

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

DRAFT Minute of meeting on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Venue: Scottish Parliament, Committee Room 4

## **1. Welcome and apologies**

### **Present:**

Jamie Greene MSP (Co-Convener - chairing)  
Patrick Harvie MSP (Co-Convener)

Susan Hart	Scottish Borders LGBT Equality
Robin Goodwin	Scottish Bi+ Network
Lorna Ward	Scottish Bi+ Network
Rowan Alison	Equality Network
Mel Maguire	Equality Network
Dougie Allison	NASUWT – Teachers Union
Callum Sinclair	Terrence Higgins Trust
Alistair Rose	Waverley Care
Stuart Duffy	Pink Saltire
Cara Spence	LGBT Youth Scotland

Stevie Maybanks	Individual
Matt Dabrowski	Individual
Matthew Waites	Individual
Michael Richardson	Individual

### **Apologies:**

Annie Wells MSP  
Jenny Gilruth MSP  
LGBT Health and Wellbeing  
Scotland Against Intersex Surgery  
James Banner-Rall  
Kevin Guyan  
Scouts Scotland  
Stonewall Scotland.

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

It was agreed to accept the requests of RNIB Scotland (reflecting their intersectional work), Borders LGBT Equality, and the Scottish Bi+ Network. The secretary will add them to the mailing list and notify the Standards Committee team.

### **3. Minute of previous meeting (8<sup>th</sup> May 2019 and AGM 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019)**

The group approved both the minute of the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2019 and the Minute of the AGM on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019. It was noted that, since the 8th May minute was circulated by email, one mistake had been notified and rectified – that LGBT Borders gave their apologies for the meeting. The minutes have been corrected.

### **4. Matters arising from the previous meeting**

No matters arising.

### **5. Bisexual issues, with a presentation from the Scottish Bi+ Network and Equality Network.**

An in depth presentation was given by Lorna Wood and Robin Goodwin of the Scottish Bi+ Network.

In this presentation, Lorna and Robin discussed the work that they deliver:

They are a self-funded network of volunteers with the aim to raise Bi+ visibility and increase awareness of the issues facing the Bi+ community. Since they formed in September 2018 they have been supporting the Bi+ community in Scotland. In just a short time they have organized events, attended prides, liaised with other groups and built an online presence. They have marched in prides across Scotland with their #BWithTheT banner. They have had film screenings with Q&As on Bi+ representation. They have built links with various organisations and helped promote events to the Bi+ community.

They discussed the statistics on Bi+ people in Scotland stating: “It is hard to estimate the number of bi+ people, as people are often closeted, or use a term other than bisexual to describe their sexual orientation. For example, when asked in a YouGov poll to tick the box corresponding to their sexuality, just 2% said that they identified as bisexual, but when asked to place themselves on the Kinsey Scale\* 19% identified as behaviourally bisexual. When asked further questions about attraction, including 'If the right person came along at the right time, do you think it is conceivable that you could be attracted to a person of the same sex?' 38% said that it was possible. This rises to 47% in the 18-24 age range. It appears that younger people are identifying as bi+ due to increased education and visible role models. Also, due to the poor physical and mental health outcomes for bi+ people, this could account for why there appear to be less older people bi+ people”.

Lorna Wood and Robin Goodwin discussed harmful stereotypes in relation to Bi+ people, including; “Bisexuality doesn't exist.” “Pick a side.” “Bi women are just straight girls looking for attention.” “Bi men are actually gay and scared of coming out.” “Greedy.” “Slutty.” “Untrustworthy.” “Cheaters.” “You're just confused.” “It's just a phase.” “You'll grow out of it.” “Bisexuality is transphobic.” “Bisexuality doesn't include non-binary genders.”

Lorna and Robin discussed isolation in relation to bi-people:

- 66% of bisexuals feel that they are either 'a little' or 'not at all' part of an LGBT community
- 69% of bisexuals feel that they are either 'a little' or 'not at all' part of a straight community
- 85% of bisexuals feel that they are either 'a little' or 'not at all' part of a bisexual community, due to a lack of local groups, and a lack of mainstream funding for bisexual specific work

They also stated that bi+ people are more likely to be closeted. They highlighted bi+ erasure as a significant issue: Bi+ people are often assumed to be covered by existing provisions for gay men and lesbians.

They said that large campaigns that focus on protected characteristics often forget about biphobia, or assume that it is covered under homophobia. For example, the Scottish Government's hate crime awareness campaign, 'Hate has no home in Scotland' had no mention of biphobia in any of the adverts or accompanying website and videos.

Lorna and Robin discussed the lack of information and resources on the issue:

- Lack of positive or diverse representation in the media
- Lack of bi+ specific information, resources, and support from service providers, including LGBTQ+ organisations
- Lack of input into information and resources by actual bi+ people
- More schools are making a point of including LGBTQ+ issues in their curriculum, but these are often heavily or solely focused on lesbian and gay issues, and do not explicitly cover or address Bi+, trans or non-binary issues

Poor mental health outcomes were also discussed:

Bisexual men and women are six times more likely to report seriously considering suicide at some point in their lives, compared to four times for gay men and lesbians compared to their heterosexual counterparts.

A quarter of bisexual adults have attempted suicide, four times the rate of heterosexuals, comparatively the suicide attempt rate for gay men and lesbians is twice the rate of heterosexuals.

Bisexual identified people, and behaviourally bisexual people are more likely to have mood and anxiety disorders.

Poor mental health had a link to poverty due to lack of ability to work.

Lorna and Robin shared statistics showing a high level of sexual and domestic violence against Bi+ people: 61% of bi women, 44% of lesbians, and 35% of heterosexual women have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner. 37% of bi men, 26% of gay men, and 29% of heterosexual men have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner

46% of bi women, 17% of heterosexual women, and 13% of lesbians have experienced rape by any perpetrator. 75% of bi women, 46% of lesbians, and 43% of heterosexual women have experienced sexual violence by any perpetrator. 47% of bi men, 40% of gay men, and 21% of heterosexual men have experienced sexual violence by any perpetrator.

It was stated that there is little or no understanding of Bi+ people from service providers in Scotland: 'The services where we are most likely to disclose our sexuality, LGBT services, and the NHS, are also where we are most likely to experience biphobia. Lack of bi+ specific services (either as stand-alone organisations, or specific projects within larger organisations) leads to a feeling within the community that there are no services available to us.'

It was also stated that there is a chronic lack of funding or resources for bi+ specific projects internationally. There is also a lack of research on people who are Bi+.

Robin and Lorna provided advice on how to improve outcomes for bi+ people in Scotland:

- Support bi+ specific projects, groups and organisations
- Support bi+ specific resources so that services and employers can become more explicitly inclusive of bi+ people
- Make government funded awareness campaigns explicitly inclusive of bi+ people, including areas where bi+ people are disproportionately at risk. e.g. domestic violence, rape/sexual assault, and mental health
- Domestic violence and rape crisis services must be proactive in supporting bi+ survivors, and work with the bi+ community
- Mental health organisations need to be proactive in supporting bi+ people, and work with the bi+ community
- Considering including training and education on bi+ issues for staff and volunteers
- Fund bi+ specific research, and actively encourage and fund bi+ researchers
- Bi+ specific resources embedded through out the school curriculum at all ages
- Training for teachers, and auxiliary personnel
- Guidance for LGBTQ+ school groups on how to be bi+ inclusive

### **Updates on other matters/ AOB**

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP is currently updating (not replacing) guidance in schools on supporting young trans people.

There is to be more bi specific content in research done by LGBT Youth Scotland and will be having a closer look at data concerning bi people.

Waverley Care is planning more rural events.

**6. Date of next meeting: Date TBC, and agreement of main discussion items for the next meeting.**

Consideration of main discussion items for the next two meetings were put forward. Dates and themes are to be confirmed ahead of the next meeting of the LGBT+ CPG in due course by the Secretariat.

The suggested themes to be considered are:

- Hate crime reporting.
- Rural issues – possibly invite Dumfries and Galloway LGBT groups.
- Trans healthcare.
- Funding.
- Asexual/Aromantic – with the possibility of inviting an AVEN representative to deliver a presentation.
- Mental health.
- Substance abuse.
- Legislative change – particularly in the areas of domestic abuse and transphobia.