

MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION FROM SCOTTISH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

In her oral evidence on 12th September 2013, Louise Cameron MSYP offered to provide further information on some of the questions asked by the Committee. Please see below for information about the Scottish Youth Parliament's Youth Manifesto consultation, on the age of gender recognition and connected issues. The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) would be happy to supply any other information or clarify any further points should the Committee wish.

The Scottish Youth Parliament's Youth Manifesto and support for equal marriage amongst young people.

The Scottish Youth Parliament's Youth Manifesto, 'Change the Picture' was shaped by direct consultation with young people – with a total of 42,804 responses it is the largest youth consultation of its type in Scotland. Our elected membership (MSYPs) decided on fifty policy statements, which were collected into five ten question surveys and consulted on between July and October 2010. Young people who responded were asked whether they agreed, disagreed or were not sure with each of the statements in each survey. Any statement that received agreement from 50% or more of young people responding was included in the final youth manifesto, which was published in the run-up to the 2011 Scottish Parliament elections and will shape the basis of SYP's policy and campaigning activity until 2016.

Of the total, 29,886 responses came through direct consultation work by MSYPs in their local areas, which included them organising sessions in schools, youth clubs, at local events and in public places to ask young people their views on the statements in the survey. 6,265 responses came through engagement by SYP centrally in schools, 4,158 through outreach work at festivals and events across Scotland and 2,249 responses were submitted online. More information, and the final youth manifesto document can be found at <http://www.syp.org.uk/our-manifesto-W21page-82->

49 of the fifty statements received majority support and were included in 'Change the Picture', including **“All laws regarding homosexual relationships, whether male or female, should be equal to those of heterosexual relationships”**, to which 74% of respondents agreed, 17% disagreed and 10% were not sure. At our June 2011 National Sitting, our membership discussed and voted on which of the statements in the Youth Manifesto to prioritise as a national campaign. From all the issues contained in the manifesto, MSYPs voted to prioritise a campaign for marriage equality based on the statement above, which was launched as 'Love Equally' in August 2011.

Further evidence of young people's majority support for equal marriage can be seen from the Ipsos MORI opinion poll conducted in June 2012 which showed 78% of 18-24 year olds in Scotland agreed that “same-sex couples should have the right to get married” with 17% disagreeing¹. Additionally, as we noted in our written evidence to the Scottish Government's 2011 consultation, in the 2009 Scottish Social Attitudes survey, 77% of 18-24 year olds in Scotland thought that relationships between adults

¹ <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/2978/Majority-of-Scots-support-gay-marriage.aspx>

of the same-sex were 'rarely or not at all wrong', notably higher than the population as a whole.²

The initial findings of the 2010 survey show this trend continuing, both amongst young people and Scots as a whole. As the SSA's 'Attitudes to discrimination and positive action' paper noted:

*"The biggest and most rapid change in discriminatory attitudes in the last decade has been in views of gay men and lesbians. In 2000, 48% felt sexual relationships between two adults of the same-sex were always or mostly wrong. By 2010 this figure had fallen to just over a quarter (27%). **At the same time, support for same-sex marriage has increased from 41% in 2002 to 61% in 2010** [our emphasis], while more people said a gay man or lesbian would be a suitable primary school teacher in 2010 compared with 2006 (56% compared with 48%)."*

*"These changes in attitudes have occurred across most groups in Scottish society, including people brought up in an era when male same-sex relationships were illegal (although it remains the case that older are more likely than younger people to hold discriminatory views towards gay men and lesbians)."*³

Gender Recognition Age and transgender issues in the Bill

SYP has not yet discussed the age of gender recognition and whether it should lower from 18 to 16 so has no policy position on this emerging issue at this time.

We do however note the support and importance to young trans people as seen from LGBT Youth Scotland's written and oral evidence, which was based on their engagement with transgender young people.

As noted in our written evidence, SYP welcomes the provisions in the Bill to end the current situation where transgender people must divorce in order to obtain gender recognition. As same-sex marriage and mixed-sex civil partnership are currently illegal, transgender people are forced to undergo a divorce or dissolve their civil partnership before receiving legal gender recognition – even if their partner is the same person. We believe that one of the many positive benefits equal marriage will bring is to end this cruel situation and a much-needed step towards equality for transgender Scots.

The Scottish Youth Parliament believes the solution to this discrimination is equal marriage. This is an extremely welcome feature of legislating for marriage equality, and a much-needed step forward towards equality for transgender Scots.

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² Equal Access to Marriage, Equality and Human Rights Commission p. 24
http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/Scotland/Projects_and_Campaigns/pdf_final_2.pdf

³ Scottish Social Attitudes survey 2010: Attitudes to discrimination and positive action - Research Findings <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/08/11121400/0>