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Jasmine Twitty, the BLACK-WOMAN who made history when she became the YOUNGEST judge, at age 25, to ever be appointed or elected in the United States. [source](#)

classic throw-away line we use to describe the mental condition of domestic abuse victims, but it's also a term that's still taken seriously by some psychologists. 'A classic example [of Stockholm syndrome] is domestic violence,' says Oxford psychologist Jennifer Wild, 'when someone – typically a woman – has a sense of dependency on her partner and stays with him.'¹⁵

But Stockholm syndrome – a dubious pathology with no diagnostic criteria – is riddled with misogyny and founded on a lie.¹⁶ The psychiatrist who invented it, Nils Bejerot, never spoke to the woman he based it on; never bothered to ask her why she trusted her captors more than the authorities. More to the point, during the Swedish bank heist that inspired the syndrome, Bejerot was the psychiatrist leading the police response. He was the authority that Kristin Enmark – the first woman diagnosed with Stockholm syndrome – distrusted.

Enmark was twenty-three when, one morning in 1973, Jan Olsson walked into a bank in Norrmalmstorg and took her and three other clerks hostage. Over the next six days, the audacious heist became a blockbuster media event. Swedes had never seen anything like it, and neither had the police.

With no training in hostage negotiation, the police response was ham-fisted from the start. Early in the siege, they

misidentified Olsson and, thinking they had found his younger brother, sent a teenage boy into the bank to negotiate, accompanied by Nils Bejerot, only to have Olsson shoot at him. As Olsson became more and more agitated, his accomplice, Clark Olofsson, whose release from jail was one of Olsson's first demands, reassured the hostages. '[Clark] comforted me, he held my hand,' Enmark recalled in 2016. 'He said, "I want to see that Jan doesn't hurt you." I can't say that I felt safe, because that's not the word, but I chose to believe him. He meant very much to me, because I thought that somebody cared about me. But there was no affection in that way. In some way, he gave me hope that, *this is going to end okay.*'¹⁷

There was no such reassurance from the police. Enmark asked to speak to Bejerot, but he refused. In a live radio interview from the bank, she blew up at the authorities. '[The police] are playing with ... our lives. And then they don't even want to talk to me, who is the one who will die if anything happens.' Sensing that their likelihood of survival was getting slimmer by the hour, Enmark took matters into her own hands. She called the Swedish prime minister, Olof Palme, and begged him to let her and another hostage leave the bank with their captors. 'I fully trust Clark and the robber,' she told Palme. 'I am not desper-

ate. They haven't done a thing to us. On the contrary, they have been very nice. But you know, Olof, what I'm scared of is that the police will attack and cause us to die.' Palme refused to let her leave, saying they could not give in to the demands of criminals. At the end of the conversation, Enmark says Palme said, 'Well, Kristin, you can't get out of the bank. You will have to content yourself that you will have died at your post.' Enmark was appalled, telling Palme, 'I don't want to be a dead hero.'¹⁸

Finally police teargassed the bank vault and paraded the captors up and down the street to cheers and jeers from the crowd. Enmark watched on, furious at this macho display. When she was told to lie on a stretcher, she refused: 'I walked in here six and a half days ago, I'm walking out.'¹⁹

On the radio, Enmark criticised the police, and singled out Bejerot. In response, and without once speaking to her, Bejerot dismissed her comments as the product of a syndrome he made up: 'Norrmalmstorg syndrome' (later renamed Stockholm syndrome). The fear Enmark felt towards the police was irrational, Bejerot explained, caused by the emotional or sexual attachment she had with her captors.[†] Bejerot's snap diagnosis suited the Swedish media; they were suspicious of Enmark, who 'did not appear as traumatised as she ought to

be.' 'It is hard to admit,' wrote one journalist, 'but the words that come to mind to describe her condition are: fresh and alert.' Her clarity was, apparently, proof that she was sick.

Four years later, when Enmark was asked to explain her actions, she was indignant. 'Yes, I was afraid of the police; what is so strange about that? Is it strange that one is afraid of those who are all around, in parks, on roofs, behind corners, in armoured vests, helmets and weapons, ready to shoot?'

In 2008, a review of the literature on Stockholm syndrome found that most diagnoses were made by the media, not psychologists or psychiatrists; that it was poorly researched, and that the scant academic research on it could not even agree on what the syndrome was, let alone how to diagnose it.²⁰ Allan Wade, who has consulted closely with Enmark, says Stockholm syndrome is 'a myth invented to discredit women victims of violence' by a psychiatrist with an obvious conflict of interest, whose first instinct was to silence the woman questioning his authority.²¹

*

In the 1980s and '90s Stockholm syndrome, battered woman syndrome and learned helplessness became the dominant models

Location 1052

12%

I actually cannot believe this origin story for "Stockholm Syndrome" which is basically just a "myth invented to discredit women victims of violence by a psychiatrist with an obvious conflict of interest, whose first instinct was to

silence the woman questioning his authority" [source](#)



I wish more people recognized how much the gender binary is rooted in colonialism. Prior to their colonization, Africans and other indigenous people not only had spaces for trans, genderfluid, and non binary people, but they were often venerated within the society... [link source](#)

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telegra.ph/UK-Black-Pride-to-go-ahead-as-virtual-15th-birthday-celebration-07-23

Telegraph

UK Black Pride to go ahead as virtual 15th birthday celebration

UK Black Pride will go ahead this year as a virtual 15th birthday celebration, organisers have revealed. The event, which is billed as Europe's biggest celebration for LGBT+ people of African, Asian, Caribbean, Latin American and Middle Eastern descent, was...

telegra.ph/Amrou-Al-Kadhi-talks-gender-and-fish-in-Life-as-a-Unicorn-extract-07-23

Telegraph

Amrou Al-Kadhi talks gender and fish in Life as a Unicorn extract

Amrou Al-Kadhi, a queer non-binary Iraqi-British drag queen, writer and performer, recalls how a teenage visit to a marine fish store helped them understand their gender. When there were no after-school clubs for me to stay behind for, I would tell my parents...

telegra.ph/Emma-Watson-Reni-Eddo-Lodge-launch-women-and-non-binary-Tube-map-07-23

Telegraph

Emma Watson, Reni Eddo-Lodge launch women and non-binary Tube map

Emma Watson and Reni Eddo-Lodge are creating a new Tube map for London, with each stop named after a woman or non-binary person who has played a part in shaping the city's history. The celebratory project is inspired by the book Nonstop Metropolis by Rebecca...

https://ed.ted.com/best_of_web/5rhHgDwh

TED-Ed

If The World Were 100 People

What would society look like if the world's population was only 100 people? In this video, GOOD Magazine uses data to uncover the answer.

telegraph.co.uk/Gender-Recognition-Act-The-history-of-the-Tories-and-UK-gender-laws-07-24

Telegraph

Gender Recognition Act: The history of the Tories and UK gender laws

Déjà vu: The feeling when, for the second July in a row, the Conservative minister for women and equalities breaks her promise to the transgender community regarding the Gender Recognition Act. This year, it was Liz Truss who promised she would announce the...

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-orwellian-really-means-noah-tavlin>

TED-Ed

What "Orwellian" really means - Noah Tavlin

If you've watched the news or followed politics, chances are you've heard the term Orwellian thrown around in one context or another. But have you ever stopped to think about what it really means, or why it's used so often? Noah Tavlin dissects the term.

telegraph.co.uk/Free-Black-University-Activist-wants-to-decolonise-UK-curriculum-07-24

Telegraph

Free Black University: Activist wants to decolonise UK curriculum

Queer Black students are being failed by UK universities, says Melz Owusu, who has a plan to decolonise the system. Owusu, a 25-year-old decolonial theorist and activist about to embark on a PhD at Cambridge, is the architect of the Free Black University...

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-is-mccarthyism-and-how-did-it-happen-ellen-schrecker>

TED-Ed

What is McCarthyism? And how did it happen? - Ellen Schrecker

In the 1950s, as part of a campaign to expose suspected Communists, thousands of individuals were aggressively investigated and questioned before government panels. Named after its most notorious practitioner, the phenomenon known as McCarthyism...

telegra.ph/Riotlandia-Why-Portland-Has-Become-the-Epicenter-of-Far-Right-Violence-07-24

Telegraph

Riotlandia: Why Portland Has Become the Epicenter of Far-Right Violence

Portland, Oregon is bracing for a storm of far-right violence. In July, Joe Biggs, a former staffer at the far-right conspiracist site Infowars announced an “End Domestic Terrorism” rally in Portland this Saturday. Its aim: the local antifa movement. Biggs...

telegra.ph/Erin-Parisi-wants-to-fly-the-trans-Pride-flag-from-the-top-of-Mount-Everest-07-24

Telegraph

Erin Parisi wants to fly the trans Pride flag from the top of Mount Everest

When Erin Parisi reached the peak of Aconcagua, the tallest mountain in Argentina, it was the highest she'd ever climbed. To mark the moment, Erin took a pink, white and blue trans flag out of her bag and held it aloft at the summit. Aconcagua is the highest...

telegra.ph/Bobby-Norris-TOWIE-star-traumatised-by-homophobic-death-threats-07-24

Telegraph

Bobby Norris: TOWIE star 'traumatised' by homophobic death threats
TOWIE star Bobby Norris has said he is “shocked and traumatised” after being subjected to a vicious homophobic hate campaign by online trolls. Speaking on Access All Areas on FUBAR Radio, Norris – who has appeared on The Only Way is Essex since 2012 – said...

telegra.ph/CBBC-The-Next-Step-makes-gay-history-with-same-sex-kiss-07-24

Telegraph

CBBC: The Next Step makes gay history with same-sex kiss
CBBC show The Next Step made history Wednesday (July 22) by featuring its first-ever gay kiss. The Next Step tells the stories of a competitive dancing troupe. Shot in a mockumentary style, the show has been airing on the CBBC, the children’s television brand...

I am a descendant of slaves, who knew that they would not make it, but dreamed and prayed that one day I would make it. [source](#)

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Amrou Al-Kadhi talks gender and fish in Life as a Unicorn extract

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Amrou Al-Kadhi, a queer non-binary Iraqi-British drag queen, writer and performer, recalls how a teenage visit to a marine fish store helped them understand their gender.

When there were no after-school clubs for me to stay behind for, I would tell my parents that there were, so I could wander around Barnes and delay going home.

On one such afternoon, when I was thirteen, I stumbled upon a street in Mortlake

I'd never ventured down before – and it was here that I encountered the Tropical and Marine shop for the first time.

In the shop window sat an enormous marine fish tank, teeming with colourful coral, free-flowing anemones, gloriously ornamented fish, and constantly undulating starfish. As I gazed at it, I felt something entirely new – a distinct sense of belonging.

Have you ever seen or heard something – a film, a painting, something fleeting out of a car window, a song or a sound – and felt a sudden emotional clarity, as if whatever you've just encountered has always been part of you, and in that moment, both parts have finally been reunited? That's what this felt like.

I was deeply stirred by the way that the marine creatures moved so freely; the way the soft corals and sea invertebrates seemed to exist without physical boundaries, like warrior shape-shifters; the way the fish regally flaunted their colourful costumes.

That's how I feel on the inside. In my soul, I'm that colourful; my sexuality, my gender – it's free-moving, like in the tank. Maybe my soul doesn't have any boundaries?

I had grown very accustomed to boundaries. I had spliced myself into different sections that existed in segregated spaces.

But here was a parallel universe where everything was fluid. I inched closer to the tank and was hypnotised by the way all the creatures interacted with each other. Cleaner shrimp politely mowed the scales of a fish that was half purple, half yellow; the corals, each with their own distinct texture and colour scheme, seemed to flow as one formless mass with the current of the water.

They were united by their diversity, not divided, like I had learnt to become. Out from the sand emerged starfish, along with hermit crabs and snails, hoovering the sand-bed like a harmonious social collective.

I was desperate to dive inside this wormhole with it, for this new world clearly had so much to teach me.

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Bobby Norris: TOWIE star 'traumatised' by homophobic death threats

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TOWIE star Bobby Norris has said he is “shocked and traumatised” after being subjected to a vicious homophobic hate campaign by online trolls.

Speaking on *Access All Areas* on FUBAR Radio, Norris – who has appeared on *The Only Way is Essex* since 2012 – said the homophobic trolling has reached the “next level” over the last week.

He has been sent graphic photoshopped images of himself in a coffin and terrifying doctored pictures showing him being beheaded.

The abuse became so bad that Norris was forced to temporarily leave social

media.

TOWIE star Bobby Norris said the homophobic abuse online has been ‘constant’ over the last week.

“The last few days it’s got so, so dark and so bad,” he told co-host Stephen Lang.

“The videos and images I’m being sent with my head photoshopped onto... I won’t go into too many details but it’s quite a traumatic thing to see yourself laying in a coffin or hanging from a rope or something holding a gun to your head,” he said.

The 33-year-old *TOWIE* star has been the subject of hate campaigns from online trolls in the past, but said it has never been as bad as it is right now.

This is very much about me being a gay man. Most of them coming in are all about kill the LGBT+, gay this, gay that.

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Emma Watson, Reni Eddo-Lodge launch women and non-binary Tube map

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Emma Watson and Reni Eddo-Lodge are creating a new Tube map for London, with each stop named after a woman or non-binary person who has played a part in shaping the city's history.

The celebratory project is inspired by the book *Nonstop Metropolis* by Rebecca Solnit and geographer Joshua Jelly-Schapiro, which recreated New York's subway map with famous women from the city.

Watson, the *Harry Potter* star now better known for her feminist campaigning, and Eddo-Lodge, author of *Why I'm No Longer Talking To White People About Race*, will work with Solnit on the Tube map redesign, a collaboration with The City of Women London.

“The project aims to identify remarkable female or non-binary Londoners who have had an impact on the city’s history in some way,” the organisers said.

“It will allocate them to each of the stations depicted on the London tube map according to their connections to a local area.

“Some of these people might be household names, others might be unsung heroes or figures from London’s hidden histories. The names might be drawn from arts, civil society, business, politics, sport and so on.”

The New York City version of the project includes names like Yoko Ono, Jacqueline Onassis, Greta Garbo, Bette Midler and Nora Ephron.

Early contenders for London’s Tube stops include Amy Winehouse for Camden, Florence Nightingale for Tooting and Zadie Smith for Brent or Queen’s Park.

Historians, writers, curators, museums and librarians will all be consulted on names of women and non-binary people for the Tube map’s 260 stops.

The public can also contribute ideas for the people who have helped shape the city.

According to the organisers: “The [New York] map then became an iconic poster and sparked numerous conversations about public space, history, gender, feminism, and memory.

“We now want to do the same for London, claiming the iconic Underground map for the women who have made and continue to make the city.”

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Erin Parisi wants to fly the trans Pride flag from the top of Mount Everest

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Erin Parisi making a 'T' sign for Trans Pride on the peak of Mount Elbrus, Russia – Europe's highest mountain – in 2018. (Supplied)

When Erin Parisi reached the peak of Aconcagua, the tallest mountain in Argentina, it was the highest she'd ever climbed.

To mark the moment, Erin took a pink, white and blue trans flag out of her bag and held it aloft at the summit.

Aconcagua is the highest peak outside of the Himalayas, and it was winter in the Himalayas at the time – so no one would be climbing Mount Everest.

“So, I’m thinking that right now, the person that’s standing highest on the planet is a trans person. And the highest flag, the highest banner – that means it’s being held by somebody – is the trans flag,” she says.

“I just held it high and proud. I don’t know who noticed or who cared.”



Erin Parisi is on a mission to make history. She wants to be the first transgender person to climb the world's seven summits – the mountaineering challenge that involves climbing to the top of the highest peak on every continent on earth.

Erin Parisi: From Australia to Russia.

Erin climbed Aconcagua, which is 22,837 feet high, in February 2019.

It was her fourth big summit in just a year. She'd started a year earlier in February 2018 with Mount Kosciuszko, in Australia, which at 7,310 ft was “pretty easy... it’s like one of the foothills here in Denver”.

In Australia, Erin felt safe – she'd rented a camper van in Sydney, bought some Australian wine and gone on a solo road trip, journalling her way across the

country.

“I just headed out into the Australian landscape and enjoyed the beaches,” Erin remembers. “I did what any woman would do after getting out of a divorce and kind of getting beat up by life a little bit.”

Ten days after she got home from Australia, Erin flew to Tanzania to climb her next big peak – Mount Kilimanjaro.

Gay sex is illegal in Tanzania and it can be dangerous to be visibly LGBT+, so Erin decided she would go stealth.

This feeling of needing to hide was ramped up when, two days before she flew to Tanzania, Erin was beaten up in her own neighbourhood. Four people accosted her while she was walking her dog on a cold evening, and then turned violent when they realised that she’s trans.

Heading to Tanzania to climb Mount Kilimanjaro (19,341 ft) right after being attacked, all Erin could think was: “I’ve got to hide. I’ve got to be safe.” She wasn’t even safe in her own neighbourhood, let alone in a region where some countries have the death penalty for being gay.

I’ve got to hide. I’ve got to be safe.

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Free Black University: Activist wants to decolonise UK curriculum

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Melz Owusu has been campaigning to decolonise universities for some time. (Will Stanley Film and Photography)

Queer Black students are being failed by UK universities, says Melz Owusu, who has a plan to decolonise the system.

Owusu, a 25-year-old decolonial theorist and activist about to embark on a PhD at Cambridge, is the architect of the Free Black University, a plan to “redistribute knowledge” among Black students with the needs of those who are also queer and trans at its very heart.

In just over a month, the Free Black University has raised more than £100,000 via a GoFundMe. There is an ambitious £250,000 target, with Owusu also

calling on universities to redistribute some of their incredible wealth to help the charges they are failing.

“Queer and trans students — especially Black students who are queer and trans — struggle not just because of how the university interacts with them, but also because of what’s on the curriculum,” Owusu, who is non-binary, tells *PinkNews*.

“Universities weren’t set up with us in mind so they continually do us a disservice. And so when I consider decolonizing education, it’s about how do we stop having queer and trans voices and perspectives being relegated to an add-on to a curriculum which already has, at its heart, our erasure.”

To end the practice of Black, queer and trans voices playing a distant second fiddle to those of white academics, Owusu says they want to “flip the entire script”, putting these often-silenced perspectives at “the heart of curriculum design”.

There is a mental health crisis in universities.

As well as distributing radical texts both in book form and a vast online library, the Free Black University will deliver lectures on “transformational” topics and build a Black-centric journal and press. All of this will be free and openly available.

There will also, eventually, be a physical community space for students to address the ongoing mental health crises taking place in universities and Black and queer communities, and those who live in the intersection therein.

A 2018 Stonewall report found that trans students in particular face bullying from staff, with more than a third reporting negative comments or conduct. One in five said they had been encouraged to hide the fact they are trans. Disabled queer students are also a particular target, with 47 per cent receiving negative conduct from other students. Overall, more than 40 per cent of LGBT+ students hid their identity at university because they were afraid of discrimination.

The Office for Students has said that Black students with mental health conditions are less likely to graduate with a first or a 2.1, by 24 percentage points less than the overall student population, and are more likely to drop out

after their first year.



“A lot of students will go to university and come out traumatised,” explains Owusu, who began their activism while studying at the University of Leeds, where they delivered a TEDx talk on the subject.

“It might be a moment where they’re accepting their gender identity or their sexuality, and universities aren’t equipped to support them properly, and the NHS isn’t supporting them either.

“And so we want to consider the ways in which education and mental health work in tandem, and the fact that in order to have a fulfilling education you need to be supported with your mental health.”

Specifically, the Free Black University will offer tailored approaches to mental health support with an emphasis on community. There will be an understanding of how spiritual approaches can be used alongside Western psychology to support Black queer and trans students, including those who are on a journey towards accepting their identities.

Free Black University will be open to all.

Looking outside the traditional university network, there will also be an effort to meet the needs of all those who seek learning, including those who are incarcerated. Black people are over-represented in the UK’s prison population, meaning many lose out on educational opportunities full stop, before the nature of those opportunities is even considered.

“It’s important all people – even those cast away by society – receive radical knowledge and see themselves as people who can change the world,” they continue.

“Too often we see those people as too far replaced from us, but it literally could be any of us. When I think of like radicals throughout history, people like Angela Davis, Malcolm X and so many more went to prison. Some of them were even radicalised in prison, so that being a critical space for knowledge production is key.”

“We don’t see people as being intrinsically criminal, intrinsically bad. We have an abolitionist politic, we agree with the defund the police mission, and we believe knowledge should be free and accessible to all.”

By this belief, the Free Black University will be completely open access to all people, not just Black communities. However it is Black people who remain at the heart of this queer-led project, and it is Black people who it hopes to educate and empower.

There have been efforts, in recent, years, to reform curricula, to tear down statues of colonisers from campuses. And yet, only one-fifth of UK universities

have committed to decolonising their curriculum as of June 2020.

For Owusu, “the progress of that movement isn’t necessarily going to end with the hope that I would like to see”.

“Rather than focusing on the ways in which whiteness continues to oppress — again, flipping the script — we’re asking how can we create a space which has at its centre the purpose of creating that radical knowledge, that centres the voices of Black, queer, trans and disable folk.”

Speaking in the aftermath of a Pride Month unlike any other, they point out the similarities between that movement and the one we are facing now.

Like those who fought against homophobia and transphobia in the Stonewall Riots, the people who today seek equality must undo centuries of oppression.

“This project is meant to create change within society in the long run,” they add. “It’s very important that it comes to fruition.”

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Gender Recognition Act: The history of the Tories and UK gender laws

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Déjà vu: The feeling when, for the second July in a row, the Conservative minister for women and equalities breaks her promise to the transgender community regarding the Gender Recognition Act.

This year, it was Liz Truss who promised she would announce the government's plan for (hopefully) improving the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) before parliament goes into summer recess. Last year, it was Penny Mordaunt.

Amber Rudd, who held the equalities brief twice after the Tories held a huge public consultation on reforming the GRA in 2018, also didn't publish the results of the consultation or announce plans for reform off the back of it.

Truss, though, does seem to have come closest to keeping her promise on announcing the results – the evidence for this includes the leak of her apparent proposals for the GRA to the *Sunday Times* on June 14 – although her public

remarks about trans youth, trans women and trans rights suggest her plans for the GRA were furthest from what the government originally intended.

Now, Truss and Boris Johnson have committed to announcing the results “over the summer”. Parliament has now adjourned, and won’t return until September 7.

While, granted, there are around 40 different calendars in existence, it seems unlikely that the Conservatives have strayed from the meteorological calendar, which is most commonly used and in which September is categorically autumn.

So, it is likely that GRA reform has been kicked into the long grass, again, and parliament will return in September having conveniently forgotten its promises to the transgender community. Unless, of course, Truss decides to publish the consultation results and her plan for the GRA over August – while neither the House of Commons nor Lords is sitting, so her plans can’t be properly scrutinised.

Read our open letter to Boris Johnson [here](#).

The Gender Recognition Act: From pioneering to out-of-date.

The 2004 law – used by transgender men and women to gain legal recognition of their gender – was considered pioneering when it was introduced.

It meant that trans men and women could get a new birth certificate with the correct gender marker on it, by jumping through a number of hoops including: being over 18, getting a diagnosis of gender dysphoria, living in their "acquired gender" for two years first and providing proof of this, getting the consent of their spouse if they had one, and paying £140.

A Gender Recognition Panel, who the applicant didn't meet, would then consider this "evidence" and decide whether to issue a Gender Recognition Certificate. Trans people use this to get their birth certificate reissued with the gender marker updated.

This is a long, costly and overly-bureaucratic process, which has put off many trans people from even applying for legal recognition – only around 5,000 trans people have had their gender legally recognised in the UK, out of an estimated

population of over half a million people.

And the UK is now lagging behind – Ireland, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Argentina, Iceland and Belgium all have more straightforward or more comprehensive gender recognition laws. In most of these countries, a trans person can get legal gender recognition by "self-identification" – filling in a statutory declaration, without the need for medical evidence or the approval of strangers.

Ireland recently celebrated its five-year anniversary of introducing self-determination – a gender recognition law that removed all medical criteria from the legal recognition process for those over 18.

And in other countries, trans youth and non-binary transgender people can also access legal gender recognition.

Iceland, India, Nepal, Uruguay and Pakistan are among the countries that legally recognise a third or non-binary gender. Three major airlines recognise that non-binary people exist – Truss should take note.

It was because the GRA is out-of-date and not being used that then-prime minister Theresa May said, in 2017, that the government would look at modernising it.

Announcing that the government would run a public consultation on proposed updates, she said: "We have laid out plans to reform the Gender Recognition Act, streamlining and de-medicalising the process for changing gender because being trans is not an illness and it should not be treated as such."

When the GRA consultation opened to the public, in July 2017, it was very clear: "This consultation simply asks how best government might make the existing process under the Gender Recognition Act a better service for those trans and non-binary people who wish to use it."

What GRA reform was not.

While trans rights in other countries have moved on since 2004, in the UK they have stagnated. At the same time, hate crimes against trans people went up 40 per cent in the last year, a third of UK employers won't hire a trans person, and

16 per cent of transgender women have experienced domestic abuse in the last year (alongside 7.5 per cent of cisgender women).

The GRA is not to do with any of these issues. Legal gender recognition doesn't protect you from domestic violence or being beaten up in the street.

But the constant delays over GRA reform have meant that what was intended to be a straightforward improvement to an outdated piece of legislation has become a stand-in for a huge, and toxic, public debate about transgender people in the UK.

The GRA has nothing to do with public bathrooms. It has nothing to do with healthcare provision for trans people on the NHS. Yet the issue has been used as a proxy for inflammatory commentary around whether trans people really exist, whether trans people are a threat to cisgender women and children, and whether or not we should love and support trans kids.

GRA reform explicitly never included considering changes to the Equality Act, the 2010 law that makes it illegal to discriminate against someone on the basis of their age, sexuality, gender reassignment, sex, disability, race, pregnancy, marriage or faith.

But Kemi Badenoch, the junior equalities minister, recently hinted that this could be changed – in the context of a small number of cisgender women arguing that trans women shouldn't be allowed to continue using women's single-sex spaces, like public bathrooms and changing rooms, or playing women's sports.

Suggestions like these echo those of far-right governments in other countries: in the US, Idaho has passed an anti-trans law that means schools check the genitals of teenage girls before allowing them to play on girls' sports teams; in Hungary, prime minister Viktor Orbán has legally erased trans people, banning legal name or gender changes, using language and rhetoric that mirrors that used by anti-trans pressure groups in the UK.

Gender-critical or anti-trans feminism has flourished in the UK – much to the bemusement and horror of people from other countries. Trans people in the US think that everyone in Britain hates trans people. Meanwhile, a record number of trans and non-binary candidates ran in the last general election.

Every time the Conservatives delay their GRA announcement, it becomes harder to make. What was intended as a straightforward administrative update has been stoked into a political and cultural battle by transphobic white feminists and the media.

It seems unlikely that any announcement the Tories make now can deliver on their promise to the trans community without igniting the fury of anti-trans pressure groups.

If not a rollback of trans rights, then what?

Liz Truss told Labour's Nadia Whittome yesterday that the Conservatives "would not be rolling back trans rights".

This has been welcomed by LGBT+ organisations as a positive commitment from the Tories, and one that Labour will be able to hold them to account over (Labour having, very belatedly, apparently decided it will stick up for trans folk).

But as trans activist Nim Ralph told non-binary writer Jamie Windust: "Most trans people ultimately don't really care about the GRA specifically – we don't plan to change our birth certificates.

"But it's being used so maliciously as a way to open a wider cultural debate around our rights and right to exist, that strategically it's become a battle we need to fight."

The campaign to reform the GRA has swallowed up the trans community's energy for three years. Urgent, pressing issues, like violence against trans women, have been sidelined by this fight.

Updates to the GRA that trans campaigners did want – like legal recognition for non-binary people and 16- and 17-year olds – now seem farfetched, in the context of current messaging about not rolling back trans rights.

But it is not farfetched to demand that the equalities minister end this *déjà vu* and announce the results of the public consultation before next July rolls around – whether she likes them or not.

The government must publish the GRA consultation results in September and enact changes to the law that will mean more trans people in the UK can access legal gender recognition, if they want to.

And then we can all move on. I hear that the third time is (sorry) a charm, Liz.

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UK Black Pride to go ahead as virtual 15th birthday celebration

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UK Black Pride will go ahead this year as a virtual 15th birthday celebration, organisers have revealed.

The event, which is billed as Europe's biggest celebration for LGBT+ people of African, Asian, Caribbean, Latin American and Middle Eastern descent, was postponed indefinitely in March due to concerns about COVID-19.

But UK Black Pride organisers have rolled back the decision, instead opting for a virtual 15th birthday celebration event to be live-streamed on their website.

The virtual event will celebrate UK Black Pride's 15-year history and will feature performances, live DJ sessions and speakers, as well as virtual rooms

hosted by partners in the community.

In a statement, UK Black Pride organisers said people of colour need spaces to call their own and where they can celebrate their identities safely.

UK Black Pride virtual event will help people of colour to ‘breathe, relax and let our hair down’.

“We deserve to be surrounded by people who love us, who understand us and who want to see us win,” the statement said.

“We deserve moments in which we can breathe, relax, let our hair down, where we don’t have to worry about explaining our existence to others.

“We deserve to find joy publicly, loudly and with abandon.”

Too many of us don’t have safe spaces we can go back to, or family who love us without conditions and expectations.

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