

EQUALITY NETWORK

WORKING FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL and TRANSGENDER RIGHTS IN SCOTLAND

A NATIONAL LGBT FORUM



We're all over Scotland, in Glasgow and Aberdeen, in Kilmarnock and Dumfries, in the cities and in the countryside, drumming and playing football and running film nights and talking about spirituality over coffee.

About 300,000 people who go to work and go out to the pub and go shopping and go on holiday and have families and employers...

AND WE ARE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER.

We and our families need to know our rights. Our employers and our trade unions should know how to be inclusive of LGBT employees. Employers and service providers and statutory bodies need to know what's good practice with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity.

When we need help or advice, we need to be able to get in touch with the right organisations and agencies – and we need to know they'll react correctly if we come out to them. We'd like to know what LGBT or LGBT-friendly events are being organised, and we need to be able to find LGBT and LGBT-inclusive organisations. [more»](#)

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A NATIONAL LGBT FORUM

» In February 2009, the Scottish Government commissioned the development of a new LGBT website for Scotland, fulfilling a commitment made in their response to the Hearts and Minds report, **Challenging Prejudice: Changing Attitudes Towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People in Scotland**, to provide a wide variety of information drawn from all of the Scottish Government funded projects to promote equality for LGBT people in Scotland.

The **Your Rights** and **Good Practice** sections of this website will be developed over the coming year (to March 2010).

The **Need Help Now** section will provide signposts and links to other organisations who can provide help and advice to people with problems or queries...

■ *"Is my landlord harassing me if he makes homophobic jokes?"*

■ *"Where can I report a transphobic hate crime anonymously?"*

This is planned as a continuing project to develop useful answers in response to crisis questions that all three national LGBT organisations receive from LGBT people across Scotland, and to questions that may be submitted anonymously at the website.

The **Community Involvement** section will develop flexibly in response to the needs and requirements of the LGBT people across Scotland who make use of the website.



This website has the potential to be a useful resource for all the communities of LGBT people in Scotland – a trove of useful information and advice to our employers and to statutory bodies and service providers across Scotland, and a unique source of information, news, and communication among ourselves.

Over to you...

REGISTER AT THE WEBSITE AND ASK TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER TO SUBMIT YOUR OWN ARTICLES AND CONTACT OTHER LGBT PEOPLE ACROSS SCOTLAND VIA THE ONLINE FORUMS.

Anyone registered at the website who is organising an LGBT or LGBT-inclusive event can post details of the event to the calendar, which allows photos, weblinks, contact details, and other event information to be made easily available.

There is a searchable directory of LGBT organisations also available at the website, which we would welcome

help in expanding and an online library of LGBT resources and research, publications from all three national LGBT organisations and from the Scottish Transgender Alliance.

If you have published a resource which is of interest to the LGBT community, you can include it in the Resources section, either as a PDF or with a link to your website.

If you want to use the website to advertise your events or promote your group, contact jane@equality-network.org for further information on how to use the website in this way. ←



COMMUNITY

skill

[skill] (plural skills)

noun Definition; the ability to do something well, usually gained through training or experience.

There are many challenges facing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups and people in Scotland today.

Where and how to find funding, providing support to members and service users, complying with new and ever changing legal and constitutional obligations are just a few of the demands put on LGBT community and voluntary groups, while new engagement frameworks and gaps in support can test the most enthusiastic equality campaigner.

The Equality Network is working in partnership with training and support providers, with the Scottish Government and with other partners in the LGBT equality sector, to put together the **National LGBT Skills Programme**.

1. SPEAK OUT

Spread over five days of training, including a three day residential weekend, **Speak Out** is a course for LGBT people to develop leadership skills. The course is free to attend and there are ten spaces available.

2. NATIONAL TRAINING EVENTS

The Equality Network will be running two national training days in cooperation with training providers, to focus on

topics such as including minority ethnic people in your work and how to fund your organisation in the future, which were identified as priorities in the 2009 survey Redrawing the Map. Both days will be free to attend and further information will be published on the National LGBT Forum website [➔1].

3. TRAINING FOR GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

If you are part of an LGBT group and would like the Equality Network to come and run training specifically around your group and its needs please contact us. Training can be as part of an event you are running such as an AGM or conference or as a stand-alone event. Training is free and we can also cover the cost of training spaces.

If you are interested in any of the training provided as part of the national LGBT skills programme, or would like to know more please contact Scott Cuthbertson, the Equality Network's community development coordinator, scott@equality-network.org.

This three-pronged approach will ensure LGBT organisations and individuals can have the opportunity to update and develop their skills and ensure a new vibrancy for LGBT equality in Scotland. ◀

➔ 1 www.scottishlgbt.org/community

SPEAK OUT



Ever wanted to be more active in your community on LGBT issues, but didn't know how?

Ever felt frustrated by homophobia, biphobia or transphobia, but didn't know what to do about it?

Ever wanted to have more confidence on speaking out against discrimination?

Yes? Then **SPEAK OUT** is for you. The Equality Network has developed a training course for LGBT community members and allies which will develop your skills as a leader on LGBT rights. The course is **free** to attend and travel costs are covered.

If you've got the commitment and enthusiasm to take part and are free on **25th–27th Sept** (residential), **28th Nov & 30th Jan 2010**, or would just like to know more, contact...

scott@equality-network.org

IT IS OUT!

It is out: the first ever Scottish research report on the intersection of race and ethnicity with sexual orientation and gender identity. Download it now on the Equality Network website [➔1].

As our regular readers will know, the Equality Network and Black and Ethnic Minorities Infrastructure Scotland (BEMIS) have been working together over the past year to produce this ground-breaking work.

The research has already received much praise and interest from many. The report covers a wide range of areas. Some of the key points identified are...

- » Many people and organisations in Scotland are keen to talk about how we can all provide better services and protections for Minority Ethnic people who may identify as LGBT (ME/LGBT). However, there are also organisations in all sectors that are not prioritising or engaging with intersectionality.
- » ME/LGBT people are not just problems that need to be solved. They are people with gifts, experiences and knowledge that are of benefit to all. We should celebrate the richness that they bring to our minority ethnic and LGBT communities.
- » Unfortunately there is currently racism in the LGBT sector and homophobia and transphobia in the race sector.
- » There are 25 organisations and projects specifically focused to meet the needs of ME/LGBT people in England. There is only one voluntary run website in Scotland – **Al Jannah** which just started this year. We need to look at why we do not have more social and support groups for ME/LGBT people. Scotland needs to be more aware and supportive of ME/LGBT people and budding ME/LGBT groups.
- » All organisations need to assist each other in developing approaches to tackling intersectionality. This includes strong leadership from the Scottish Government, Equality and Human Rights Commission, and national Equality Organisations.
- » One of the key ways of addressing the many issues around the ME/LGBT intersection is for race and LGBT organisations to come together more often. This will allow us all to talk about the issues and understand them better, be better able to signpost people to different services, and develop working relationships and partnership.
- » Looking at the needs of ME/LGBT people can help us to develop new ways to better meet the needs of all individuals. Making assumptions about what people may or may not need because of what ethnicity we think someone comes from or what we think their gender or sexual orientation often leads to misunderstanding, inappropriate assistance and marginalisation. We are all complex individuals with multiple needs. Better awareness of ME/LGBT needs results in better awareness of the diversity of humanity more generally and better approaches to treating everyone better.

The EveryoneIN Project is now visiting various national equality organisations and forums to present the research findings and discuss this important topic. Some of the organisations that are taking part in this are The Equality and Human Rights Commission, The Scottish Government Equality Unit, The National LGBT Forum, The Scottish Refugee Council and Scottish Trade Union Congress.

THE REPORT WILL BE OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED ON FRIDAY 28 AUGUST.

If you would like to receive an invitation please e-mail timc@equality-network.org. For more information on the EveryoneIN Project, contact sam@equality-network.org or timc@equality-network.org. ◀





HATE CRIME BILL PASSED

Green MSP Patrick Harvie's hate crime bill was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament on June 3rd. It is now called the Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) (Scotland) Act 2009, and we expect it will come into effect early in 2010.

The Act covers homophobic/biphobic, transphobic and disability-related hate crime (racist and religious hate crimes are covered by previous laws).

Once the Act is in effect, these hate motives for crimes will have to be recorded by the police and included in the charge for the crime.

The court will be required to take the hate motive into account when passing sentence, and must publicly state the effect on the sentence. And to help reduce future hate crime, the Equality Network will be pressing for research

into how sentences could include an element that addresses the offender's motivation – homo/biphobia, transphobia, or disability-related.

The new law will not end hate crime against LGBT people – in fact the published numbers will probably go up because of better recording. But, together with improvements in police and prosecution policy, and better recognition by the courts, the Act will make a difference. We hope that LGBT people who suffer hate crime will feel more able to report it, and will feel that the justice system has served them better.

This bill has long been a priority for the Equality Network and our partners. We would like to heartily thank Patrick Harvie for all his work in very successfully leading the bill through all its stages.

SEXUAL OFFENCES BILL PASSED

On June 10th the Scottish Parliament passed what is now called the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009. This Act is a complete overhaul of Scotland's outdated sexual offences law.

The Equality Network successfully worked for a number of amendments to ensure that the Act removes all of the discrimination that previously affected LGBT people in sex offences law.

The Act does not make major changes to what is illegal or legal, but it does restructure the law. It includes a clearer definition of consent, which hopefully will help lead to more convictions of those who commit rape and sexual assault.

The new Act extends the crime of rape to include male rape, and ensures that

rape and other sexual offences laws fully apply to transgender people. In addition, the Act makes 'sexual assault by penetration' (that is, rape with an object) an offence as serious as rape.

In making the law gender neutral and sexual orientation neutral, the Act abolishes the old "homosexual offences" of sodomy and gross indecency.

The general age of consent is unchanged at 16, although the Act makes some changes in the rules on consensual sex between teenagers. And the offence of public indecency, covering any sexual activity that is not private and causes offence, is unaffected by the Act.

This new Act is not yet in effect – we will keep you updated about when it will come into effect.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE PETITIONS

In the past few months, two petitions have been submitted to the Scottish Parliament calling for the introduction of same-sex marriage in Scotland. The petitions were submitted by the LGBT Network [➔1] and NUS Scotland [➔2].

The Equality Network strongly supports these petitions. Our position is that marriage and civil partnership should both be available as choices for same-sex and mixed-sex couples. Although civil partnership and marriage have the same legal effects in the UK, the current segregated system – civil partnership

only for same-sex couples, and marriage only for mixed-sex couples – is discriminatory in a number of ways.

We have made two written submissions to the Parliament's Public Petitions Committee in support of the petitions. The Committee will be considering the petitions again on September 8th, and we are calling for the Parliament to examine and consult on how the law can be changed.

You can see some more details online here [➔3], including our written submissions. ◀

➔ 1 www.lgbtnetwork.eu

➔ 2 www.equalmarriage.org.uk

➔ 3 www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/petitions/docs/PE1239.htm

UK EQUALITY BILL UPDATE

The UK Government published its Equality Bill at the end of April and it is currently making its progress through the House of Commons. If the Equality Bill manages to make it through Westminster before the next General Election, then it will provide the following improvements for trans equality...

- » New fully comprehensive public equality duty inclusion in our own right as one of seven equality strands (instead of just being partially included within a gender equality duty)
- » New protection from discrimination due to association with trans people (such as a family member or friend) or perception as a trans person (such as pop-star Lady GaGa has experienced)
- » New wider definition of gender reassignment (no longer any need to be 'medically supervised')
- » New indirect discrimination protection
- » New protection from discrimination in school education

The Scottish Transgender Alliance welcomes the Equality Bill and is keen to see it become law. However, there remain areas where the Equality Bill does not yet go far enough to clearly protect all transgender people from discrimination and harassment.

The Scottish Transgender Alliance and Gender Spectrum UK jointly consulted transgender people across the UK via an online survey in May 2009 to find out their views about the Equality Bill.

Based upon the survey responses, the Scottish Transgender Alliance and various other UK trans organisations (such as Press For Change, Trans Youth Network, Gender Spectrum UK and GIRES) are working together to try to get the Equality Bill amended to...

- » Widen the protected characteristic from 'gender reassignment' to 'gender identity'
- » Provide clear-cut protection from transphobic harassment in school education
- » Narrow the range of exceptions which allow employers and service providers to discriminate on grounds of gender reassignment

Follow the bill progress in relation to transgender equality issues here...

www.scottishtrans.org/page/equality_bill.aspx

NEW SUPPORT SERVICE FUNDED

The Scottish Transgender Alliance has just received funding from the Big Lottery Fund to set up a new Transition Support Service.

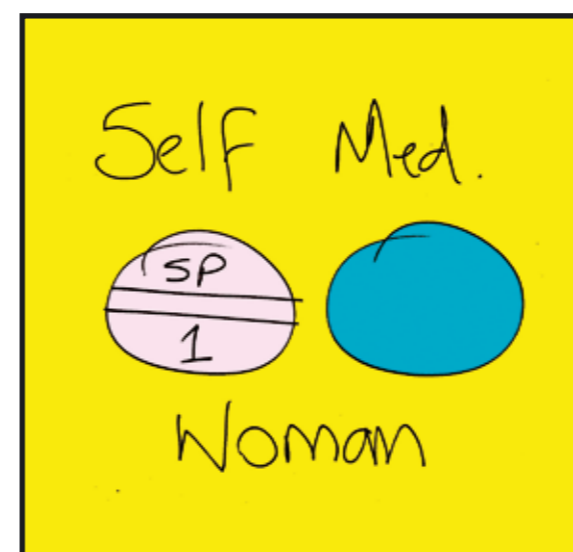
The funding will enable the recruitment of a new three-year full-time **Transition Support Service Development Worker**. The new worker will be responsible for developing a series of life skills workshops for transgender people across Scotland dealing with issues such as improving self-esteem and coping with the social and emotional challenges involved in coming out as transgender and considering or undergoing gender reassignment.

The new project will also develop structured volunteer transgender peer-mentoring support across Scotland to ensure that the existing small transgender community groups around Scotland grow in their capacity to safely support vulnerable trans people.

Recruitment for the new post is planned for October 2009, and we hope the new development worker will take up their post no later than January 2010. The post will be widely and openly advertised.

In the meantime, James Morton, the Scottish Transgender Alliance Coordinator, will be visiting transgender community support groups across Scotland over the summer and autumn to discuss in detail with them this new project and the benefits it can provide to existing small support groups. He has contacted all the transgender community support groups in Scotland for which the Scottish Transgender Alliance has up-to-date information.

If you're part of a transgender community group which has not been contacted by him, then please email your contact details to james@equality-network.org or call the Equality Network office on 07020 933 952.



➔ Created by Kristi for Rendering Gender. ←

RENDERING GENDER... ART EXHIBITION

From **25th June 2009** until **22nd August 2009**, Balcony 1 at the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) in Glasgow is home to **Rendering Gender...** – a free exhibition created by transgender people in a series of intensive workshops led by artist David Sherry in collaboration with the Scottish Transgender Alliance. ←



EVERYONEIN LAUNCH

Friday 28th August

NATIONAL LGBT SKILLS PROGRAMME

EVERYONEIN
Saturday 17th October

EQUALITY NETWORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE

EQUALITY FOR ALL
Saturday 14th November

NATIONAL LGBT FORUM

Thursday 5th November

NATIONAL LGBT SKILLS PROGRAMME

FUNDING AN
EQUAL FUTURE
Saturday 12th December

LGBT EVENTS

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EQUALITY NETWORK STAFF

ILLUSTRATION Kate Charlesworth

“The Equality Network works and campaigns for equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Scotland. It creates ways for people to contribute to making Scotland a place in which everyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, can live free from hatred, prejudice and discrimination.

“The Equality Network strives to be inclusive and open in its work, to challenge discrimination and to consult, involve and inform the individuals and the communities for which it works.”

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