

It's time to ban conversion therapy for good

Tomorrow, my bill to ban conversion therapy will be debated in the House of Lords.

It's too easy to think of these practices as a remnant from the past. Sadly, this is far from the reality. The Government's own research has shown that 7% of LGBT+ people had undergone or been offered conversion therapy.

This is an appalling statistic. Sexual orientation or gender identity is not a problem to be treated and 'cured'. It's who we are – and these practices have got to stop.

But time and again, the Conservative Government has broken their promise to deliver a conversion therapy ban. Five years on, we cannot afford to waste any more time.

We cannot leave the LGBT+ community unprotected against these harms for any longer.

That's why I have tabled a bill which will make it an offence for any person to practise, or offer to practise, conversion therapy.

My bill seeks to be as comprehensive as possible, to make sure that all LGBT+ people are protected and no loopholes can persist. And it will focus on the intended purpose of the practice – ensuring that genuine psychological or religious support without a predetermined goal isn't caught up in a ban.

Of course, this isn't the first time us Liberal Democrats have been at the forefront of the fight for LGBT+ equality.

From Ed Davey moving the clause to repeal Section 28, to Lynne Featherstone's tireless work in getting the Same Sex Marriage Act passed, we have a long, proud history of delivering change for the LGBT+ community.

It is my sincere hope that we can do the same with this bill.

There is still a long road ahead. The only way to get this bill passed is with support from the Government. So we will be pushing Conservative ministers to do the right thing and back our bill.

In the past weeks, I have been amazed to see a positive response from so many of my colleagues in the House of Lords. I have been busy meeting with parliamentarians from all parties and none to discuss how we can work together to deliver a ban.

It's clear that there is cross-party consensus. So we will keep working together on this.

Because it isn't about party politics. **It's about finally delivering the change the LGBT+ community deserves.** And I will keep doing everything in my power to make this a reality.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

[Munira Wilson introduces Schools' Mental Health Bill to Parliament](#)

Childhood is supposed to be a happy time, filled with cherished memories and laughter. However, for too many it can also be a very difficult time. Headteachers say that there are numerous pressing challenges facing our education system and many come from outside of the classroom. Mental health is among the biggest.

According to recent data, it is estimated that one in five children between the ages of 7 to 16 have a probable mental health disorder. Early intervention is crucial. Research tells us that half of all lifetime mental health disorders start before the age of 14. Stepping in as soon as warning signs start to show can often help to prevent conditions from becoming more severe.

Our Bill would place a dedicated qualified mental health practitioner in every school – primary and secondary – giving every child in school access to care and support from the moment they start needing it.

“This Bill is an investment in our future, and it is an investment we must make. Because we owe it to this generation of young people.” [@Munirawilson](#) introduces her bill to Parliament, which would place a qualified mental health professional in every school. pic.twitter.com/rVJTLtGegd

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [January 9, 2024](#)

Currently help that is available is stretched thinly across many local

primary and secondary schools, which means their valuable skills and service is only available about half a day per week in many schools. Children who are waiting for mental health support miss substantial amounts of schooling and this absence has a huge impact on their life chances. We cannot wait to tackle this issue.

Our Bill makes clear funding needs to be made available for this proposed statutory duty for all state schools. Using the “polluter pays” principle, Liberal Democrats have proposed funding these mental health practitioners through tripling the digital services tax on our big social media companies, given the harm they have contributed to our children’s mental health.

There is a tidal wave of mental ill health among our children and young people. It is jeopardising their current wellbeing, their education, their prospects, and their long-term health. Professionals from the education sector, mental health sector, and other public services all agree that something more has to be done. Putting a mental health practitioner in every school is an important step in tackling this vital issue.

[Go to Source](#)

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[Ed Davey's Tory Removal Service](#)

The Liberal Democrats are the leading Conservative MP removal service in the Blue Wall and beyond. Four historic by-election wins and sweeping gains in last May’s local elections show that voters across the country are turning to us for change.

People are fed up with waiting for promised hospitals that are never built, waiting for an end to sewage being dumped in our rivers and waiting for real action on the cost of living.

To kickstart his Surrey campaign tour, Ed Davey drove a poster van advertising ‘Ed Davey’s Tory Removals’ through Guildford, before addressing Lib Dem campaigners, activists and the party’s local parliamentary candidate Zöe Franklin. The poster describes the Liberal Democrats as the “Blue Wall’s Premium Conservative MP unseating service”, with services including repairing NHS waiting times, ending raw sewage discharges and tackling the cost of living crisis.



It shouldn't be up to Rishi Sunak to cling on for another twelve months, desperately hoping for something to turn up and causing even more damage as he tries to keep his fractured party behind him.

That's why we're tabling a law to force a General Election, so we can send the movers into Number 10 and get rid of this out-of-touch Conservative Government.

General Election NOW

Join our calls for an immediate General Election.

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[Go to Source](#)

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Only we will fix the broken system

“Getting rid of the Conservatives will not be enough to bring about the radical change we need.”

That’s how Liberal Democrat Leader Ed Davey began his New Year message to the country. 2024 is almost certain to see Rishi Sunak call a general election, with April or May looking increasingly likely as Conservative Party infighting grows.

Ed made clear that defeating the Conservative Government is “absolutely necessary”, but argued it is “nowhere near enough to solve the big, deep-rooted challenges in our country” – from poverty and inequality to climate change.

Underpinning these huge challenges, he said, is “a political system that has been fundamentally broken for generations.”

Ed described it as “a two-party system that leaves millions feeling powerless and excluded; makes it impossible to hold those in power properly to account; rewards short-term self-interest at the expense of actual solutions; and serves no one, except the vested interests of the Conservative and Labour parties.”

Neither the Conservatives nor Labour can really tackle the country’s most serious problems, he argued, because they are both wedded to the current system, which “suits them just fine”.

Ed said Labour “think they can simply take their turn, without ever grappling with the big challenges we face, or the radical solutions they demand.”

He pointed to Labour’s support for Conservative spending plans – including the two-child limit for benefits and cuts to international aid – as well as their rejection of the Liberal Democrats’ clear, detailed plan to fix the UK’s broken relationship with Europe. “And, of course,” he said, “the Labour Party is still wedded to First Past the Post – even though the majority of voters want change.”

“So it falls to us – to Liberal Democrats – to be the agents of change, once again.”

As Liberal Democrat campaigners make a flying start in 2024, Ed reminded the country why this year’s election is so important:

“Not just to beat the Conservatives, though beat them we must. Not just to change who sits in power, but to change where power sits. We must do nothing less than transform the nature of British politics for good.”

Ed’s New Year Message

As Liberal Democrats, we know: Getting rid of the Conservatives will not be enough to bring about the radical change we need. Though absolutely necessary, it is nowhere near enough to solve the big, deep-rooted challenges in our country.

The change we seek, the change our party has always sought, the change liberals have championed for generations – is so much bigger than that.

Because, beneath the daily stream of crisis and scandal, lie much older and more fundamental problems; that neither the Conservatives nor Labour are capable of tackling.

Entrenched poverty and inequality. Systemic injustice. Climate change and the nature crisis. Britain’s diminished standing in an increasingly authoritarian world. The concentration of so much power in the hands of so few.

And underpinning them all: A broken political system.

A political system that leaves millions feeling powerless and excluded. That makes it impossible to hold those in power properly to account. A political system that rewards short-term self-interest at the expense of actual solutions. A two-party system that serves no one, except the vested interests of the Conservative and Labour parties. That swings from blue to red and back again, while nothing really changes. A political system that has been fundamentally broken for generations.

And only we – Liberal Democrats – will fix it. No one else will.

Labour certainly won't. They've made that crystal clear. Because the truth is – the current system suits Labour just fine. Yes, it lets the Conservatives in most of the time. But they are bound eventually to let people down so badly that Labour think they can simply take their turn; without ever having to actually offer a convincing vision of the future. Without ever grappling with the big challenges we face, or the radical solutions they demand.

So look what we have as a result:

A Labour Party fully signed up to Conservative spending plans; even when it means leaving millions of children to grow up in poverty. A Labour Party with nothing to say about Britain's place in the world; following the Conservatives' lead on cuts to the aid budget, and rejecting our plan to rebuild our critical relationship with Europe. And, of course, a Labour Party still wedded to First Past the Post; even though the majority of voters want change.

And so it falls to us. To Liberal Democrats. To be the agents of change, once again. And bring millions with us, to make it happen.

That's why cold hands clutch wet phones to canvass voters. Why worn-out shoes walk miles to put leaflets through letterboxes. Why tired voices urge neighbours to lend us their votes.

Not just to beat the Conservatives – though beat them we must. Not just to change who sits in power – but to change where power sits.

We must do nothing less than transform the nature of British politics for good.

Hand back far more control to individuals and communities. Fight for a fair deal, that empowers everyone, and holds the already powerful to account. Smash the two-party system, reform our elections, and give everyone an equal voice.

Because that is the only way we can build a fairer, greener, more caring country.

That is our goal. That is our calling.

So Happy New Year, and I'll see you out there!

Help us keep demanding change

– join our fight today.

[Yes, I'm in](#)

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

Merry Christmas

Merry Christmas from everyone at the Liberal Democrats!

It is such a joyous time of the year. I have enjoyed watching the Christmas spirit spread across the country.

Watching Christmas trees pop up all around, the lights making the darker evenings sparkle.

It's a time when we can come together with friends and family. To sing, to eat, give and receive presents.

And, thank God for the grace and blessings we have to celebrate in our life.

Christmas time gives us a chance to reflect on the past year, whilst looking forward to a new one.

As I look to the future, I pray that we welcome a year of kindness and peace.

Although Christmas is a joyous time for so many, it may also bring added pressures.

I want to send my love and prayers to those caring for loved ones over Christmas. You are unsung heroes of our health system, and Christmas is a time when your acts of kindness and care are felt even more.

We hold in our hearts those less fortunate than ourselves. And to those who, this year, are without loved ones over Christmas.

Whether through loss or the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, if you are missing family and friends at your Christmas table, you are in my thoughts.

So, from my family to yours, I wish you a very Merry Christmas filled with peace, love and joy.

[Go to Source](#)

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