

# LGBT CHARTER of rights

Your journey to lesbian, gay, bisexual  
and transgender equality and inclusion



## LGBT HUMAN RIGHTS

LGBT people can face discrimination on a daily basis, in the street, in their place of work and sometimes from the services that they use. LGBT Youth Scotland's recent survey *Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People*<sup>1</sup> found that 69% of respondents had experienced homophobic or biphobic bullying at school, 25% at college and 14% at university. Transgender young people faced an even tougher time, with 77% of respondents experiencing homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying in school, 69% in college and 38% at university.

The past twenty years has seen significant legal change for the LGBT community in the UK to almost full legal equality. That includes the recognition of same-sex civil partnerships, gender recognition for transsexual people, hate crime legislation and same-sex couple adoption. Social attitudes have improved with 27% of people in Scotland believing that same sex relationships are always or mostly wrong in 2010; compared with 48% in 2000<sup>2</sup>.

However, social attitudes towards transgender people remain some of the most negative with 49% of people in Scotland saying that they would be unhappy about a family member forming a relationship with someone who has transitioned gender.

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states that 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and in rights.' Similarly Article 2 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that 'children's rights should be respected and ensured without discrimination of any kind'. However discrimination and prejudice towards LGBT people combined with a general lack of knowledge about LGBT issues still exists. This often results in LGBT people being excluded and isolated in communities and a society which can be intolerant and judgemental.

1/ Lough Dennell, BL., and Logan, C. (2012) *Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People: Education Report*. LGBT Youth Scotland.

2/ Ormston, R., Curtice, J., McConville, S. and Reid, S (2010) *Scottish Social Attitudes survey 2010: Attitudes to discrimination and positive action*. Scottish Government.

# LGBT CHARTER of rights

YOU HAVE  
THE RIGHT  
TO...

## BE YOURSELF

- We believe that LGBT people have the right to express themselves in their own way and forge their own identity
- We will support LGBT people coming out and their individuality will be respected
- We recognise that sexual orientation/gender identity are only one part of an LGBT person's life, we will challenge negative stereotypes and strive to promote a positive image of LGBT people within our organisation
- We will value LGBT people as equal citizens of Scotland, putting policies in place where appropriate to support their equality.

YOU HAVE  
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TO...

## BE LOOKED AFTER

- We believe that LGBT people are entitled to the best possible care and good standard of living
- We will support LGBT young people to live with their parents where this is beneficial to their health and wellbeing and we will support them to have their say in the care that is given to them.

YOU HAVE  
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## SUPPORT BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AND WESTMINSTER

- We believe that the government has a duty to ensure that LGBT people can access all of their rights
- The law should protect LGBT people and ensure that they are treated equally in society
- We will stand up for LGBT rights and will speak out when appropriate against any law which unfairly discriminates against the LGBT community.



YOU HAVE  
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TO...

## BE KEPT FROM HARM

- We believe that people have the right to be protected from violence and homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime including bullying, physical attacks and domestic abuse
- We will put procedures in place to make sure that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic violence and intimidation are not tolerated within our organisation.



YOU HAVE  
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## BE HEALTHY

- We believe that LGBT people should be given the best healthcare possible and we will train our staff to be aware of their needs
- We believe that LGBT people are entitled to equal access in healthcare including the rights of gay and bisexual men to give blood, and the rights of lesbian women (and pre-op transgender men) to have smear tests
- We recognise that homophobia and heterosexism can seriously damage the health of LGBT people.



YOU HAVE  
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## FORM RELATIONSHIPS

- We will celebrate and support LGBT relationships, provided that they are free from abuse
- We will support LGBT (young) people to decide their own friendships and spend time around people they feel comfortable with, in an environment they feel comfortable in.

YOU HAVE  
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## EDUCATION

- We believe that places of learning should recognise and value diversity and support both staff and students/pupils to come out
- LGBT (young) people should be able to easily access information and an education which develops their personality, knowledge and abilities
- We will strive to be an organisation which allows LGBT people to learn in a safe and supportive environment.

YOU HAVE  
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## BE HEARD

- We will find ways to ensure that LGBT people's voices can be heard within our organisation
- LGBT people's views are important to us and will be respected and valued
- We will listen to the needs of LGBT people and will create opportunities which are relevant to them.

YOU HAVE  
THE RIGHT  
TO...

## PRIVACY

- We believe that a person's sexual orientation or gender identity is their own business and we will not share this information to third parties without prior consent.



# LGBT CHARTER OF RIGHTS

In 2003, a group of young people in Dumfries (Phoenix LGBT Youth) began a project to find out more about the UNCRC and UDHR and how they related to their lives. They were supported by LGBT Youth Scotland, Save the Children and Dumfries Youth Enquiry Service.

The group explored relevant topics to LGBT people including education, social and health issues in particular and it emerged that although LGBT people should have all the rights laid out in the UNCRC and the UDHR, these rights were often denied because of discrimination and prejudice. That group decided to create the LGBT Charter of Rights to increase understanding and awareness of the barriers LGBT people face. LGBT Youth Scotland then responded by developing a programme to support and guide groups and organisations on their journey to LGBT equality and inclusion.

By raising awareness and increasing visibility of LGBT people, LGBT Youth Scotland is dedicated to ensuring that all LGBT people are valued, included and supported.

The LGBT Charter process is a powerful, easy to use tool to help everyone in an organisation focus on the quality of services they provide.

It helps demonstrate an organisation's commitment to LGBT people in their local area by supporting them to identify their rights.

The Charter will help organisations look at their policy and practice, including their legislative obligations in the context of LGBT equality.

Organisations should display the Charter only when they have adequate mechanisms in place to validate and support it, such as equal opportunities policies and group agreements, staff training and information available on LGBT issues.

By displaying the LGBT Charter of Rights, you will send a positive message to LGBT people in your area that they are included, valued, supported and will be treated fairly when they access your service.

You will also make it clear to other organisations and service users that equality and diversity is at the heart of your service.

Displaying the Charter will reassure people that your workplace is a safe and supportive place for LGBT people.

# INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

A member of staff at LGBT Youth Scotland will help you identify which Charter award will be best for you: *foundations*, *bronze*, *silver* or *gold*, and help guide you through the process. The foundations award is aimed at larger organisations and departments at a 'corporate' level, signalling readiness and a commitment to making progress towards LGBT equality.

LGBT Youth Scotland is committed to supporting you on your journey towards inclusion and equality. The LGBT Charter has practical steps to guide you through and demonstrate progress. You will have access to online resources and tools to impact assess the positive effect you will make on the LGBT community and/or your LGBT service users. You will also have the opportunity to sign up to Charter training sessions and networking events with other Charter clients.

Welcome and good luck on behalf of the team at LGBT Youth Scotland!

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LGBT Youth Scotland is the largest youth and community-based organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Scotland.  
LGBT Youth Scotland is a company limited by guarantee.  
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