

**The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP**  
Minister for Women and Equalities  
Government Equalities Office  
16-20 Great Smith Street  
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Mayor Philip Glanville  
Mayor of Hackney  
Cllr Carole Williams,  
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Dear Ms Truss,

### **Trans, Non-binary and gender diverse inclusion**

As we celebrate LGBT+ History Month this month, it is a timely reminder that despite the progress we have made over the past few decades, we still have further to go in guaranteeing LGBT+ rights and promoting trans, non-binary and gender diverse inclusion.

As part of LGBT+ History Month, we would urge you, as previously consulted on, to reform the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and adopt a system of self-declaration, including a statutory declaration, in line with international best practice.

While the Gender Recognition Act 2004 was considered ground-breaking back in 2004, it is very clear that it has now become outdated and is in urgent need of reform.

As you will be aware, in the Government's own 2018 consultation, respondents said that they found the process of applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate unnecessary bureaucratic, stressful and stated that it made them feel dehumanised. However despite these overwhelming number of calls for change and your own committee's calls back in your 2015-16 report into Transgender Equality, it is deeply disappointing that only minimal and non-legislative changes have been proposed by



your Government so far. Without clear action from the Government there is a real risk that progress will stall or go backwards, especially given the often hostile and entrenched tone of the debate on trans rights, a tone that we all have a duty to de-escalate as we support the human rights of often some of the most vulnerable fellow citizens.

This is a missed opportunity that lets down our trans community. The Government's minimal proposals fail to meaningfully reform the Gender Recognition Act and achieve the Government's intention to make the process "kinder and more straightforward" for applicants.

Far from being a country that leads in trans and non-binary equality, the Government's failure to make significant and progressive reforms, in particular the failure to implement a system of self-declaration, not only lets down our residents who identify as trans but also sets us back as an inclusive society.

As part of this, it is vital that we avoid some of the challenges that arose during, and as a result of, the 2018 consultation on the Gender Recognition Act which produced a significant backlash to trans and non binary genders. Given that there has been a significant rise in the reporting of both Transphobic and Homophobic hate crimes since 2014, it is vital that further work does not risk furthering the notion that some aspects of human rights are negotiable, or open to debate.

It is vital that the Government takes steps to progress LGBT+ equality and adopts a system of self-declaration, including a statutory declaration. Our stalled progress on trans equality means we continue to lag behind our many of our European neighbours in LGBT+ equality.

Hackney is proud to be a diverse borough in which people of different genders, nationalities, ethnicities and sexualities are proud to call their home. However, we also recognise that we can never afford to be complacent, especially with the national rise in transphobic and other hate crimes, if we are to maintain a reputation for an open, inclusive and tolerant borough.

As part of our wider Access and Inclusion strategy, Hackney is currently auditing all our service areas - leisure, parks, recreation, adult services, customer services, schools, children and families, housing, community safety, housing and employment - to try and enhance and embed trans, non-binary and gender diverse inclusion across all our areas of work. Fundamental to the Access and Inclusion work is an approach which doesn't just seek to be inclusive, but actively celebrates and values diversity.

This work also includes embedding awareness of gender diversity in training to staff and holding focus groups with our gender diverse staff and service users.

We are also acutely aware that many individual experience multiple discrimination for example because of gender identity, race and ethnicity combined with socio-economic disadvantage. As part of our broader work on equalities, we are also focusing on issues of intersectionality.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss work that we are doing in Hackney as well as the pressing need for reform of the outdated Gender Recognition Act. We

would be very grateful if you could ask your office to contact ours on the details above to make the necessary arrangements.

Yours sincerely,



Philip Glanville  
**Mayor of Hackney**

Carole Williams  
**Cabinet Member for Equalities**

CC Meg Hillier MP, Member of Parliament for Hackney South and Shoreditch  
Diane Abbott MP, Member of Parliament for Hackney North and Stoke Newington