B10 Green Party Executive to Terminate the Appointment of the Policing and Domestic Safety Spokesperson

Proposer: Raphael Hill (Brighton & Hove)
Agenda item: B Motions of Policy and Organisation

'Green Party Executive to terminate the appointment of the Policing and Domestic Safety Spokesperson'.

Summary:

According to the Code of Conduct for Spokespeople 'The Green Party of England and Wales reserves the right to terminate the appointment of spokespeople before the end of their term, subject to the needs and reputation of the party. '

We, as the Young Green Conference, call for the Green Party Executive to terminate the appointment of the Policing and Domestic Safety Spokesperson, Shahrar Ali. We ask for this action to be taken once guidance has been given by GPRC to GPEx which establishes a clear process for terminating a spokesperson's appointment. We would also advise that there be consultation with all of the GPEW liberation groups with this process.

This motion provides a non-exhaustive list of instances where we believe Shahrar has not lived up to the 'highest standard of behaviour' that is required from spokespeople in the Spokesperson Code of Conduct. This motion seeks to show that some of Shahrar's public comments do not 'uphold the policies of the GPEW'. We also do not believe that certain statements do not 'uphold the ethical principles and political values of the GPEW.' This motion focuses on two instances of this. The first instance is Shahrar's claim that it is unprofessional to wear a badge advertising your sexuality in a "patient setting". The second instance is Shahrar's public statements related to his motion to prohibit GenderGP from operating in the UK.

Key terms:

GPEW= Green Party of England and Wales

GPEx= Green Party Executive ('is responsible for the day to day running of the party.')

GPRC= Green Party Regional Council ('a forum for dialogue between Regions, responsible for keeping under review the general well-being of the Party and for supporting and advising the Green Party Executive, particularly on matters of political strategy.')

Before going further into this it needs to be made clear what this resolution does not seek to do.

- This is not a motion which is concerned with Shahrar Ali's membership to the Green Party of England and Wales.
- We do seek to determine any qualities about the character of Shahrar Ali.

What does this resolution seek to do?

- Make a case on the grounds of two instances that Shahrar's online statements have not met the Code of Conduct required of GPEW spokespeople.

The Spokesperson Code of Conduct states that 'GPEW reserves the right to terminate the appointment of spokespeople before the end of their term, subject to the needs and reputation of the party.' However, we are aware of the procedural difficulty of this as this has not been done previously. We hope the Green Party Regional Council can provide a clear mechanism to allow for this and for GPEx to be able to use this when it is deemed appropriate by them in future. This includes in this instance.

The following contains the evidence on which we wish to claim the Spokesperson Code of Conduct has not been adhered to:

1. Shahrar's claim that it is unprofessional to advertise your sexuality in a patient setting.

Evidence:

1. 'Judging from responses to this, CQC would be advised to follow up with clarification they are not advocating for clinicians & care workers to advertise their sexuality in patient settings. Professionalism dictates clear role responsibilities & scrupulous boundaries.' (28th February 2021) https://twitter.com/ShahrarAli/status/1366157075571748864

2. 'Nice riposte but of course you completely miss the point. Advertising sexuality to patients - as per badges - in clinical or care environment is unprofessional and inappropriate.' (7th March 2021) https://twitter.com/ShahrarAli/status/1368369686019252228

3. 'Then you just don't get it. At all. You think it's appropriate for a clinician or care worker to advertise their sexuality in a patient setting? It's highly inappropriate.' (7th March 2021) https://twitter.com/ShahrarAli/status/1368363245573185544

Polices which this contradicts:

WR321 The Green Party will support and improve legislation to make it an offence to harass or discriminate directly or indirectly against people at work, on grounds of race, sex, family status or responsibilities, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, political opinion or physical appearance. This will include people who are disadvantaged by reason of resistance to discrimination.

HE207 The Green Party recognises that the Health Service, and all public services, influence the life of the community and the country. It is important that there is no discrimination in employment and that the NHS is a leader in challenging racism, homophobia, transphobia, and prejudice and discrimination based on disabilities or faith.

RR503 Sexual orientation or relationship status shall not affect the decision whether or not to employ, promote or discharge any individual. When assessing a

person's work, their sexual orientation or relationship status is of no consequence in their ability to undertake the work required.

Reasoning:

Firstly, being open about your sexuality in any workplace is in no way unprofessional. This includes in the context of providing care work. The image by the Care Quality Commission had a man with some buttons on his lanyard stating, 'I'm gay', 'he him', 'trans ally' & 'I like men'. While it isn't specified in the post, the fact that the individual being quote tweeted is gay is important to this. While the comments Shahrar makes talk more generally about sexuality, the fact that this quote tweets a photo of a gay man suggests that the open display of his sexuality specifically is 'highly inappropriate' to Shahrar. Shahrar quote tweeted the Care Quality Commission post to make his first statement. Shahrar is asking the Care Quality Commission to 'follow up with a clarification' and that in his mind you should not 'advertise your sexuality' if you are a care worker or clinician.

Sexual orientation is a protected characteristic and so it would not be appropriate for clinicians or care workers to be asked to hide their sexuality under the Equalities Act of 2010 and so the Clinical Care Commission would be wrong to do so. Shahrar is therefore saying that there should be a form of workplace discrimination where individuals in care roles cannot disclose their sexuality because he deems it to be 'highly inappropriate'. This is contrary to WR321 & HE207.

If someone were to be open about their sexuality and for it to be considered 'highly inappropriate' then this would be likely within their workplace context to affect their status within the company. This is contrary to RR503.

It is important to note here that Shahrar does not give an explanation as to why only those working in a patient setting should be treated in this way. For LGBTQ+ people who are patients in a care context, this can in fact have the effect of putting them at ease. This openness helps to make better connections with the people who care for them and creates a clear sense that this is a safe space. If open displays of sexuality are not allowed for carers/clinicians, it can have an isolating effect on people receiving care, due to the lack of other openly LGBTQ+ people.

Finally, Shahrar is acting in his capacity as spokesperson when he is tweeting. His twitter is public and shows and his spokesperson role is in his Twitter description. At this point in time (February-March 2021), he was our Home Affairs Spokesperson. His role now includes 'Domestic Safety' which would relate to services that provide care to vulnerable people. By having a spokesperson who has made these prior statements and by GPEW not acting upon this, we would be taking a step back from trying to achieve equality in the workplace especially for those with sexualities that are marginalised in mainstream society. This is not something that we can accept as Young Greens.

2. Shahrar's public statements related to his motion to prohibit GenderGP from operating in the UK.

Evidence:

1. EMERGENCY MOTION: PROHIBIT GENDERGP FROM OPERATING IN UK on Grounds of Patient Safety, Lack of Child Informed Consent & Safeguarding Failures. This EM will be voted on at #gpconf plenary! Full text in image & thread. @TheGreenParty members pls support motion. #GenderGP #Tavistock (March 4th 2021): https://twitter.com/ShahrarAli/status/1367461683510341632

2. Full text of motion available on Shahrar's Twitter here (March 4th 2021): https://twitter.com/ShahrarAli/status/1367461683510341632/photo/1 This can also be found at http://electshahrar.co.uk/gpew-em-prohibit-gendergp-from-uk

3. 'Why this motion and why now? How long are we going to sit on our hands or turn a blind eye to evidence of clear #safeguardingfailure and risk to #patientsafety or lack of #childinformedconsent or lack of #parentconsent? No! Greens must take a stand and show the way. Emergency.' (March 4th 2021) https://twitter.com/ShahrarAli/status/1367466645741002758

Polices which this contradicts:

RR533 The NHS should better recognise the increasing need for Gender Identity Clinics and increase service provision, across the country.

RR534 The NHS should remove barriers to accessing services for trans people, with thorough review of access to services for Children and Young People and for those who have self prescribed or self funded gender treatment in the UK or abroad.

Reasoning:

Shahrar asks the Green Party Conference to 'Prohibit GenderGP from operating in the UK on grounds of patient safety'. If GenderGP were to be prohibited from operating in the UK, then this would create an additional barrier to trans people who need to access services that provide gender affirming therapy. This would reduce service provision and create further barriers and so conflicts with RR533 & RR534.

This also further conflicts with RR534 as RR534's proposed 'thorough review' relates to access to services for children and young people. This is explicitly linked to the need to remove barriers for young people and children. Shahrar tweets express concern that GenderGp are 'providing puberty blockers to children as young as 10 and hormones to others at 12'. This implies that puberty blockers, when used on children are harmful. It is important to state that puberty blockers can be used by both trans and cis children safely, as in instances of early puberty, the NHS can provide puberty blockers when 'girls have signs of puberty before 8 years of age. Boys have signs of puberty before 9 years of age.' https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/early-or-delayed-puberty/

NHS policy accepts that a child under 8 years old should not have to go through menstruation when they and their parents do not consent to that. We also have already made it explicit that as a party we recognise the right to gender affirming therapy for 'children and young people'. Shahrar's motion seeks to undermine that right by claiming that GenderGP is acting inappropriately, when

in fact it is following standard NHS practice with regards to the age of children accessing puberty blockers.

Shahrar's motion seeks to interfere with the actions of the Care Quality Commission. The regulation of healthcare providers must be independent of politicians and of the Green Party Conference.

In conclusion:

We call for GPEx to consider the following evidence provided when considering whether to terminate the appointment of the Policing and Domestic Safety Spokesperson. We hope they bear in mind the views of the Young Greens Conference on this matter alongside, the views of the GPEW liberation groups.

Supporters

Alexander Sallons (Brighton and Hove); Heni Tinker (Brighton & Hove Green Party); Patrick McAllister - Bristol Young Greens co-Chair (Bristol Green Party)