

# A pride manifesto

Equality for the LGBTQ+ community



Briefing paper

By Jasneet Samrai, August 22nd, 2022

**Centre**

# Contents

■ Cover page	01
■ Contents	02
■ Writers	03
■ About Centre	04
■ Summary	05
■ Introduction	06
■ Education	07
■ Legal	09
■ Healthcare	12
■ The Economy and Jobs	14
■ Housing	16
■ Justice	18
■ Bibliography	20
■ Company details	22
■ Back cover	24

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## About Centre

We are an independent non-profit foundation and cross-party think tank. Our mission is to rebuild the centre ground and to create a more centrist and moderate politics. We support better public services and a strong economy inspired by policies from the Nordic countries.

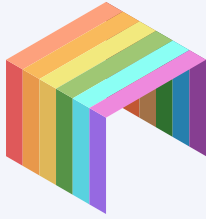
To achieve these goals, we work with people from across the UK and party politics. This includes engaging with politicians and our networks, which include academia, politics, and law.

Our work includes creating new conversations by hosting events and conducting interviews. We also produce new policy ideas to better inform debate, publish papers, and release articles. We aim to build consensus, shape public opinion, and work with policymakers to change policy.

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## Summary



We would enhance transgender rights by ending the spousal veto, reforming the GRA to allow self-identification, and ensuring that transgender people have fair access to social housing in Northern Ireland. We also support removing gender markers on legal documents.



We will protect the rights of gay people, and we will enhance them by abolishing the 'gay blood ban'.



We would introduce a scheme similar to Finland's Housing First scheme in the UK. Part of the reason for this is that homelessness disproportionately affects LGBTQ+ people.



We would support local councils and devolved bodies in creating accessibility grants, as there is currently a lack of LGBTQ+ venues in the UK that are fully accessible to disabled people.



We would ban conversion therapy for all LGBTQ+ people, relationship and sex education that includes LGBTQ+ issues where parents cannot opt their children out, and reform the census so that data on the number of LGBTQ+ people is collected.

## **Introduction**

For Pride Month, we have written this paper looking at improving the lives of LGBTQ+ people. This includes changes in areas such as education, legal changes, justice, health, housing, the economy, and jobs.

Chapter one

# Education



**Relationship and sex education (RSE) should ensure that all students learn about LGBTQ+ issues.** RSE in schools must include students learning about the LGBTQ+ community, including different identities, the prejudices that members of the community may encounter, different types of sex, and awareness of past and current LGBTQ+ movements. We are pushing for the rest of the UK to adopt an RSE curriculum like Scotland's, which does all of these things<sup>1</sup>. As well as this, it does not let parents opt their children out of partaking in any part of this curriculum<sup>2</sup>.



England - The DfE (Department for Education) would need to amend the new curriculum so that the above items are also taught. They would also need to remove the 'opt-out' clause that exists, as it currently allows parents to opt their children out of certain parts of the curriculum. If the DfE fails to do this, Parliament could instead hold a debate on the subject<sup>3</sup>.



Wales - At present, there is a new curriculum being drawn up by the Welsh Government. They have already confirmed that there will be no 'opt-out' that parents can use. Due to it currently being drafted, we are pushing for the statutory guidance to include the above topics that are within the Scottish Curriculum<sup>4</sup>.



Northern Ireland - We would amend the current curriculum so it is in line with the current Scottish one<sup>5</sup>.



**Remove the delay in implementing the new curriculum in England.** In June 2020, the Government pushed back the requirement for schools to start teaching their new LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum from September 2020 to the summer term of 2021. We are asking for the Department for Education to bring this date forward to September, so that inclusive LGBTQ+ education is taught sooner.

Chapter two

# Legal



**Reform the GRA to allow self-identification.** To change your gender, you must have lived as your preferred gender for two years and received a diagnosis of gender dysphoria from two different doctors. This is a lengthy and difficult process that self-identification would prevent. We are advocating for a version of self-identification like Portugal uses, where people are allowed to change their gender by making a statutory declaration. To achieve this, different measures would need to be taken by different bodies depending on their jurisdiction due to devolution.



Scotland - Holyrood would need to either pass a new version of the GRA that allows people to self-identify as their preferred gender or amend their current version.



England, Wales and NI - The Westminster Parliament needs to either pass a new version of the GRA that allows people to self-identify or amend the current version.

**Remove gender markers on legal documents.** There is currently no non-binary or intersex option on legal documents, meaning that often people are forced to identify themselves using a gender that they are not. We therefore support removing gender markers on legal documents, including passports. Whilst an alternative solution would be to use a statutory declaration system where people could choose between male, female and an 'X' marker, we have concerns about creating a list of people who identify as neither male nor female.



England, Wales, Scotland and NI - Parliament either needs to amend their current GRA or pass a separate one that removes the gender markers. UK - For legal documents that are reserved, like passports, the UK Parliament will need to have a vote to ensure gender is removed from legal documents. It should also be noted that 62% of people said that the Scottish Government should recognise non-binary people.

**End the spousal veto.** Divorce and annulment legislation already exists. Couples should be free to decide on whether to continue the marriage, yet this should not be tied to one of their gender. It is open to abuse and instead leaves the person who is legally changing their gender at a huge disadvantage - with them often having to wait a long period. This has already been abolished in Scotland.



England and Wales - The spousal veto is caused by a clause within the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013. This means that Parliament either has to amend the act where required.



NI - The Northern Irish Assembly would need to amend the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 where required.

**Reform the census so that data on the number of LGBTQ+ people can be collected.** At the moment, we are unaware of how many people are LGBTQ+ in the UK. We believe that this data should be collected in the next census (originally scheduled for 2021), as has already been done in Scotland<sup>11</sup>.



England and Wales - Parliament would amend the 1920 Census Act so that new voluntary questions can be asked. These would include whether somebody is transgender and their sexual orientation.



NI - The Northern Irish Assembly would amend the 1920 Census Act so that new voluntary questions could be asked. These would include whether somebody is transgender and their sexual orientation.

Chapter three

# Healthcare



**Ban conversion therapy.** This has not yet been implemented, even though it has been widely condemned, including by healthcare professionals. Conversion therapy refers to “any form of treatment or psychotherapy that aims to change a person’s sexual orientation or suppress a person’s gender identity<sup>12</sup>.” It should be noted that this was included in the Conservatives’ LGBT+ Action Plan of 2018<sup>13</sup>, yet has still not been implemented.



The UK Parliament needs to pass a bill that outlaws conversion therapy.

**Abolish the ‘gay blood ban,’ which prevents sexually active gay and bisexual men from donating blood.** Currently, there is a ban that prevents men from donating blood if they have had oral or anal sex with another man in the last three months<sup>14</sup>. We believe that this legislation is outdated and discriminatory, hence we advocate for it to be scrapped.



England- Under EVEL, Parliament needs to pass a bill that abolishes the ‘gay blood ban.’



Scotland- The Scottish Parliament needs to pass a bill that abolishes the ‘gay blood ban.’



Wales- The Senedd Cymru needs to pass a bill that abolishes the ‘gay blood ban.’



NI- The Northern Irish Assembly needs to pass a bill that abolishes the ‘gay blood ban.’

Chapter four

# The Economy and Jobs



**We would support local councils and devolved bodies in creating accessibility grants.**

Currently, in the UK, there is a lack of LGBT+ venues that are fully accessible to those who are disabled. For example, there are currently no LGBT+ venues with disability access in central London<sup>15</sup>. To solve this, we are pushing for the central government and the devolved assemblies to provide grants to local authorities. These grants would be provided to local venues to ensure that they remain accessible.



England - The Central Government would need to issue these grants to local authorities, which would be done through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This money would also need to be included in the budget that is passed by Parliament.



Wales - The Welsh Government would need to issue these grants to local authorities through the department responsible for housing. This money would also need to be included in their budget.



Scotland - The Scottish Government would need to issue these grants to local authorities through the department responsible for housing. This money would also need to be included in their budget.



NI - The Northern Irish Assembly would need to issue these grants to local authorities through the department responsible for housing. This money would also need to be included in their budget.

# Chapter five

# Housing



**Ensure that transgender people have fair access to social housing in NI.** At the moment, transgender people in NI can be refused social housing as transphobia is not recognised by the Housing Executive, meaning that transgender people are often unable to gain social housing points.

Implement our 'Housing First' policy. At the moment, it is estimated that 24% of the homeless population is LGBT+, often due to their sexuality<sup>16</sup>. This policy focuses on providing people with permanent housing as soon as possible, rather than placing them in temporary accommodation, while also offering ongoing support. This is done through access to education, support workers, and addiction therapists.



England - This scheme would need to be voted on by the Westminster Parliament under EVEL and would be implemented by the government department that is responsible for housing.



Scotland - This scheme would need to be voted on by the Scottish Parliament and would be implemented by the government department that is responsible for housing.



Wales - This scheme would need to be voted on by the Senedd Cymru and would be implemented by the government department that is responsible for housing.



NI - This scheme would need to be voted on by the Northern Irish Assembly and would be implemented by the government department that is responsible for housing.

# Chapter six

# Justice



**Stop transgender people from being put in the wrong prisons.** At the moment, if a prisoner has not fully completed the GRA process and obtained a GRC (Gender Recognition Certificate), they will be placed in a prison that corresponds to the gender they were assigned at birth. This issue would be solved by a GRA reform that allowed people to self-identify. The process for implementing this within the UK was outlined earlier in this paper.

Have accommodation provided for non-binary and intersex people. Our proposed GRA reforms would mean that people can identify as non-binary and have this legally recognised. Intersex people would also be recognised as having a valid gender identity. Intersex people would also be recognised as having a legally valid gender identity. Therefore, our prison system would need to reflect that, with non-binary and intersex people also being accommodated.



Scotland - The Justice Directorate would need to ensure that accommodation for non-binary and intersex prisoners is available to access.



NI - The Department of Justice would need to ensure that accommodation for non-binary and intersex is available for prisoners to access.



England and Wales - The Ministry of Justice would need to ensure that accommodation is available for all non-binary and intersex prisoners to access.

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