highpoint of the summer.

A chance to celebrate the contribution that LGBT people of all backgrounds make to our national life.

To look back with pride on everything that generations of campaigners have achieved.

And to look forward to a future where the bigotry and discrimination that LGBT people still face can be made a thing of the past.

During this year's Pride season, we remember two important anniversaries.

50 years since the Stonewall Riots in New York – the catalyst for the modern LGBT rights movement.

And thirty years since a group of people here in the UK, inspired by those events in 1969, founded Stonewall – today Europe's biggest LGBT rights charity.

I am delighted to welcome Ruth Hunt and all the guests from Stonewall here today – thirty people nominated by Stonewall to celebrate their thirty years of ground-breaking activism in the cause of human rights.

Stonewall has four inspiring missions: empowering individuals to be their authentic selves; transforming institutions to create inclusive and accepting cultures; changing hearts and minds so LGBT people can participate fully in society; and changing and protecting laws so that equality is achieved, maintained and defended.

These are noble causes and your success in pursuing them has made our country, and our world, a better place.

The last three decades have indeed been years of progress.

Years when the hearts and minds of the British people have been changed – have been opened.

Today we are a more accepting, more respectful, and more loving society when it comes to questions of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The fact that in 2019 the second in line to the throne speaks openly about how relaxed and comfortable he would be if one of his children were to come

out to him is a sign of just how far we have come.

It sends a powerful message right around the world.

Because as everyone here knows, the job is not done.

In many countries, LGBT people still face legal persecution, social stigma, violence and discrimination.

A few weeks ago the United Kingdom took over as co-chair of the Equal Rights Coalition – the first intergovernmental network devoted to promoting and protecting the human rights of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people around the world.

Next year we will host an international LGBT rights conference here in London to address the key issues we need to tackle to achieve global equality.

And while the UK is regularly ranked as one of the most LGBT-friendly countries in the world, we know that we still have a long way to go.

We now have a much clearer picture of the challenges, thanks to the National Survey which the Government conducted in 2017.

It drew a huge response and it has provided a wealth of information.

Last year we launched our LGBT Action Plan in response – a comprehensive, cross-government plan to improve the lives of LGBT people.

It makes 75 commitments which the government will meet over the next four years.

And in the last 12 months we have made a strong start, with a third of the commitments already achieved.

We have appointed the first ever National Adviser on LGBT health in the NHS, Dr Michael Brady [and I am very pleased has joined us here today].

We have created a new LGBT Advisory Panel to advise government on everything from ending conversion therapy to tackling hate crime.

And we have expanded our programme to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

I want to commend Penny Mordaunt, Baroness Williams and Vicky Atkins for leading that effort – and for all the work they and their officials at the GEO do to champion equality.

We have seen just how necessary that work is.

I was shocked to see the image of a young couple brutally attacked on a London bus last month.

I am very pleased that Melania and Chris are here with us today.

As Chris said of her experience: 'It was scary, but this is not a novel situation.'

The hostility and hate experienced by LGBT people, especially trans people, in our society is real – and it is something we must all stand against.

The Government has refreshed our Hate Crime Action Plan and the Law Commission will be conducting a review of existing hate crime legislation, to see if it needs to be strengthened.

But the law by itself cannot change attitudes.

That's why we have developed other policies that I think have a huge part to play in breaking down this ignorance and hatred.

Last week we published the final guidance on Relationships Education for schools in England.

Under the new policy, every child will leave school having been taught in an age-appropriate way about the protected characteristics of sexual orientation and gender identity.

It is a chance to establish right from the start that difference is to be respected, diversity to be valued – and I believe it is a huge step forward.

This will probably be one of the last times I make a speech in this garden.

And I am very pleased that one of my final events here should be the Pride reception.

Like a lot of people of my generation, my heart and mind has changed on some of the issues that Stonewall has spent 30 years campaigning on.

It was during David Cameron's leadership that my political party fully embraced LGBT equality.

I was proud to be the shadow Minister who published the Conservative Party's first Contract for Equalities.

I was proud as Home Secretary to sponsor and vote for the Same Sex Marriage Bill.

When I became Prime Minister, I was determined to use this platform to be an ally to LGBT people.

That's why I spoke out at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting to condemn homophobic laws that still criminalise gay people and call for change.

It is why I pressed ahead with the consultation on reforming the Gender Recognition Act, work that remains unfinished, but which must be completed so we can get a system that works for trans people and commands broad confidence.

And it is why we have put in place that inclusive relationships education for schools – so every child can be taught to accept and respect difference.

I am confident that whoever succeeds me as Prime Minister will share my absolute commitment to equality for LGBT people.

I know that Stonewall and many of the other groups represented here today will carry on working with government – and challenging us too – to make sure we get the best outcomes.

And finally my message to all of you is this: I will only be your Prime Minister for a few more weeks, but I will be your ally for the rest of my life.

Thank you very much.