

Losing a parent can be devastating

When my dad died, my mum was left with three boys under the age of ten. At age four, I remember her going to pick up her widow's pension every other week. It was a lifeline for her and for us. It helped her adjust, and to take good care of my brothers and I.

For any family, losing a parent can be devastating not just emotionally, but financially too. My family weren't particularly poor, but I still don't know what we'd have done without that support.

Bereavement Support Payments are supposed to help families adjust to life after the tragedy of losing a parent.

From my own experience, and from working with my constituents and nationwide bereavement charities, **I know how overwhelming it can be to suddenly find yourself a single parent.** You have sole responsibility of putting food on the table and paying for childcare while dealing with your own grief. Add to this the needs of grieving children, such as specialist counselling, and an overwhelming financial burden is placed on families needing breathing room to heal.

.@EdwardJDavey secures Boris Johnson's commitment to look into the injustice surrounding Bereavement Support Payments, where grieving children are not entitled to support if their parents are unmarried. #PMQs pic.twitter.com/8yBNJIgKUz

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [February 12, 2020](#)

Bereavement Support Payments are supposed to help families adjust to life after the tragedy of losing a parent. **Yet for 2,000 families a year, the law says they aren't entitled to this support, because the parents weren't married.**

With cohabiting couples being the fastest growing family type in the UK, how many more children need to suffer before the Government takes action?

Last week the High Court ruled that the difference in Bereavement Support Payments between married and cohabiting couples **is a breach of children's human rights.** In 2018, the Supreme Court made a similar ruling.

Today, I asked the Prime Minister to make sure that all grieving children are supported, whether their parents were married or not.

Enough is enough. Today, I asked the Prime Minister to legislate to respond to both rulings, and make sure that all grieving children are supported,

whether their parents were married or not.

I am pleased that Boris Johnson has agreed to look into the issue, and **I hope that his Government will legislate to make sure that no child is left without the support they need.**

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

My campaigning priorities

The tiniest of silver linings in that of the Tory majority and the near enough certainty that this Parliament will sit for at least the next four years, is that we now have time to be strategic. **We have time to plan.**

The fact that our leadership race will not take place until the summer also allows us time to pause, reflect, and consider what we need going forward.

How do we reconnect with the voters and who will be the right person to do that for us?

We have had some spectacularly good leaders, but the next will also have to be someone special to break the cycle in which we find ourselves trapped.

They will need Tim's ability to hold and inspire a crowd.

The current law on assisted dying offers no dignity, choice or compassion to those in the final stage of their life.

Jo's steely determination and vision.

But most of all they will need something of that particular gift which both Paddy and Charles had in spades. Empathy.

That indefinable ability to connect with people on a level that says: "I understand, I know, I appreciate what you are going through and I'll do my damndest to fix it".

Over the next few months we will have the time and space for that leader to emerge.

In the meantime I will concentrate on three progressive, liberal campaigns that will make a real difference to peoples' lives.

This first is to push for a **change in the law on assisted dying.**

The current law offers no dignity, choice or compassion to those in the final stage of their life. It also criminalises family members who support their loved one's wishes.

We often pride ourselves on how far have come as a liberal, progressive society that treats everyone with compassion and equality. **But, at the end of their lives, we're letting them down.**

The prescription of medicinal cannabis is legal but many sufferers of pain are still not getting easy access to the relief they need.

Then there is cannabis.

The prescription of medicinal cannabis is legal. It was hard won, but the law remains so overly rigid and ambiguous that many sufferers of pain are still not getting easy access to the relief they need.

The only way to properly solve this is to **introduce a legal, regulated market for cannabis.**

This would also protect young people, free up precious police time by breaking the grip of criminal gangs and **raise an estimated £1.5bn**, which could be used to treat addiction and fight crime.

A common sense, grown up and evidence-based policy that would radically change the lives of thousands of people.

Just like changing the law to allow asylum seekers the right to work while waiting for their applications to be processed.

A simple change in the law would help the economy and, more importantly, allow people who have risked everything the opportunity contribute fully to our society, and give them the dignity they deserve.

They are liberal, radical and what we need.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

[My first LGBT+ History Month as an openly pansexual MP](#)

Earlier this year, I came out as pansexual, becoming the first openly pan MP. This February is of particular significance for me. **It is the first LGBT**

History Month I have openly celebrated as part of the community.

I did not come out to be heralded as a trailblazer. But upon coming out, I realised that **my public visibility meant a lot to a lot of people.** Many people in the LGBT+ community, especially those who fall under the 'B', 'T' or '+', don't feel visible to or accepted by the rest of society. These identities are often treated with suspicion or cynicism because people simply don't know what they are.

We need to actively engage people in this conversation now. This is why LGBT+ education is so important.

This is where visibility comes in. When I came out, I found myself having to define pansexuality and I believe that the more we speak on the topic, the greater the understanding and acceptance of people who identify as LGBT+. Additionally, **by having more elected officials who identify as LGBT+, we shine a light on a community and individuals who often feel hidden.**

Increasing sexual diversity in politics and the media has the power to help those people who are afraid of being misunderstood to feel accepted by society. But there is more that needs to be done to teach the world about different identities and sexualities. We need to actively engage people in this conversation now. This is why LGBT+ education is so important.

By teaching children about different kinds of relationships, we remove the gap in knowledge and challenge stereotypes. We stop an LGBT+ teenager feeling there is something wrong with them. We stop them being bullied for who they are attracted to or who they love. **We can help to build a world where people are comfortable to be themselves.**

By teaching children about different kinds of relationships, we remove the gap in knowledge and challenge stereotypes.

No, LGBT+ education in schools is not a one size fits all solution. It will take time for the education to disperse through society, but **by educating children, we can actively improve attitudes.**

Homophobia and hate often come from a place of miseducation and lack of interaction. People who don't meet or learn about the LGBT+ community, are more likely to believe misguided stereotypes about the community and the individuals.

While it is important to look at LGBT history, we must also look to the future. Look to improving visibility, and education for the LGBT+ community. I am excited to celebrate my first LGBT History Month as part of the community and reflect on the achievements we have made. **But I keep at the forefront of my mind that there is a lot that we need to do to keep making a difference.**

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

[We have a duty to support young people with their mental health](#)

Week in, week out, either at my constituency surgery or in my inbox or just through conversations with friends and acquaintances, **I hear yet another tragic story of a child or young person struggling with their mental health, having to battle to get any sort of help.**

Inadequate funding under the Conservatives has left Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) close to breaking point

Stories include teenagers self-harming and attempting suicide, being excluded from or staying away from school because their school or they themselves simply cannot cope. Stories include a ten-year-old – yes, a ten-year-old – with a severe mental health disorder who has already been waiting four months for her initial assessment and will have to wait months more for treatment.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

[Celebrating LGBT History Month](#)

LGBT History Month is a welcome opportunity to celebrate the activism, strength and the spirit of the entire LGBT+ community. This is the time to look back at the key moments in the struggle for equal rights and to reflect on how we can build a more just world for everyone.

This month we celebrate iconic LGBT+ pioneers and strengthen our efforts to give meaningful attention to LGBT history.

Introducing the amendment that led to the repeal of Section 28 remains one of my proudest moments in parliament

In the UK, LGBT History Month falls in February to coincide the repealing of

Section 28 in England and Wales. Introducing the amendment that led to the repeal of that abhorrent act remains one of my proudest moments in parliament.

[Go to Source](#)

Author: