

Siân Berry MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

**Sent by email.**

Dear all,

**Brighton and Hove City Council's consultation of the Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit.**

I am writing to respond to the consultation on Brighton and Hove City Council's (BHCC) Consultation on review of the [Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit](#).

Firstly, I'd like to welcome BHCC's commitment to continue the offer of the toolkit at a time when some [other local authorities have paused](#) or cancelled theirs. For local schools to have the option of this resource is not just invaluable in terms of harm reduction to trans and non-binary young people, as vital though that is, but it is of benefit to all children and young people in preparing them for life in the modern world.

I agree that the toolkit plays a key preventative role with regards to transphobic bullying, and with a core message of the toolkit on challenging broader "Gender Stereotyping" e.g. that boys and girls should present themselves in certain ways. This is again beneficial to all young people, including to my young constituents who are not transgender but are gender non-conforming. Inclusivity is synonymous with Brighton and Hove and our city has a longstanding reputation as a haven for LGBTQIA+ people.

The [2021 census revealed](#) at least 2,341 residents (1.0%) identify with a gender different from their sex identified at birth and more than one in ten residents aged 16 or over (10.6%, 25,375 people) identify with an LGB+ sexual orientation. Teaching our young people about their trans and non-binary neighbours and peers in age-appropriate way, as the toolkit does, is essential for reducing bullying and transphobia and for helping them understand and value the diversity of the city they live in, and beyond.

The draft toolkit's focus in point 3.2 on Black, and Racially Minoritised (BRM) children and young people and children and young people from faith backgrounds is particularly welcome. BRM trans people are likely to face discrimination based on their race as well as their gender, and this can make seeking support even harder. It is also welcome to see the ongoing close relationship between Brighton and Hove City Council and Allsorts Youth Project who have a [BRM inclusion worker and resources](#) written by and for young LGBT BRM people and young people of faith.

As part of the consultation process, I have received powerful testimonies from parents about the positive impact the toolkit has had on their children and families. I've included some anonymised excerpts below from those who were happy for me to share their comments:

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- *“The adoption of the toolkit at my child’s school has meant she has a happy and safe time at school for the first time... It also means that her peers have understanding, and empathy, which has resulted in my daughter and her schoolmates having no difficulties in their friendships.”*
- *“Our family benefitted from the toolkit in both primary and secondary school settings, enabling our daughter to participate fully in school residentials, PE and in daily school life as an equal member of the community.”*
- *“The toolkit generally is an invaluable tool which helps families like ours navigate school life without being to the detriment of any others- and it’s reassuring to know it is underpinned by equalities law.”*
- *“Her form tutor used the toolkit as her guide and resource and the transition for my daughter and her class was beautiful and seamless. Her well-being improved dramatically with the recognition and acceptance of who she was. She experienced bullying and hate from some pupils but the school staff were unwavering in supporting her and challenging the hate. The toolkit was her safety net through school life in short it was invaluable and massively supported her and our wellbeing as a family.”*
- *“The toolkit felt like an absolute lifeline when we as parents were clueless about how the school could support our child.”*
- *“The toolkit has often given us an important benchmark / starting point for a conversation with pastoral leaders. It has been invaluable in supporting parents and young people to feel accepted.”*
- *“For our school, it has meant that they feel confident in following gender-affirming policies, knowing that they have the support of the council, and are doing the same as other local schools, and are not a lone voice. If our school is forced to enact the proposed DfE guidelines, it will put my child at mental, emotional and physical harm. I feel it will leave me with no option but to remove my child from the school system entirely.”*
- *“Heartfelt thanks for developing this vital piece of work which has helped so many families like ours and ensured so many trans and NB young people can flourish in the school environment as equal members of the community rather than bring segregated or excluded. It means so much.”*

These testimonies highlight the enormous impact the toolkit has had in the city. While the toolkit is voluntary, I hope its use is maintained throughout Brighton and Hove and I’m pleased to hear that the feedback the council has had from schools is that they have found it a helpful and supportive resource.

All young people deserve respect and dignity in navigating their early lives in education and I believe this resource plays an important role in that. If it is ever helpful, I would be delighted to have a meeting with you about these issues and the work being done in the city to support young people.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Siân Berry', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

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