

NSS honorary associate Michael Cashman joins House of Lords

Posted: Fri, 15th Aug 2014

Former MEP and NSS honorary associate Michael Cashman has been appointed to the House of Lords as a Labour peer.

Mr Cashman came to prominence playing Colin Russell, the first gay character in the BBC's drama EastEnders, before going on to be a Labour member of the European Parliament and co-founding campaign group Stonewall. In the European Parliament he served as Labour spokesperson on human rights and was a member of the European Parliament Platform for Secularism in Politics. He stood down as an MEP this year.

He has been a trenchant critic of discrimination against minorities within the European Union and led a cross-party coalition to tackle the rise in homophobia throughout Europe. He is also an [advocate](#) for sex and relationships education (SRE) to become a compulsory part of the national curriculum in schools.

Michael described his elevation to the House of Lords as a "huge and humbling honour". He told Pink News:

"It's a huge opportunity to speak out about the things that I'm passionate about, about equality, human rights, inhumanity, international development, and work towards a Labour government that I believe will start to address these major issues.

Labour leader Ed Miliband, commented: "Throughout his life Michael Cashman has been a passionate defender of human rights. As a founder of Stonewall and a member of the European Parliament he has fought tirelessly for LGBT people.

Video: [See Michael Cashman speaking at the National Secular Society's Secularist of the Year event in 2013.](#)

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