



**UNITE AND FIGHT FOR  
LGBTQ+ RIGHTS  
FIGHT FOR  
SOCIALISM**

## **Socialist Party LGBTQ+ charter**

This charter is for discussion and debate about the demands and organisation we need to fight for LGBTQ+ liberation.

**[www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk)**

# LGBTQ+ WORKERS' CHARTER

Autumn 2021

LGBTphobia - discrimination, oppression, harassment and bullying of LGBTQ+ people - impacts the lives of every LGBTQ+ person. The Tories cannot be trusted to end this, or protect our lives or livelihoods. Therefore a fightback is needed. The Socialist Party has produced this charter to aid the discussion and debate needed as part of building a movement to fight for LGBTQ+ liberation.

LGBTQ+ workers and young people have a proud history of fighting back against oppression. The Stonewall riots in 1969 saw the LGBTQ+ community in New York explode in anger at police repression and led to the birth of Pride events.

Such powerful movements are what have led to the legal improvements we've won, such as the equalisation of the age of consent, equal marriage and other laws that improve LGBTQ+ rights.

But no gain is permanent under capitalism. And homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and discrimination still exist and affect our lives.

These issues have been exacerbated during the Covid pandemic. Outrageously, some services have even recommended people 'press pause' on coming out during the pandemic.

- Surveys show that two-thirds of LGBTQ+ people are afraid of holding their partner's hand in public, or being open about their sexuality for fear of a negative reaction
- More than a quarter of young LGBTQ+ people in education have experienced verbal harassment, insults or forced 'outings'
- Nearly all LGBTQ+ people experiencing this harassment do not report it for reasons like 'it happens all the time', or the feeling that nothing will change
- A report from the Trades Union Congress found that 68% of LGBTQ+ people have faced sexual harassment at work. Of these, two in three did not report it to their employer. A quarter of



those who didn't report chose not to for fear of being 'outed'

- Young LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be homeless - making up 24% of the young homeless population
- More than half of LGBTQ+ people have experienced depression (with one in seven afraid to seek help for fear of discrimination)
- LGBTQ+ asylum seekers face hostility while attempting to flee persecution. The Home Office demands 'proof' of sexuality, or says that deportation is not a risk to people's safety on the basis that they could hide their sexuality in countries where they would otherwise face persecution, discrimination or violence

## BUILD A MASS MOVEMENT TO END LGBTQ+ OPPRESSION

In Britain today, austerity and capitalism in crisis threaten the gains won through struggle in the past. Austerity hits groups already discriminated against under capitalism hardest.

Since 2010 we've seen large numbers of LGBTQ+ services close due to lack of funding. LGBTQ+ people are disproportionately more likely to experience mental health issues or experience homelessness; all areas where we are seeing huge cuts.

In recent years, issues around discrimination, particularly transphobia, have been on the rise. This is not just as a result of the Tories and their policies, but the failure of the trade union and labour movement leaders to answer Tory lies, cuts and division with mass action and a socialist programme.

The housing crisis, cuts to homelessness services and shelters, cuts to NHS funding and many of the other austerity

attacks are hitting LGBTQ+ people sharply. Defeating austerity requires rebuilding working-class struggles.

The Tories' lie, that needs to be answered, is that the fight for rights and resources in society is between different groups who face discrimination and oppression. The truth is that capitalism, the system the Tories defend, is based on exploitation and the driving

down of working-class living standards. Keeping us divided is in their interests as it weakens our ability to fight back. This tactic is what ultimately lies behind the Tories' failure to update the Gender Recognition Act (2004) to make it easier for trans people to self-identify. The Socialist Party fights for the right to self-identify and for the resources and services we all need.

By building the struggle against austerity alongside other workers and youth we can defeat the Tories, their division, and their austerity agenda! That means building fighting trade unions and a new mass workers' party.

Improving LGBTQ+ rights is an issue for the trade union movement because the unions, as the main organisations of the working class, can and have played a key role in the fight for the rights of those who suffer oppression and discrimination under capitalism.

Homophobia and transphobia have their roots in class society and the institutional inequality inherent to it,



including on gender lines. Capitalism is a system based on the exploitation and division of workers in order to maximise the profits of a few.

In Britain and worldwide, a tiny group of people own and control industry, science and technology - and harness them in order to make vast fortunes.

Globally, eight people own as much wealth as the poorest half of humanity - the greatest polarisation between rich and poor in human history. In Britain, the majority of us have faced endless austerity, while a tiny handful are raking it in. For example, the CEOs of the 100 biggest stock-market-listed companies collect an obscene 73 times the average wage of their workers.

Big businesses and banks claim support with rainbow logos and by sponsoring Pride events. But the major banks and big businesses that rush to lead Pride marches and hang rainbow flags are part and parcel of the capitalist system. Many, for example, also invest in Saudi Arabia where the government sentences LGBTQ+ people to death. They all exploit the working class and have an interest in maintaining any forms of division among us.

Capitalism offers no hope of a decent future for the 99%. It is an unequal, oppressive and discriminatory system, based on exploitation of the working-class majority by the tiny capitalist class,

and divides us on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, etc.

That's because it is the working class that is the force in society that can get rid of capitalism. Class exploitation unites workers of all backgrounds. Together we have the potential power to fundamentally change this rotten system. Because of our role in production - we make things and make things work - and the consciousness of our collective interests that this can generate, the working class has the potential power to replace capitalism with a socialist alternative based on democratic planning to meet the needs of all.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought misery for the working class, but it has also revealed our collective strength. It is essential to link the fight against all forms of oppression including racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, to the fight against class exploitation and capitalism.

The rights the LGBTQ+ community have gained have come from decades of struggle. However those gains and developments can be lost. We don't want to just struggle to keep what we've already won, we need to build a mass movement, not just of LGBTQ+ people but the wider working class, which moves into action. It is only through this that we can fundamentally change society - fighting for a socialist change and the end to exploitation, oppression and discrimination.

# PRIDE

Born out of the struggles and campaigning of LGBTQ+ people, more recently we have seen Pride events become increasing corporatised and step away from their radical roots. A political Pride is more important than ever. But an annual protest is only the start of what we need.

## We call for:

- Pride events to kick out the corporations and organise by drawing together community campaigners, trade unions and all others interested in reclaiming Pride
- Build a fighting movement with a democratic and accountable leadership to fight for LGBTQ+ rights, participate in movements against austerity, oppression and discrimination and organise international solidarity

# IN OUR WORKPLACES

Many LGBTQ+ workers face discrimination, bullying and harassment at work. The main bodies of organised workers - the trade unions - need to launch fighting campaigns to stand up for LGBTQ+ workers at work and in wider society. These are organisations which can put the rights and needs of workers first, before the profit or interests of the bosses.

## We demand:

- That the trade union movement fights against the discrimination which remains endemic in our workplaces
- Trade unions must organise and campaign for zero-tolerance of bullying, discrimination and harassment in workplaces, including schools, colleges and universities. This means not only ensuring that adequate procedures are in place for dealing with such behaviour, but that they are actually implemented in practice. Training must be available for all trade union reps and staff. Trade unions to establish committees in every workplace to oversee safety and harassment procedures
- Job security. No forced redundancies. End zero-hour contracts which can be used against workers raising issues of discrimination. Trade union action to fight any job losses and cuts in the workforce
- End low pay. Increase the minimum wage to £12 an hour as a step towards £15
- Ensure election of equality officers in trade union branches
- Trade union oversight over the recruitment and promotion process



- Defend the right to protest. Scrap the anti-trade union laws and other anti-democratic legislation such as the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill

## IN HEALTHCARE

As socialists we fight for democratic control of society, and that includes in the health service. This requires democratic discussions, bringing together workers and service users, to develop a plan of what treatment, support and resources we actually need, not what capitalists can make a profit from or what the capitalist system can 'afford'. We wouldn't have to fight tooth and nail for safety measures like pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to be available, or against the years-long waiting lists for trans

healthcare, because resources could be allocated on the basis of need not greed.

### We say:

- Reverse all privatisation and cuts. Kick big business out of the NHS. End the postcode lottery. Scrap the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and cancel all PFI debts
- Build a mass campaign for massive investment into our NHS - for a fully funded National Health Service and care system, free at the point of use
- Scrap prescription charges in England, and all dental and health charges
- Invest and expand provision of gender clinics to meet the needs of trans people



- Massively expand mental health support
- Nationalise the private healthcare sector, care homes, the medical supply industry and the pharmaceutical companies - integrate them into the NHS
- Health services run for health not profit. Build and fight for services that meet all our needs

## IN EDUCATION

Many LGBTQ+ young people deal with the effects of capitalism's divide and rule at school, with bullying and an unrepresentative curriculum. We support students forming students' unions to be able to organise and fight.

### We need:

- Parents, teachers, students and the trade unions to have democratic oversight of the curriculum
- History and gains from the struggle to be taught. Include in the curriculum working-class struggle, LGBTQ+ history and trade unions' record and achievements in fighting oppression
- A positive curriculum regarding sexuality and gender identity to replace the legacy of Section 28
- Students' unions and education trade unions must organise and campaign against LGBTphobic bullying. Joint committees of trade unions and students to oversee and monitor anti-bullying and harassment procedures
- All schools to be brought back under local authority control. End academisation and free schools
- Free school meals and travel





- Free education for all - scrap tuition fees, and write off all student debt

## HOUSING, SERVICES AND RESOURCES

How many LGBTQ+ people have put up with discrimination in the workplace or bullying bosses because the alternative was being thrown on the scrapheap of Universal Credit, facing poverty and eviction? How many LGBTQ+ people have not been able to be out, or have been forced to live in unsafe conditions, due to the lack of decent housing, or been forced onto the streets? How many LGBTQ+ services, already stretched, have been stripped to the bone by a decade of austerity?

- Oppose cuts and privatisation of public services
- End enforced poverty - for the right to decent benefits, no to sanctions, pensions for all
- No imprisonment for crimes of poverty. Safe communities for all. Mass investment in jobs and training
- Fully fund vital services for all including social care, domestic violence refuges and support, education, public toilets and the NHS

- Shelters for LGBTQ+ people fleeing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic families or partners
- Protect existing LGBTQ+ venues and provide funding to develop additional venues to meet the needs of the community
- Cap private rents, for a mass programme of building council houses, no to evictions

## YOUNG PEOPLE

- Get organised! Build student unions in school, college and universities to fight to end homophobic bullying in education and for young people to have a say. Build Youth Fight for Jobs to fight youth unemployment
- Safe, council-run, well-funded youth centres, youth services and youth clubs and facilities. Young people need support and somewhere to go
- Fully fund housing and social support, and supply council homes for LGBTQ+ young people fleeing abusive living situations



## TRANS RIGHTS

It is largely as a result of the courageous struggle by trans people that trans oppression is becoming more widely understood. But that doesn't mean there isn't still a lot of work to do to end it. Many trans people experience mental health issues alongside discrimination and harassment in the community and in workplaces, and when accessing services including healthcare.

The Socialist Party stands for the right to self-identify, including for non-binary identities.

### We say:

- Fight to end trans discrimination in law and in society as a whole. Build a movement to fight for legal changes to simplify the process of self-identification
- Invest in expanding all public health support and other services for all
- Build a united struggle to end the discrimination and oppression faced by trans people

## BUILD INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

LGBTQ+ people across the globe face murderous anti-LGBTQ+ regimes and horrific discrimination.

### We say:

- End the hostile environment - end all racist immigration laws. For community and trade union oversight of border controls
- Grant all refugees and asylum seekers the right to work
- No deportation. End inhumane 'proof of sexuality' by the Home Office
- Close down all detention centres - these are run by profit-driven companies that further exploit detainees and use them for cheap labour
- Fight for the right to asylum - including the right of families to be reunited

# FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

Ultimately, until we end the rotten capitalist system, oppression and discrimination will be a part of everyday life for millions across the world. We need to fight for an alternative, socialism - a system which replaces the bosses, their divide-and-rule tactics, and quest for profit above all else. So that the working-class majority is able to put the vast wealth and resources of society to use, planning society democratically to provide what we need.

- Take the wealth off the 1% - we can't control what we don't own. Take into democratic public ownership the top 125 companies and the banks that

dominate the British economy. A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people would enable us to use the vast wealth that is there in society to produce what we need, not what makes a profit for the billionaire bosses

- No trust in capitalist politicians. Join the fight to build a mass democratic workers' party to represent our interests and fight for these demands
- The fight for socialism is an international fight. We support workers moving into action across the world and show our solidarity to those fighting for LGBTQ+ rights and against capitalism across the world



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