



**James Cleverly - Unite to Deliver**

Dear LGBT+ Conservatives,

The Conservative Party is at its best when it reflects all of our diverse membership and I would like to thank your organisation for all your work in ensuring our Party can be a home for all of the LGBT+ community. Our country should be the best place in the world to be LGBT+ and I recognise that this starts first by making sure our Party is inclusive and representative of our members.

I would like to pay tribute to the enormous contribution all of the LGBT+ Conservatives make to our party. Delivering leaflets, knocking on doors, hosting events, raising money, and making the case for Conservatism in your local communities are the base ingredients for victory. I know your group goes above and beyond and you should be enormously proud of the difference you make.

I will always be an outspoken ally to the LGBT+ community. I [publicly backed same-sex marriage in 2005](#) before becoming a candidate even though I was advised it would limit my chances of selection. The Conservative Party must always champion individual freedom and the equality of opportunity; it is why it is so brilliantly diverse and we should never forfeit these principles to favour one group above another.

We should be very proud of our record when it comes to supporting and protecting the LGBT+ community. We have made huge progress in advancing equality for LGBT+ people. We changed the law so that same-sex couples could get married, we cut the cost of obtaining Gender Recognition Certificates and we accepted the intent behind all of Lord Etherton's recommendations in his LGBT independent review.

But I know there is more to do. No one in our society should feel unsafe because of who they are. And, nobody should have to hide who they are or who they love. From my experience as Home Secretary, I know we need to do more to tackle crime targeted at the LGBT+ community and I know there is more work to do to make sure our Party's culture is truly inclusive and tolerant. We can have open and honest debates in good faith when exploring difficult issues, but we must make sure we always return to our principles on common ground.

I want to build a party proud of all its members and, ultimately, lead a government with equality of opportunity at its very heart. We have a bold and aspirational message to share with the country and it is only by working closely with organisations - such as your own - that we can ensure it reaches all corners of our United Kingdom.

Kind regards,

**James Cleverly**  
**Member of Parliament for Braintree**