# Labour’s first openly trans councillor resigns over party’s response to Supreme Court ruling



Dylan Tippetts, Plymouth's first openly trans Labour councillor, has resigned from the party, citing a profound disillusionment with its stance on transgender rights in the wake of a contentious ruling from the UK Supreme Court. The court determined that the legal definition of a woman is grounded in biological sex, a decision that has wide-reaching implications for the rights of transgender individuals. Following this ruling, Tippetts accused Sir Keir Starmer of “throwing transgender people under the bus”, stating that he could no longer align himself with a party that, in his view, no longer supports his fundamental rights.

The Supreme Court's ruling, delivered on April 16, clarified that under the Equality Act 2010, the terms 'man', 'woman', and 'sex' specifically refer to biological distinctions rather than gender identity. This decision was met with significant backlash from various LGBTQ+ advocacy groups, which warned of potential setbacks for transgender individuals in terms of legal recognition and access to safe spaces. Many noted that the ruling could exacerbate an already challenging environment for trans people, who frequently face violence and discrimination. Speaking to the media, a member of Labour's National Executive Committee highlighted the dangers such a response could pose, underscoring the heightened risk of hate crimes against transgender women.

In the wake of the ruling, Starmer modified his previous position that had affirmed trans women as women, instead asserting that “a woman is an adult female”. This shift has prompted widespread criticism, with Tippetts remarking, “The Labour party nationally has thrown transgender people under the bus and has taken us backwards decades.” He expressed frustration over the party's alignment with a narrative that undermines the dignity and rights of trans individuals, stating, “I cannot continue to represent a party that does not support my fundamental rights.”

In response to the growing outcry, Equalities Minister Bridget Phillipson attempted to reaffirm Labour's commitment to trans rights, insisting that the party would uphold the dignity of all individuals, including the most vulnerable members of society. However, her assurances did not quell the dissent, as critics within the party argued that the leadership was not doing enough to protect trans rights in the face of mounting legal challenges.

Tippetts' resignation followed allegations that he would be replaced as chair of the Taxi Licensing Committee, a move interpreted by some as a retaliation against his outspoken views on the party's stance towards transgender individuals. He plans to continue serving as an independent councillor until the end of his term but has announced that he will not seek re-election next year.

This significant legal development comes amidst a broader decline in support for trans rights within the UK political landscape. Advocates worry that the Supreme Court’s recent verdict may embolden anti-trans sentiments, especially as it paves the way for heightened restrictions on transgender individuals’ rights to participate fully in public life. The ruling has begun to influence public institutions as well, with the Equality and Human Rights Commission reportedly drafting new guidelines that reflect the court's interpretation, particularly concerning access to single-sex services.

As the Labour Party grapples with internal dissent and public backlash, the implications of this ruling could define its approach to transgender issues moving forward. The question remains whether the leadership will reaffirm its commitment to inclusivity or continue down a path hampered by legal and social complexities regarding gender identity.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/trans-labour-starmer-supreme-court-b2747952.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/trans-labour-starmer-supreme-court-b2747952.html> - Dylan Tippetts, Plymouth's first openly trans Labour councillor, resigned from the party, accusing Sir Keir Starmer of 'throwing transgender people under the bus' following the Supreme Court ruling that defined a woman based on biological sex. Tippetts criticized the Labour Party's response, stating it no longer supports his fundamental rights. Equalities Minister Bridget Phillipson emphasized Labour's commitment to protecting trans people's dignity and rights, despite the ruling. Tippetts will serve his final year on Plymouth City Council as an independent and will not seek re-election next year.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/9f4feaeb-44ba-42d2-8187-aa3760443d53> - Following the UK Supreme Court's ruling that the legal definition of 'woman' is based on biological sex, Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer revised his stance, affirming that 'a woman is an adult female.' This marks a shift from his previous position that 'trans women are women.' The ruling has prompted the Equality and Human Rights Commission to draft new guidance for public institutions, while Equalities Minister Bridget Phillipson pledged to end mixed-sex hospital wards based on biological sex.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/pm-starmer-welcomes-uk-top-court-ruling-biological-sex-equality-laws-2025-04-22/> - British Prime Minister Keir Starmer welcomed the UK Supreme Court's ruling that the legal definition of a woman under equality laws is based on biological sex. The April 16 decision clarified that single-sex services can lawfully exclude trans women, resolving prior legal ambiguities. The ruling came after a legal challenge by 'For Women Scotland' and has been praised by those concerned about the impact of transgender policies on the rights of biological women. However, trans rights groups criticized the verdict, warning of potential exclusion and legal setbacks for transgender individuals.
5. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2025/04/britain-rules-woman-supreme-court/682511/?utm_source=apple_news> - The UK Supreme Court ruled that for the purposes of the 2010 Equality Act, the terms 'man,' 'woman,' and 'sex' refer to biological sex, affirming that sex is binary. The ruling clarifies the legal distinction between sex and gender identity in cases involving anti-discrimination law, especially in women-only spaces like shelters, hospital wards, and prisons. While it allows the exclusion of trans women from such spaces, it maintains protections for transgender individuals under other provisions of the Equality Act.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/1e87c431-23e9-4318-954e-56d8fa92f5ef> - The UK Supreme Court has ruled that under the Equality Act 2010, the legal definition of a 'woman' refers specifically to a person born biologically female. The unanimous decision excludes transgender women, even those with a gender recognition certificate, from this definition in the context of sex-based rights. The ruling stemmed from a legal dispute between campaign group For Women Scotland (FWS) and the Scottish Government over a 2018 bill aimed at boosting female representation on public boards, which had included trans women in its definition of women.
7. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uks-highest-court-rule-definition-woman-under-equality-laws-2025-04-15/> - In a pivotal ruling, the UK Supreme Court has determined that the legal definition of 'woman' under the Equality Act 2010 refers to biological sex, excluding trans women from this designation. The case stemmed from a legal challenge by For Women Scotland, opposing Scottish government guidance that classified trans women with gender recognition certificates (GRCs) as women. The Court's decision clarifies that single-sex services, such as hospital wards, shelters, and sports, can lawfully exclude trans women.