

# Greens demand shorter waiting times for trans patients



14 November 2017

Green Party politicians have written to Jeremy Hunt to demand action over long wait times for patients who need to access a gender identity clinic.

All NHS gender identity clinics in the UK except one are failing to meet the 18-week referral target [1].

The letter, signed by LGBTIQA+ spokesperson Aimee Challenor and co-leaders Jonathan Bartley and Caroline Lucas, asks Jeremy Hunt to explain what the Department of Health is doing to reduce waiting times and when it expects to meet the target.

The Green Party is highlighting the delays as part of Transgender Awareness Week [2] which runs from November 13 to 17.

Bartley and Challenor will visit the Department of Health at 3.30pm today (November 14) to hand in the letter.

Challenor said:

“The extensive wait times for gender identity clinics have a devastating impact on trans people, who are already at much higher risk of mental health issues and self-harm.

“Nearly every single clinic is failing to meet the target, a year after it was introduced. One clinic has an average waiting time of 130 weeks, an enormous 112 weeks longer than the maximum referral time of 18 weeks.

“It’s unclear what the Department of Health is doing to reduce these delays and that’s why we’re here today – to demand answers from Jeremy Hunt and ensure he takes trans people’s needs seriously.”

## **Notes:**

1. <https://www.gaystarnews.com/article/nhs-fails-trans-people-gender-identity-clinics/>
2. <https://www.glaad.org/transweek>
3. Full text of the letter:

Dear Jeremy,

We write to you regarding the extraordinarily long waits faced by patients who need to see a clinician at one of the UK’s Gender Identity Clinics (GIC).

Last December, it was confirmed that the waiting lists for GICs are subject to the NHS-wide 18 week referral target. A year on, all GICs in the UK except for one are failing to meet that target, with some patients having to wait two and a half years before getting an appointment at a GIC.

Going through the process of transitioning within the NHS should empower rather than demean trans people – yet that's not the case. Referral delays are having devastating effects on trans people. Rates of self-harm and suicide attempts are significantly higher for trans people, especially those not receiving treatment. In September 2015, Dr John Dean, Chair of the NHS National Clinical Reference Group for Gender Identity Services told the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee that “not treating people is not a neutral act – it will do harm”. Trans people are far more likely to have contact with the mental health system, and are at much higher risk of mental health issues, self-harm and suicidal ideation, than cisgender and heterosexual people.

We would like to know what the Department of Health is doing to actively reduce waiting times and when it expects to meet the 18 week referral target.

Yours sincerely,

Aimee Challenor, Green Party LGBTIQA+ spokesperson

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader

Caroline Lucas, Green Party co-leader

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## **Green Party submits complaint over Sun's drag queen coverage**



13 November 2017

Aimee Challenor, Green Party LGBTIQA+ spokesperson, has filed a complaint with press regulator IPSO over today's coverage in the *Sun* of gender fluidity lessons for toddlers [1].

She has accused the *Sun* of breaching the Editors' Code of Practice by discriminating against trans people.

The *Sun's* story follows a number of articles targeting the trans community in the *Times* on Saturday (November 11) [2].

Challenor said:

"The Sun's coverage of gender fluidity classes is a sad mix of scaremongering, discrimination and inappropriate jokes about drag queens. On the same day the Church of England issues guidelines to help prevent transphobic bullying, it's appalling that one of our national newspapers is perpetrating such harassment. The rates of suicide and self-harm for young trans people are staggeringly high and it's simply immoral for the *Sun* to feed into the prejudice towards them. We should instead be welcoming the move to improve understanding and inclusivity by talking to children about gender fluidity from an early age."

**Notes:**

1. <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4896260/drag-queens-nursery-schools-teach-kids-transgender-issues>

2. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/comment/children-sacrificed-to-appease-trans-lobby-bq0m2mm95>

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/scout-chiefs-accused-over-transgender-self-harming-with-support-for-chest-binding-23f33sgjk>

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/meet-alex-bertie-the-transgender-poster-boy-z88hgh8b8>

3. Full text of the complaint:

I wish to make a complaint under the Editors' Code of Practice relating to the Sun's coverage on November 13, 2017.

I believe the Sun has breached clause 12 by publishing prejudicial and pejorative coverage of 'trans lessons' for children.

The paper's front page headline 'The skirt on the drag queen goes swish swish swish: Trans classes for kids aged 2' pokes fun at the issue and ignores the very serious reasons why talking about gender fluidity from an early age are so crucial.

The article itself treats drag queens and the concept of gender fluidity lessons with contempt. The coverage is not only sensationalised but blatant scaremongering about the influence drag queens will have on toddlers.

We live in a society where eight out of 10 trans young people have self-harmed and almost half have attempted to kill themselves. When our national newspapers publish attacks on the LGBTIQA+ community they are fostering a wider climate of hostility, fear and aggression towards us.

For this story to be published on the same day as the Church of England publishes guidelines to prevent transphobic bullying – which the Sun has also

reported on and is well aware of – shows just how necessary these steps to prevent bullying are.

Please will you consider if this coverage has breached the code and if so, take action against the Sun to ensure this does not happen again.

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## **Greens on latest government revelations: Patel position now “doubly untenable” and May has questions to answer**



8 November 2017

The Green Party has said that Priti Patel's position is now “doubly untenable” after it emerged the International Development Secretary failed to disclose all the details of her recent secret meetings in the Middle East to the Prime Minister on Monday [1].

The party says that Ms Patel has broken four out of ten principles of ministerial conduct in the government's own ministerial code.

Co-Leader of the Green Party Jonathan Bartley also said that Theresa May now needs “clean up the mess”, clearly establish the details of what Patel has done and be honest with the British public about what was discussed during her trip to Israel, the promises that were made, and where Government policy now stands in relation to Israel.

Mr Bartley said:

“The latest revelations make Ms Patel's position doubly untenable. Not only has she in effect tried to set up her own secret Middle Eastern policy unit. Not only did she appear to promise money to Israel that wasn't hers to promise. She failed to return to Parliament to take account of her actions, she mislead the prime minister about the details of her visit, and she still hasn't come clean about the full details of her meetings in Israel. To my mind that's at least four out of the ten points in the Ministerial Code broken.

"There can only be one end to this saga: Ms Patel needs to be sacked. But the prime minister also has to clean up the mess. These were the actions of a minister that she appointed. We need full disclosure of the issues discussed, opinions raised, and actions promised in Ms Patel's meetings in Israel and how the British government intends to respond to those promises. We need to know as well what she will be doing to prevent this kind of event occurring in future and what prevented Ms Patel's holiday meetings being disclosed to the Cabinet."

## Notes

[1] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-41904459>

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## **Caroline Lucas: Theresa May must sack Johnson and Patel**



7 November 2017

**\* Lucas labels Johnson a 'human wrecking ball' and says Patel's actions risk making Britain a 'laughing stock' on the international stage**

Caroline Lucas, the Green Party co-leader, has called for Theresa May to sack Boris Johnson and Priti Patel after high level mistakes and deceitful behaviour.

She labeled Johnson a 'human wrecking ball' and said Patel's actions risk making Britain a 'laughing stock' on the international stage.

Lucas said:

"Enough is enough, these two blundering ministers must be sacked. Boris Johnson continues to act as a human wrecking ball, risking the freedom of a British national through his high-level recklessness. Any other minister in any other government would have been sacked already – and it's time that the Prime Minister kicks Johnson out of the Foreign Office before he makes any other calamitous errors.

"Patel's secret meetings are, without doubt, a sackable offense. Not only did she have the meetings, but she then lied about who she told about them. Reports that she then pushed for British aid money to go to the Israeli

Military cast serious doubt over her ability to do her job in a professional way – and risk making Britain a laughing stock on the international stage.

“It’s time for Theresa May to get a grip on her Government and sack these ministers who are bringing her party, and indeed our country, into disrepute.”

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## **Green Party deputy leader to visit Devon beaver project**



7 November 2017

Amelia Womack, Green Party deputy leader, will visit England’s first beaver reintroduction trial in east Devon on November 8.

The River Otter Beaver Trial [1] is a five-year project running until 2020. The trial is monitoring the beavers’ impact on the landscape, other wildlife, water resources, water quality, local communities and infrastructure, and local farms.

Initial results reveal strong evidence for the role beavers might play in reducing flooding downstream, even during prolonged wet periods [2].

Womack said:

“I’m looking forward to visiting Devon, learning about the River Otter beavers and seeing their hard work up close. The trial is already producing promising results that indicate the role beavers can play in helping to protect our towns and cities from floods, while giving us a richer, more exciting natural world.

“Floods are devastating for communities – they destroy our homes and belongings, damage our economy and disrupt our daily lives. Without serious action to tackle climate change, the floods we face every winter are only going to get worse.

“But just a small number of beavers can have a disproportionate effect on the environment around them, influencing water flow, improving water quality and increasing biodiversity. Successful flood prevention means working with nature starting with our soils and land management which hold huge capacity

to absorb intense rainfall, through to allowing more space for rivers and floodplains to behave more naturally, not covering it in concrete." "This is about working with the grain of nature and not battling against it"

The River Otter Beaver Trial is run by Devon Wildlife Trust. Peter Burgess, the Trust's, Director of Conservation and Development, said:

"I am so pleased by the overwhelming level of interest that organisations and communities from all over the country are showing in this fascinating project. Beavers are more than just charismatic animals; research we've been running with University of Exeter shows they can breathe new life into our river ecosystems, reduce flood risk and improve water quality. They can also bring great benefits to other wildlife. But there are potential challenges ahead, not least the possible impacts these industrious creatures could have on farmland. The Trial is looking at all the possible impacts, and exploring how we can maximise the positive and minimise the negative ones."

Notes:

1. <http://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/river-otter-beavers>
2. [http://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/sites/default/files/files/Beaver%20Project%20update%20\(LowRes\)%20.pdf](http://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/sites/default/files/files/Beaver%20Project%20update%20(LowRes)%20.pdf)
3. The River Otter Beaver Trial is led by Devon Wildlife Trust working in partnership with the University of Exeter, the Derek Gow Consultancy, and Clinton Devon Estates.
4. The trial is funded by the Devon Wildlife Trust and its members, Royal Society for Wildlife Trusts, Peter de Haan Charitable Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, Wellcome Trust, The Tale Valley Trust, University of Exeter and public donations.

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