

# **Cross-Party Group on LGBTI+ issues**

Minute of Wednesday 1 February 2017 meeting

Venue: Scottish Parliament, Committee Room 3

## **1. Welcome and apologies**

### **Present:**

Ben Macpherson MSP (Co-Convener, chairing)  
Jamie Greene MSP (Co-Convener)  
Patrick Harvie MSP (Co-Convener)  
Ross Thomson MSP  
Annie Wells MSP

Liam Stevenson	TIE Campaign
Jordan Daly	TIE Campaign
Cara Spence	LGBT Youth Scotland
Stuart Duffy	Pink Saltire
Liam Beattie	HIV Scotland
Izzy Proctor	HIV Scotland
Aaron Slater	Fearless
Alistair Rose	SX and Waverley Care
Hannah Pearson	Equality Network
Vic Valentine	Scottish Trans Alliance
Chris Lang	Pride Glasgow
Hugh Torrance	LEAP Sports Scotland
Bill McKee	LGBT Age
Liz Haggart	LGBT Age
Belle Doyle	Dumfries and Galloway LGBT Plus

### **Observing:**

Paul F Cockburn	Individual
Ben Munnoch	Individual
Joe McGurk	Individual
Jordon Henderson	Individual

### **Apologies:**

Rona Mackay MSP  
Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP  
Kezia Dugdale MSP  
Jackie Baillie MSP  
Colin Macfarlane Stonewall Scotland  
Paul Daly Amnesty International UK

The meeting was chaired by Ben Macpherson MSP.

## **2. Introductions and new members**

It was agreed to accept the request of Scottish Trans Alliance, Amnesty International UK, Dumfries and Galloway LGBT Plus, and SX to join the group. The group secretary will add them to the mailing list and notify the Standards Committee team.

## **3. Minute of the last meeting (14<sup>th</sup> December 2016)**

The group approved the minute.

## **4. Matters arising from the last minute**

The group confirmed that the Google group mailing list was working well, and shall continue to be used for all group communication and file sharing.

MSPs noted that there has been no further development with the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012. This action will be rolled over to the next meeting.

Equality Network confirmed that they had shared the Report of the Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion with the group via the group mailing list.

BM shared feedback from Rona Mackay MSP on the group's letter to the Scottish Government regarding blood donation. RM thinks the letter would be more effective if it comes from the group as a whole, rather than just MSPs. The group agreed with this and it was decided that organisations and individuals could also sign the letter if they wish.

RM had proposed amendments to the letter as she felt it was antagonistic in tone. The group read through RM's proposed amendments, which was followed by a group discussion. There was particular discussion around terminology used in the letter.

SX advised that replacing the term 'gay and bisexual men' with 'MSM', is not being representative of the population, as they noted the vast majority of the population of men who have sex with men don't identify as MSM.

TIE were concerned about removing the phrase 'lifestyle choice'. They felt removing it further perpetuated the negative connotations around the use of this phrase that are so often seen in the media. TIE commented that they come across the phrase a lot in their work in the community, and that we must acknowledge and challenge it.

JG commented that he felt the phrase 'lifestyle choice' was used in relation to the use of PrEP, rather than gay and bisexual men.

PH commented that the use of the phrase was clumsy and can give rise to misinterpretations.

Following the group discussion, it was agreed to accept RM's proposed amendments to the letter. HIV Scotland and SX will make the amendments and circulate the letter to group members to sign if they wish.

## **5. LGBT Age Group**

BM welcomed the two members of LGBT Age and thanked them for joining us.

BMc from LGBT Age then spoke of the issues facing older people in the LGBT community, which are often not addressed within the wider LGBT movement. These include: social isolation, as older LGBT people often do not have the same support networks as their heterosexual counterparts, as well as isolation within care home settings themselves, where many people are doubly isolated and stigmatised from being both old and LGBT. He also spoke of the growing number of HIV positive people within the older LGBT population now. Being HIV positive is no longer a death sentence, and people are living longer. This can however have financial implications, as many older HIV positive people cashed in their life insurance or stopped paying into a pension when they were first diagnosed, not thinking they would live as long as they have. BMc commented that the LGBT Age group work to give the older LGBT population a voice, and appreciate the opportunity to speak in meetings such as these.

JG thanked BMc for sharing this with the group, and agreed that it was sadly an overlooked area within both LGBT research and the wider LGBT community. He asked how we can specifically support LGBT people living in care homes?

BMc said that some older members of the LGBT+ community advocate for LGBT care homes to be established, although he personally does not agree with this, commenting that they have as much right to be in 'mainstream' care homes as anyone else. He spoke of the importance of raising awareness amongst care home staff of the issues LGBT people face within care home settings, so they can be more sensitive to their needs.

SX then spoke of attending a staff presentation in a care home about supporting people living with HIV. They commented that the staff member delivering the presentation expressed some very prejudiced views. They agreed that staff training and awareness raising is vital.

LEAP Sports highlighted the great work of the Highland Rainbow Folk group who also work to raise awareness of the issues facing older LGBT people, and deliver presentations to health and social care staff in the North of Scotland. They commented that having similar initiatives across the country would be useful.

BM asked LGBT Age if any of their members had faced inequality around pensions and survivor benefits?

BMc from LGBT Age said that very few members of their group are part of a couple, so it hasn't been an issue as of yet. He commented that their members supported both Civil Partnership and Equal Marriage, and are thankful that the next generation of LGBT people will benefit from this legislation.

HIV Scotland highlighted the work their organisation does around older people and HIV, and suggested that the LGBT Age group may wish to join the Older People, Age and Ageing Cross-Party Group. They also asked if there are appropriate sexual health services for the older LGBT community?

BMc from LGBT Age said that this is not an issue that has been raised in their group but commented that society often scoffs at the idea of older people having sex, despite developments in medication which are enabling older people to enjoy sex again.

SX commented that sexual health services are largely targeted at 18-50 year olds, and that the buildings themselves are often not accessible. They commented that their organisation needs to be mindful of solely using images of young gay men to advertise their sexual health related work.

TIE asked if the LGBTI+ CPG could request data from the Scottish Government on LGBT people in care homes. They also suggested that the forthcoming Pardons Bill to pardon men convicted of same-sex sexual activity that is no longer criminal, could be used as an opportunity to raise awareness of the issues faced by the older LGBT population.

JG said that it was unlikely that the Scottish Government would have that particular data, as many care homes are private, but he agreed using the Pardons Bill would be a good opportunity to highlight that some of the people affected are still alive today and facing new forms of inequality.

JG also spoke of recent visit he went on to a care home in Greenock which provided shared double rooms for couples residing there. He said he would write to this care home asking if they would provide a shared room for a same-sex couple, as well as enquiring if the staff there have received any LGBT and/or HIV awareness training. JG will share the response with the group.

TIE commented that they meet young LGBT people in schools every day who suffer from isolation due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and that their organisation needs to be mindful that this often doesn't go away with age and can in fact increase.

BMc from LGBT Age commented on the mental health implications of social isolation for both old and young LGBT people.

TIE asked the CPG what is the proportion of public vs privately funded care homes in Scotland, and who is training care home staff?

JG agreed to ask a PQ regarding the breakdown of public vs private care homes, as well as the provision of LGBTI+ training for care home staff.

LGBT Youth commented that MSPs, as well as organisations, should consider the extent to which the Equality Act 2010 is being implemented in care homes. Are we holding public sector care homes to account?

BMc from LGBT Age said that although most LGBT people in care homes wish to be out and acknowledged as being LGBT, they also do not want to cause irritation or annoyance in the staff for fear they will be treated differently.

Scottish Trans Alliance commented that for older trans people in care homes it can be the complete opposite, as they often fear their privacy will be taken away, and that they will be outed as being trans, especially if they need assistance with washing, dressing, etc. STA said that it is important to ensure we approach the needs of LGBT people in care homes from all perspectives.

## **6. LGBT History Month**

LGBT Youth provided the group with an overview of LGBT History Month and this year's schedule of events.

LGBT History Month is co-ordinated by LGBT Youth Scotland, but they highlighted that it does not belong to them and encouraged all group members to get involved, saying they couldn't do it without the support of organisations around the table, as well as small community groups that deliver events. LGBT Youth host the History Month website, and employ a part-time staff member at this point in the year to support the implementation of LGBT History Month in Scotland.

LGBT History Month takes place in Scotland every February. 2017 is Scotland's Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology, and the theme for LGBT History Month is heritage, highlighting and celebrating social and political milestones from Scotland's LGBT history.

There are over 70 events planned across Scotland, including one being held on the isle of Lewis for the first time. All the events can be found on the website: [www.lgbthistory.org.uk](http://www.lgbthistory.org.uk). This year's hashtags include #LGBTHeritage and #PurpleHero. LGBT Youth encouraged all group members to get involved through social media.

LGBT Youth have developed several resources for this year's LGBT History Month including: a timeline poster and postcard, lesson plans and assemblies for schools, and a workshop for community groups. All resources can be found on their website ([www.lgbtyouth.co.uk](http://www.lgbtyouth.co.uk)), and posters and postcards were provided in the meeting.

Media coverage on the first day of LGBT History Month Scotland includes: a guide to history month on Common-Space; a piece in the Stornoway Gazette; events highlighted in The List; The National have enquired about producing a short film; and the Georgia Voice in Atlanta USA, highlighted the events happening in Scotland.

LGBT Youth are working with Filmmaker Kate Adair to produce some short films for social media. The films will include a timeline and a reading of LGBT themed

children's poetry. They commissioned Poet Rachel Plummer to develop a collection of children's poetry re-telling traditional Scottish myths from an LGBT perspective.

In regards to parliamentary engagement, two motions have been passed to Christina McKelvie MSP as the convenor for the Equalities and Human Rights Committee, and she has agreed to take these forward. On 2 February there will be a LGBT History Month Motion, and on 23 February, the day before Purple Friday, there will be a photo call in the garden lobby of the Scottish Parliament. Purple ribbons have been distributed to all party leaders. There are also 12 meetings with MSPs and LGBT young people scheduled throughout History Month.

It was noted that the Scottish Government was flying the rainbow flag today. LGBT Youth then asked the group two questions: 1. Is there anything else that can be done this month in terms of parliamentary engagement? How can you advise or help? and 2. How can you or your organisation assist in raising the profile of LGBT History Month?

All group members agreed to promote LGBT History Month through their social media channels.

JG agreed to put out a press release about the LGBT History Month events happening across Scotland.

BM to visit LGBT Youth's offices during LGBT History Month.

Pink Saltire highlighted the 'Pink Heritage Day' event happening at the Smith Gallery and Museum in The Forth Valley on February 18.

TIE said that they are hoping to hold an event in Glasgow during LGBT History Month, but it is dependent on the support of MSPs. Currently 45 MSPs have signed their campaign pledge, but they need 20 additional signatures before they can hold an event.

LGBT Age highlighted their 'Luminate, Dive and LGBT Age Cabaret Performance' event happening in Glasgow on February 16.

LGBT Age also suggested the possibility of exhibiting the Scottish AIDS Memorial Quilt, which is currently in storage.

The group agreed that it was probably too late to coordinate an exhibition for this year, but that various organisations may wish to work collaboratively on this for next year's LGBT History Month.

LGBT Youth commented that there are numerous other LGBT themed artworks in Scotland that could also be featured in an exhibition.

HIV Scotland highlighted that they will be taking part in a panel discussion on blood donation rules at The University of Edinburgh on 28 February, as part of the university's LGBT History Month events. They invited other members of the group to attend.

## **7. Update on other matters**

SX raised the issue of the Scottish Daily Mail's two days' worth of articles last month, which ostensibly exposed individuals and charities receiving public money. LGBTI charities were disproportionately targeted. SX suggested that LGBTI related media coverage is perhaps an issue the group want to look at and/or keep abreast of.

LGBT Youth commented that the author of the article is notoriously homophobic so it was unsurprising they targeted LGBTI charities.

PC said that he was a member of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and a Scottish representative on its Ethics Council; that the NUJ produces reporting guidelines on a range of subjects (such as the reporting of LGBT+ issues) but that there is little the Union can do if particular journalists are not members.

BM commented that the articles had been widely criticised and that Third Force News had responded well in their own article.

## **8. Any other business**

At LGBT Youth's suggestion, a group photograph was taken, holding LGBT History Month posters to mark the beginning of the month.

## **9. Date of the next meetings**

Wednesday 19 April 2017, Committee Room 5, 6-8pm

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

- MSPs to find out if there is going to be a meeting to discuss the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012 before Stage 1 commences – rolled over from last meeting.
- HIV Scotland and SX to make the agreed amendments to the blood donation letter to the Scottish Government and circulate the letter to the group members to sign if they wish. HIV Scotland and SX also to make contact with the Cross-Party Group on Sexual Health and Blood Borne Viruses to see if their group members also want to sign, as well as MSPs who spoke in the blood donation parliamentary debate in October.
- JG to write a letter to the care home in Greenock he recently visited, to enquire if the staff there have received any LGBT and/or HIV awareness training. JG to share the response with the group.
- JG to ask a PQ regarding the breakdown of public vs private care homes, as well as the provision of LGBTI+ training for care home staff.
- JG to put out a press release about the LGBT History Month events happening across Scotland.
- BM to visit LGBT Youth's offices during LGBT History Month.