

These last few days have been difficult for me.

It took a lot for me to go on record and retract previous statements I'd made asking for people to vote conservative.

It took a lot for me to admit I was wrong.

And for that I am sorry to the Labour party, who have shown me nothing but support, kindness and acceptance for who I am.

I cannot say the same about my experiences within the Conservative party,

And that is why, 1 week ago, I decided to speak out.

After recent events, I felt, I could no longer hold my silence.

I felt it owed it to the LGBT community and to the country as a whole,

To lift the lid on the Conservative Party.

When I was a teenager, I was bullied.

I was called every name under the sun.

Dyke.

Lezzer.

Freak.

And after all that, I made myself a promise.

I wouldn't stand back and take discrimination.

I wouldn't let people push me around.

And most importantly, I would never be bullied again.

Being a victim of homophobic bullying made me who I am today.

It made me realise that nobody has the right to make me feel inferior simply because of who I am.

And I thought, when I signed up to the Conservative Party, that they were a party who shared such beliefs.

I thought they believed someone shouldn't be treated differently because of their gender, their race, where they went to school, what their parents did for a living, or their sexuality...

But that didn't stop their members constantly commenting on my sexuality.

As if it even mattered.

As if, if a person wasn't gay, it was inconceivable to them that, that person would stand up for gay rights.

Well, I am gay. But I find the notion that only gay people can defend gay rights disgusting.

You do not need to be black to fight racism.

Nor do you need to have fought in Afghanistan to care about our heroes overseas.

You don't have to be anything to stand up for freedom.

I thought the conservatives believed in freedom – true freedom – where the freedoms of others were protected.

I thought they believed in being honest with the British public.

And yet the policies that Mr George Osborne briefed the gay protesters about outside CCHQ only a few days ago – that the conservatives would introduce a law to wipe clean convictions of those prosecuted in years gone by for being gay– were then dropped from the manifesto just a couple of days later.

It feels like there is a different message for every audience.

I think we should all have “a think”, about what it is Mr Cameron's conservatives actually stand for?

I wanted to believe in the ideals he put forward.

A Conservative Party which believes in change...

It sounded too good to be true.

But that's exactly what it is.

An elaborately executed, highly marketed deception.

A leopard does not change its spots, and neither has the Conservative Party.

Once upon a time, I made the massive mistake of believing that they had.

And I'm here to tell you how wrong I got them.

Mr Cameron, I believed in you and your party, and you let me down.

I thought your party was progressive and would stand up for the "great ignored.", but your party ignored my complaints about discrimination and smears.

I thought the days of homophobia were over.

And then Mr Cameron, you voted against lesbian IVF and gay adoption.

Though should we have been surprised, considering you were against the repeal of section 28

I thought Mr Cameron said in an interview that "gay rights were like human rights."

They are.

So why when asked about giving a free vote on the issue did you not even seem to know what you thought?

His party have called Gordon Brown, "the prime ditherer."

And yet it took him, Mr Cameron, a whole week to get Chris Grayling to give half an apology for offending people, after suggesting there was nothing to apologise for in the first place! And even now Mr Grayling still hasn't retracted his original statement.

And Mr Cameron... don't think we've forgotten about Andrew Bridgen and his "great sympathy" for Grayling's comments... We're still waiting for a comment on that. Your party has called Gordon Brown the "prime ditherer". Mr Cameron, the "prime ditherer", is your party, who have still yet to produce one concrete gay policy.

The voice of the gay people of this country will not go away.

Mr Cameron! Change we can believe in? We shouldn't have to believe in your party changing, because actions should speak louder than words and we should just be able to look at your party and know whether you've changed or not.

As a now ex-conservative politician, needless to say, I wasn't convinced.

And with your recent manifesto launch, I am still not convinced.

There is not one mention of new gay rights in that document.

Mr Cameron, you have not only lost my vote. You have lost my respect.

And I know, I'm not the only one out there who is asking themselves "have the conservatives really changed?".

The answer, is no.

On May the 6<sup>th</sup>, I will be voting for Labour. Because I shouldn't have to believe in change, I should see change and I want to be part of achieving it.

Thank you.