

# **Hoy heckled at PinkNews Holyrood reception**

**Conservative MSP, Craig Hoy was repeatedly heckled and challenged by audience members attending the PinkNews Edinburgh Pride Reception on Wednesday after claiming he is an ally to the transgender community. Hoy voted against the Gender Recognition Reform (GRR) bill in December 2022.**

The MSP addressed the audience and said: "I'm a trans ally but I didn't vote for the GRR bill, so I put my hands up for that", adding that he thinks the impression of the Tory stance on LGBTQ+ rights is a "mischaracterisation", and he pointed out John Major's support for lowering the age of consent for gay men in the 1990s as an example.



Panel discussion in Garden Lobby at The Scottish Parliament  
PHOTO Ben Fitzhugh

Fellow Conservative MSP Jamie Greene opened the event, confirming his support for the GRR bill confirming he voted in favour of the thwarted bill making him one of only a few Tory MSPs to do so. He also spoke about the fears for trans youth today saying “Here’s what’s unfair...the young trans person who reads the headlines where they use the word trans in the same sentence as the words monster or pervert.”

Hoy’s attendance at the event was a last minute replacement for Douglas Ross MP, Leader of the Scottish Conservatives, who cancelled due to “a diary clash”. The absence of the party’s Scottish leader at the event was mentioned by the panel’s moderator, Ellie Gomersall, President of NUS Scotland, when introducing Hoy at the start of the panel discussion. She said Mr Ross’s absence was a “real shame” before turning to the audience saying, “I’m sure that many of you would have liked to have spoken to him regarding some of his recent comments”, referring to his [recent tweet](#) calling drag queen storytime in

his constituency “totally inappropriate”.

Patrick Harvie MSP set the tone saying: “We need to have some really difficult conversations tonight otherwise there’s no point in us coming together.” The event was interactive with the audience and panellists participating. Hoy was then heckled from the audience by Michael Sturrock, Head of Communications and Outreach for Angus Robertson MSP, asking for further clarification on his reasoning for not voting for the GRR.



Minister Patrick Harvie with Craig Hoy MSP right PHOTO Ben Fitzhugh

Hoy responded saying he was “mindful that there are other voices and other issues and that actually there were a couple of technical issues in there. But I think if The Scottish Government had thought about it, if we debated it more, we could potentially have done that”.

Michael Sturrock pressed Hoy for further clarification on the ‘technical issues’ he had found with the GRR bill. Hoy

responded that he voted against the legislation with a “very heavy heart” but that he couldn’t support it as he felt there were key amendments needed. He had heard from LGBTQ+ people who urged him to stand up for “women’s rights, and women’s safety and safe spaces”.

Hoy finished with a simple admission and said: “You may not agree...” He claimed he wanted to see the “right legislation” being brought forward, before criticising the SNP for not taking on board the amendments that would have added a medical provision to the process and would have prevented 16 and 17-year-olds obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate.

PinkNews asked Mr Hoy about the ‘technical issues’ in the GRR bill. He said: “I think there were three things”, and reiterated his concern about insufficient safeguards for women’s rights, women’s safety and questioned whether sex offenders should have access to The Scottish Government’s Gender Recognition Act. He claimed “sensible amendments” were proposed to the legislation but that they were ultimately rejected.

When asked how long a trans person should have to live in their gender before being granted a GRC, he said there was a “big discussion” to be had. “Some people say more than six months, 12 months, two years – I don’t have an absolute answer to that.” Hoy called for “further investigation” around the age that a person can legally transition, saying it’s a “very significant” decision to legally transition, but acknowledged it wasn’t “not reversible”.

PinkNews also spoke with Michael Sturrock who said: “Hoy said in one breath that he was a trans ally and that he voted for GRR and a sort of hand up movement which I found particularly objectionable because I don’t believe one can be a trans ally and have voted against the gender recognition of the formula.”

The panel discussion also hosted several cross-party MSPs

including Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP Labour, Patrick Harvie MSP Scottish Greens, the Minister for Education, Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, Cllr Euan Davidson (Liberal Democrats). Additionally, the evening included speeches by Jamie Greene who sponsored the evening, and Mhairi Crawford CEO of LGBT Youth Scotland.

The PinkNews Edinburgh Pride Reception was held at the Scottish Parliament in the Garden Lobby, hosting the first panel discussion dedicated to discussing LGBTQ+ issues.



PHOTO Ben Fitzhugh