

STAY OUT. STAY PROUD.



LGBT* in UKIP

2017



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“UKIP are committed to equality for all, I commend this manifesto for the thought and depth of tolerance that has gone into drawing it up. Flo and her team show that one can be committed to LGBT rights as well as the rights of all others.”

Paul Nuttall MEP, Party Leader

“UKIP is proud to support equality for all, regardless of race, religion or sexual orientation. I'm delighted to support LGBT* in UKIP and the excellent work they do to break down barriers and challenge bigotry wherever they find it.”

Suzanne Evans, UKIP Deputy Chair

“It is incomprehensible in a modern, civilized state, that anybody's liberty, health or life, is under threat because of their sexuality.”

Margot Parker MEP, Women and Equalities Spokesperson

“UKIP believes that your gender, race or sexuality should never mean you are discriminated against for housing or anything else. As UKIP's housing spokesman I pledge to fight for the right to safe, secure, healthy housing for all.”

Ray Finch MEP, Housing Spokesperson

“Everyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, should feel safe in Britain.”

Bill Etheridge MEP, Defence spokesperson

Blood Donation

Six thousand blood donations are needed across England and Wales every day¹. The NHS warns that blood donations are at a worrying low². However, men who have sex with men (MSM) are banned from donating blood unless they remain celibate for a minimum of 12 months. This ban does not take into consideration relationship status or the use of protection. We understand that no protection is 100% effective, however, no such restrictions are placed on any other sexual orientation. Sexually transmitted disease does not discriminate based on sexuality. Effectively a heterosexual person can engage in promiscuous, risky, relations without any protection and still donate blood. All blood donated is screened for infections. Both HIV³ and Hepatitis B⁴, the historical reasons for the ban, are detectable within a period of 3 months from exposure. This brings into question the validity of the 12 month ban.

We ask for a review of current blood donation regulations with the proposition of:

- Removal of the 12 month deferral period for MSM.
- All blood donors to become subject to individual risk assessment with consideration of sexual activity and relationship status.

LGBT* Homeless

Almost a quarter of homeless youth (an estimated 4,800 people) are LGBT* according to a survey by the Albert Kennedy Trust (AKT). 473 housing providers in England, Scotland and Wales were surveyed, interviewing youth aged 16-26 years old. It revealed 24% of the homeless youth identify as LGBT¹. This is substantially disproportionate considering stonewall estimates that 5-7% of the population identify as LGBT*². Stonewall Housing, a specialist in LGBT housing, reports two thirds of people who seek advice state that their housing problem is directly related to their sexual orientation or gender identity³. Further to this 62% of homeless LGBT youth were forced out of their home by family members, 69% experienced mental or emotional abuse, and 62% experienced physical violence. The study concluded that homeless LGBT* youth are more likely to participate in drug abuse and fall victim to sexual exploitation in comparison to their heterosexual counterparts¹. Homeless people, particularly those who identify as LGBT*, have multiple and complex needs. Agencies within the UK are increasingly offering generic support, in part due to a reduction of funds¹.

To combat this we propose that local authorities and housing providers:

- Collect, monitor and analyse data on service user sexual/gender identity.
- Provide opportunities for service users to disclose their sexual/gender identity beyond their initial assessment.
- Provide staff with relevant training to understand the unique needs of LGBT* homeless.
- Review housing options, policies and procedures to ensure that services are inclusive of homeless LGBT* people.
- Provide a more comprehensive service for LGBT* people by collaborating with both general and LGBT* specific local services.

Education

Too many people experience hatred and homophobic/ Transphobic bullying at school. 99 % of gay young people hear the phrases 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay' in school and 96 % of gay pupils hear homophobic language such as 'poof' or 'lezza'¹.

Almost a third of LGBT pupils feel ignored and isolated by other people. 41 percent have considered or attempted to commit suicide directly because of bullying. The same number self-harm deliberately due to the bullying¹. It is disheartening and both mentally and physically harmful to feel that we are different and unconnected to peers.

To address this we would:

- Introduce comprehensive and LGBT* inclusive sex and relationship education in secondary schools that covers:

- * Risks posed and the methods to prevent transference of sexually transmitted diseases for both heterosexual and LGBT* individuals.

- * All relationships are unique. Understanding that Sex and Love are not necessarily the same thing. It is not unusual to experience emotional connections without sexual attraction or without the desire to have sex. Little or no sex does not make the relationship any less valid.

- Require every school to have an anti-bullying policy that specifically targets homophobia, transphobia, biphobia.

- Ensure training for teachers and educational staff on how to:

- * Provide LGBT* inclusive education.

- * Care for the wellbeing of LGBT* students.

Equal Marriage

Although the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 was an incredible stride towards equality, it has fallen short of true equal marriage. Unlike a heterosexual marriage, the surviving partner of a same sex marriage (SSM) is not entitled to receive the full value of the deceased partner's pension. SSM does not include adultery or failure to consummate under grounds for annulment. This discrimination is two fold. Firstly, suggesting that adultery is not equal between heterosexual and SSM. Secondly, that heterosexuals must consummate discriminates against asexuals¹.

Further to this, the ban on heterosexual couples to enter into a civil partnership still remains. Civil partnerships for heterosexual couples are already legal in other European nations including the Netherlands (1998) who now have more straight couples entering into a civil partnership than gay couples. Other nations include Portugal (1999), France (1999), Belgium (2000) and Luxemburg (2004)¹.

Whilst we fully support the furtherment of gay rights we also support people's rights to freedom of thought and conscience. With this in mind we fully support the right for religious organisations to not perform gay marriage, should it be against their beliefs. In turn we believe religious institutions should not be allowed to prevent civil SSM. We believe religious rights are just as important as gay rights.

With Same sex Marriage enshrined in law we now want to push for true equal marriage.

- The right for Heterosexual couples to enter into a civil partnership if they so wish.
- Equal pension rights for both heterosexual and homosexual marriage/ civil partnerships.
- Equal grounds for annulment including removal of the need for consummation.
- Protection of the rights of conscious in religious organisations.

Spouse Veto/ Gender Recognition Certificate

To legally change sex and obtain the appropriate legal rights, such as the right to retire at a certain age and receive state pension, an individual must apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC). Applicants must: be over 18 years old, be diagnosed with gender dysphoria (discomfort with your birth gender), live as the acquired gender for 2 years, intend to live as the acquired gender for the rest of their life and of course apply for the GRC¹.

If the applicant is married then they must seek written consent from their spouse to obtain a GRC. If the spouse refuses, then the applicant will be given an interim GRC. This provides no legal protection, it is purely for the purpose of ending the marriage, at which point a full GRC will be issued. Divorce is very rarely a smooth and amicable process. It is not uncommon to hold property, child visitation or even child custody to ransom. Within the divorce proceedings, the spouse veto can and has been used as a bargaining tool. Over 40% of Spouses actively tried to prevent their partners from transitioning. 28% made the divorce proceedings as difficult as possible. 24% were denied access to their children, 15% of these even after a court order².

If a divorce is the end result, then why should the applicant be forced to wait for the conclusion of what can be a lengthy and messy divorce to obtain a GRC? To be truly equals, each individual must have the power to determine their own sex, without having to seek the permission of their spouse.

To ensure equality we must:

- Remove the Spouse Veto.
- Streamline the application process for a GRC.

References

Blood donation

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- 1) <https://www.gov.uk/apply-gender-recognition-certificate/changing-your-gender>
- 2) http://www.t-vox.org/index.php?title=Spouse_Reactions_to_Transsexuality_Report



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