

## **Kacey de Groot Statement for the re-election to NEU Executive as LGBT+ Seat Holder.**

I would like to state my intention, once again, to stand for election for the Equalities seat holder, for LGBT+ members, of the National Education Union. I first put myself forward for this position in October of last year and was appointed unopposed in November. At that time I was well aware that, due to the short period of time I would have in the role, I would need to stand again at this point. Whilst no other candidates ran against me in the previous election, I am not taking that for granted now. I feel that the process of being on the executive is far more clearly understood by me now, and that I still have a great deal to offer LGBT+ members, the union, and the students we teach.

The remainder of my statement below is the same as I have publicised in the previous election. There has been a deeply challenging set of circumstances for educators recently, in the midst of the COVID19 pandemic. I still stand by and reassert all of those aims and objectives and am happy to put these forward, once again, as my statement of intent.

I am a trans woman. But I am also a queer woman. I don't stand purely for Trans and Non-Binary representation in the Union, although I feel, at this point in time, that is vital. I want to ensure that the union upholds its democratic commitment to Trans rights, and also, with consultation from Non-Binary members, recognises the validity of Non-Binary members' identities.

I stand for the acceptance, visibility, representation, and celebration of all LGBT+ Educators. Most of my own lived experience of oppression has centred around my 'transness'. It is part of who I am also though, to look for the 'bigger pictures' in the world. I always want to understand how things operate, and I seek to deal with the roots of problems.

When I apply this approach to the transphobia I face, I can see it is not anything new, modern, or original. Gay, bi and lesbian people have faced similar and almost identical oppressions before. Clause 28 used similar demonisation and fear mongering bringing a legacy that has set back people's opportunities to live fulfilling and authentic lives, free from prejudice, by decades. And still there are protests and organising, thirty years later, against the idea of gay people being seen in books. This has not ended. Rather, it seems to be growing and is often funded from deeply problematic organisations and groups. I stand to fight against this, and to bring more visibility, solidarity, and support for LGBT+ Educators.

Through the outstanding work done by the NEU Black LGBT+ Network, and my links and connections with the Trans community, I have seen how LGB, and Queer, Trans and Intersex People of Colour particularly, have a greatly increased level of discrimination, oppression, poverty, violence and often death. If I am elected, I don't want to speak for those people, and never knowingly over them. I will always push for them to be heard, seen and listened to themselves. As a white person I cannot guarantee I will always get things right. But, I will approach any work done for those members with thought, care, and consultation. And, if I ever make a mistake, I will apologise and listen to the voices of Black Educators to enable me to do that better in the future.

I will look to create, within the existing Equality networks, greater connection and union between Black, Disabled and LGBT+ members. I welcome the intersectional groups that have been created recently, including the mentioned Black LGBT+ Educators, and the Disabled LGBT+ Educators, and whether through networks or events, I want to develop this way of working to grow more members, and more organisers and activists.

I believe passionately in intersectionality and in understanding our identities on an individual basis. I think when we see our complexity and difference as a strength, and as a benefit, we have a far greater chance of creating a better world.

I want to create more opportunities for our union to lead in the world of Education. As more academies, commercially produced curriculums, educational consultants, and 'ThinkTanks' dictate what makes good practice and outcomes, the voices that understand this best, the actual teachers, are being ignored. This. Is. Wrong. Similarly, while large commercial organisations are charging schools high prices for Diversity and Equality Training, a great deal of the expertise and experience is already in classrooms and teaching. If elected, I want to find ways that support our members in creating and sharing their work more widely, and with more connectivity, to more of the union membership, and within more schools.

I have always pushed back against narrow curriculums, focussed on knowledge, written examinations and often too much content. I know how this disadvantages young people from less privileged backgrounds. With my increased understanding of the Black Lives Matter movement I can now also see how these pedagogies come from the process and mechanics of colonisation. I believe that not only racism (overt and structural) but also homophobia, biphobia, sexism, and particularly transphobia are rooted in colonialism. I will work hard to decolonise schools and curricula for the benefit of all students and educators.

Finally I want to build more connections and bridges, through the greater visibility and presence of LGBT+ Educators, to LGBT+ student groups. I want our network to understand how we can grow LGBT+ representation within the teaching profession, (particularly Black and Disabled LGBT+ teachers) by connecting with students.

I am including a link to a podcast in which I appear in because it communicates (I hope) something about my personal story and about how I approach teaching and education. I am very proud of daughter, Dora, who is also in the episode. She steals the show in my opinion!

My experience as a Trans Woman is not the same as a woman who was assigned female at birth, and has always lived as a woman. It is different. But since transitioning I have been able to understand sexism in a real and tangible way. As opposed to a 'privileged' or purely philosophical way. (Which is the way I can understand Racism or Disableism). I am standing as a Woman who wants to fight, as well as for LGBT+ people, for Women. All Women.

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