

STONEWALL SCOTLAND LGBT MANIFESTO 2016

Putting LGBT equality at the heart of a changing Scotland

INTRODUCTION

Scotland is a changing country, and significant steps have been taken in ensuring that LGBT people have the same rights and opportunities that others take for granted. But we have a long way to go. More than 15 years after the repeal of Section 28, too many LGBT young people go to school each day terrified. Too many teachers are unsure of what they can or can't say if an LGBT pupil comes to them for advice. And too many schools are failing to give our young people basic information about LGBT issues, necessary to keep them happy and safe. We must do more.

This is a manifesto for a changing Scotland, with education at its heart. At Stonewall Scotland we believe you can judge a country by how it values its young people, and whichever party forms the next Scottish Government must ensure that our young people leave school prepared for a modern Scotland where LGBT equality is celebrated.

But education doesn't stop at the playground gates. Stonewall Scotland's research suggests worrying inequalities across public life, and discrimination in basic public services such as health, social care and housing. Investment in training is crucial to ensuring that those services are fit for purpose, and we are calling for clear leadership from the next Scottish Government to ensure that our public bodies are meeting their legal requirements for LGBT equality.

Whilst great strides have been made in legislative equality for lesbian, gay and bisexual people, there remains much to do to ensure that trans people can get recognition and fair treatment without intrusive legal hoops and waiting times. That's why we're calling for significant legal reforms to our transgender recognition laws, and better resources for the gender identity services which are struggling to keep up with demand.

Scotland has come a long way for LGBT equality but we must not be complacent, and we can do more. We are calling on all parties to show their commitment to creating a more equal Scotland, where wherever they live, work, socialise or pray, LGBT people can be accepted without exception.



Colin Macfarlane

Director of Stonewall Scotland

AN EDUCATION SYSTEM GROUNDED IN EQUALITY

LGBT inclusion in the curriculum can no longer be viewed as best practice, but should be considered an essential part of preparing young people for life in modern Scotland, and central to creating a healthy school environment. Currently there is a significant inconsistency in the approach schools and local authorities take to addressing LGBT issues. If we are truly serious about tackling the attainment gap and getting it right for every child in Scotland then this must change.

Despite almost 15 years having passed since the repeal of Section 28 (2A) of the Local Government Act, a staggering 75 per cent of primary school staff and 44 per cent of secondary school staff in Scotland say they either aren't allowed to, or aren't sure if they are allowed to, teach about LGBT issues in their school.

More than half of young lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in Scotland never hear LGBT issues mentioned in the classroom and four in five are not given information or advice about same-sex relationships. Only 16 per cent of teachers, however, have received any specific training on how to tackle homophobic bullying.

Almost one in four LGBT people believe they would face discrimination from other students at college or university. More than half think they would be discriminated against in construction and engineering modern apprenticeships.

We are calling for a commitment to:

- Develop a serious, long term strategy to train teachers to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and provide age-appropriate sex and relationships information and advice, as part of an inclusive curriculum
- Review Scottish Government guidance and toolkits on approaches to bullying, sex and relationship education, and school inspections at a minimum of every four years, including impact assessing the implementation of any new guidance to ensure that all teachers are given clear direction on the expected standards and current best practice in supporting LGBT young people
- Improve data on the experiences of LGBT young people at school, in line with the National Improvement Framework, by requiring Local Authorities to record and report prejudice based incidents, including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, similar to existing practice around race based bullying
- Collect information on LGBT participation in modern apprenticeships, and to work with relevant agencies to break down the barriers that exist for LGBT people accessing this important route into work

FAIR TREATMENT IN PUBLIC SERVICES

At a time when budgets are tight, it has never been more important that our public services are designed around the people that need them, avoiding costly emergency interventions. But LGBT people continue to face discrimination and poor treatment from the services that many take for granted, be that housing, local authority services, or even health and social care, and mental health services.

One in six (16 per cent) LGBT people say they have experienced poor treatment because of their sexual orientation or gender identity when accessing public services in the last three years.

Three in five health and social care practitioners with direct responsibility for patient care say they don't consider sexual orientation to be relevant to an individual's health needs. This includes half of mental health workers.

Three in ten health and social care staff in Scotland have heard their colleagues make negative remarks about lesbian, gay or bisexual people, or use discriminatory language such as "poof" or "dyke" whilst at work in the last five years. One in five have heard colleagues making discriminatory remarks about trans people. One in twenty patient facing staff have witnessed colleagues discriminate against, or provide a patient or service user with poorer treatment because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual in the last five years.

We are calling for a commitment to:

- Support public services to better meet their legal obligations for LGBT people, including support to engage with LGBT communities at a local level, including in small and rural communities
- Train frontline health and social care staff to understand the health needs of LGBT people, and provide them with equal treatment. As a priority, mental health services should ensure that staff are trained to understand the relevance of sexual orientation and gender identity to someone's health
- Explicitly include LGBT equality issues within the new Mental Health Strategy for Scotland after consultation with LGBT people across Scotland
- Improve access to gender services which are struggling to keep up with demand, leading to long waiting times for transgender people

TACKLING HATE CRIME

It is unacceptable that in modern Scotland people continue to be targeted simply because they are seen to be different. Too often, LGBT people are physically and verbally abused for the way they look, for holding hands with a loved one, or for just coming out of the “wrong” pub. Some are even targeted by people they know.

One in six lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Scotland have been the victim of a hate crime or incident in the last three years, yet far too many of these crimes go unreported, with two thirds of those experiencing a hate crime or incident saying they did not report it to anyone.

More than a third of LGBT people say they would not feel confident reporting a homophobic, biphobic or transphobic hate crime directly to Police Scotland. This increases to 45 per cent in the Highlands and Islands, and 43 per cent in the West of Scotland.

We are calling for a commitment to:

- Take action to tackle incidences of LGBT hate crime across Scotland
- Raise awareness about what a hate crime is, and how people can report it, reflecting the needs of diverse communities across Scotland
- Review of how existing measures to tackle hate crime are working, and a commitment to learn from best practice across Scotland

A REVIEW OF LAWS AFFECTING TRANS PEOPLE

We know that trans people often have to fight to be themselves, often struggling with a legal system that doesn't make it easy. It is time that the Scottish Government acted.

Research suggests 62 per cent of trans Scots have experienced transphobic harassment from strangers in public.

88 per cent felt they currently or previously suffered from depression.

We are calling for a commitment to:

- Review the Gender Recognition Act, with the view to remove the intrusive medical requirements currently placed on applicants and enable people under the age of 18 to obtain legal gender recognition, taking into account the interests and views of the person affected
- Review and act on at the devolved aspects of the Transgender Equality Inquiry undertaken by the Women and Equality's Select Committee at Westminster, in particular issues around the provision of healthcare and consult with non-binary people about the best possible way to provide legal recognition of non-binary identities following the recommendations of the Transgender Equality Inquiry at Westminster.

PROTECTING LGBT RIGHTS HERE AND ABROAD

The next Scottish Government must show leadership at home and abroad in the advancing and protection of LGBT rights.

Over 400 million people live under laws which punish same-sex sex with the death penalty

Most governments deny trans people the right to legally change their name and gender. In the Americas alone, a trans woman is killed in a transphobic hate crime every 32 hours. Each year, one in twenty trans people in Europe experience a violent hate crime.

We are calling for a commitment to:

- Support LGBT groups internationally to develop and run their own campaigns for change
- Raise concerns about LGBT equality with governments and international bodies around the world, in consultation with LGBT human rights campaigners in those countries
- Ensure that the Scottish Government's NGO partners work to include LGBT equality and support local human rights defenders in this work
- Support LGBT asylum seekers settling in Scotland, including in understanding their rights and protections from discrimination, and in accessing support and relevant services

ABOUT STONEWALL SCOTLAND

Stonewall Scotland was established in 2000. Since then we have been campaigning for equality and justice for gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people living in Scotland. We work with businesses, the public sector, the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament and a range of partners to improve the lived experience of LGBT people in Scotland.



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