

# LGBT

## handbook



n u s lgbt



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# Introduction

Welcome to the LGBT Students' Handbook, brought to you by NUS LGBT Campaign.

We are the largest democratic movement of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans students in Europe and exist to defend and promote the rights of all LGBT students in the UK. We combat homophobia, biphobia and transphobia on campus and in wider society, and fight under-representation through empowerment and training of LGBT students.

This handbook is for LGBT students who want to find out more about what we do, and who want to get more involved in local and national campaigning for LGBT student rights. It contains ideas for running campaigns on your campuses, tips for developing successful LGBT societies, information about equality law, a calendar of important LGBT dates and much, much more!

We hope you find it really useful and keep hold of it throughout the year. And don't forget that the national LGBT officers and committee are here to support you in the implementation of the many ideas you will find inside this handbook, so please don't hesitate to get in touch!

**NUS LGBT Campaign**

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[www.nus.org.uk/lgbt](http://www.nus.org.uk/lgbt)

[www.nusconnect.org.uk/lgbt](http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/lgbt)

# What's in a name?

## A glossary of LGBT words and phrases

You may wish to look over the following definitions which explain some of the terms used in this handbook.

**Biphobia** – fear, anger, discomfort, intolerance, or lack of acceptance toward bisexual people.

**Bisexual** – a person who is emotionally, physically, spiritually, and sexually attracted to members of more than one gender.

**Coming out** – the ongoing process of coming to terms with and telling other people about your sexual orientation or gender identity. Most people assume that you are straight unless you tell them otherwise, which means that coming out is a continuous process for the majority of LGBT people.

**Discrimination** – unfair treatment of a person or group on the basis of prejudice.

**Gay** – usually, but not always, refers to men who are emotionally, physically, spiritually and sexually attracted to other men. Also used as an umbrella term for the LGBT community. Some lesbian women also refer to themselves as gay.

**Gender Expression** – a person's external gender-related appearance including clothing, mannerisms and chosen names.



**Gender Identity** – the gender that a person sees themselves as, which can include refusing to be labelled with a gender at all. It is not always possible to tell someone's gender identity from their outward appearance.

**Heteronormativity** – refers to the societal assumption that all people fall into two distinct sexes and that heterosexuality is the only normal sexual orientation.





**Heterosexuality** – sexual, emotional, and/or romantic attraction to a sex other than your own. Commonly thought of as attraction to the opposite sex. Heterosexual people are also referred to as straight.

**Homophobia** – fear, anger, discomfort, intolerance, or lack of acceptance toward LGBT people, or experiencing these feelings about one's own non-heterosexual preference.

**Lesbian** – a woman who is emotionally, physically, spiritually and sexually attracted to other women.

**LGBT** – lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans. An umbrella term to describe people who do not conform to gender and/or sexuality norms.

**Out** – refers to a person being open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**Sexual Orientation** – to whom a person is attracted. Not to be confused with sexual preference: what a person likes to do sexually.

**Trans** – someone whose gender identity does not match the social expectations for the physical sex they were born with. When NUS talks about trans people we use it as an umbrella term for a variety of people who identify as, for example, transsexual, genderqueer, transvestite or transgender.

**Transphobia** – fear or hatred of trans people; transphobia is manifested in a number of ways, including violence, harassment and discrimination.

**Queer** – has many different definitions. It is used by some people as an umbrella term similar to LGBT (see above). For others, Queer is an identity that rejects labels and definitions, particularly those relating to gender and sexuality.



# LGBT Students in HE

## What does the research say?



### Equality Challenge Unit

Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) supports the higher education sector in promoting equality for all staff and students. We do this through working in partnership with higher education institutions and sector organisations such as NUS, undertaking projects and research

and providing practical support and guidance to help us advance equality of opportunity and the diversity of the sector.

Our projects focus on areas where there are gaps in data or where few targeted resources exist.

In 2008 ECU was aware that there was little evidence about how being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual (LGBT) influences the experience of higher education.

A variety of contrasting views were expressed about the need for work in this field; many believe that higher education offers a safe and liberal space for LGBT people but with Stonewall reporting that 9 out of 10 teachers have witnessed homophobic bullying, ECU felt that it was important to find out if these levels of homophobia were carried over from schools as students moved into higher education. We therefore set about undertaking research in the area.

The research was conducted using quantitative survey and qualitative interview methods. Over 4200 LGBT staff and students in England, Wales and Northern Ireland completed the survey, and nearly 100 of the respondents were interviewed.

For the first time the findings have provided an authoritative evidence base of the actual, rather than perceived, experiences of LGBT people. It makes for very interesting reading!

Unequivocally the findings show that whilst higher education institutions provide a very positive space for many LGBT students to come out to their peers, there is also a huge amount of banal and more serious discrimination that takes place.

Nearly half of all LGB students experience some negative form of homophobia or homophobic language and nearly two thirds do not come out to lecturers because of fear of discrimination. With figures like these it is easy to see why 20 per cent of LGB students take time out of their studies because of issues connected to their sexual orientation. The figures are even more worrying for trans people and those with a trans background.

The research also shows that students are voting with their feet; 1 in 7 students choose their institution because they perceive it to be gay friendly. Despite this, half of staff, and a third of student respondents feel their institution does not treat discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation as seriously as discrimination based on disability and race. Difficulties sometimes arise where faith and LGBT groups come together in public spaces on campus – such as students’ unions – and homophobia in student accommodation is also a concern.

Higher education really does provide the space where many students can come out for the first time. The sector now really needs to engage with sexual orientation as an equality area and review how it provides support for LGBT

staff and students so they can continue to be themselves, supported and without fear of discrimination.

ECU continues to work with NUS and others to support the sector in achieving LGBT equality. For more information on the research, or to find out how you can help advance LGBT equality, please visit the ECU website <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/lgbt-staff-and-students-in-he>

**90.2%** of LGB students are out to their university friends

**64.3%** of LGBT are not out to lecturers

**7.1%** of trans students have been refused financial support by their parents

**28.5%** of trans students have taken time out of their course

# LGBT Students in FE

## What does the research say?

The most recent research about LGBT students' experiences in the further education sector was commissioned by the Skills Funding Agency and explored the adult learning environment (19 +). NUS contributed to the project which involved a survey, interviews, and focus groups with LGBT learners.

### Key findings include:

- Almost one in three (30%) trans learners had experienced bullying or harassment in adult learning due to their gender identity.
- Fewer than one in six (14.3%) LGB learners surveyed had experienced bullying and harassment in adult learning due to their sexual orientation.
- Only around a third of respondents stated that they thought that equality policies seemed to translate into reality in their FE provision.
- The most commonly reported form of bullying and harassment was discrimination in practical work or tasks within work-based learning.
- A significant proportion of LGB and especially trans learners do not feel 'totally safe' in adult learning.
- A quarter of our respondents stated that there was an LGB and/or T friendly/specific welfare officer available at their learning provider.
- The greatest barrier reported for learning was 'insensitive curriculum content'.
- Qualitative respondents related how they were attracted to adult learning through proactive action by providers e.g. taking recruitment to LGBT events.
- There are still comparatively more problems and barriers for LGBT learners for gender stereotyped courses eg. beauty; engineering etc.
- Around one in twenty LGB learners, and around one in six trans learners, expressed concerns about remaining in adult learning, or achieving within adult learning due to their sexual orientation/gender identity.

*Research into Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Equality in Adult Learning (2011) Skills Funding Agency*

# n u s lgbt awards

The NUS LGBT Awards recognise the contribution that LGBT societies make to their students' unions, institutions and to individual LGBT students' lives. Whether through organising social events, campaigning for change or providing support to students coming out, these awards celebrate the hard work that you put in all year!

The winners are announced at NUS LGBT Campaign Conference in March. Look out for nominations opening in February!

FE LGBT Student  
of the Year

HE LGBT Student  
of the Year

LGBT Society  
Development Award

LGBT Campaign  
of the Year

LGBT Event  
of the Year

LGBT Society  
of the Year

# LGBT Societies

An LGBT society is an important part of a students' union, providing support and social activities, and campaigning on behalf of LGBT students.

In this section we talk about some of the great things going on in campuses across the UK, and highlight the winning work carried out by LGBT societies that has been recognised at the annual NUS LGBT Awards.

- Events

LGBT societies across the UK organise thousands of **events** for LGBT students and their friends every year. These range from club nights and parties, film festivals and quizzes, to demonstrations and job fairs. Events which have been nominated for **Event of the Year** in the past include a political pride march, a balloon release, talks, films and workshops to mark LGBT History Month, a queer charity fashion show, a club night for World AIDS Day, a stunt for Same-Sex Handholding day, a Christmas Ball, and a speaker event exploring issues around faith and sexuality. Through these events, LGBT societies often **raise money for charity**.

- Campaigning

LGBT societies **campaign** on issues affecting LGBT students such as estrangement, bullying and anonymous marking, and wider issues such as the ban on gay and bisexual men donating blood. The **Campaign of the Year award** has recognised societies who have – amongst other things – campaigned against the deportation of LGBT asylum seekers, challenged homophobia by providing workshops in local schools, and lobbied their institution to deal with homophobia in halls of residences.

- Support and Welfare

LGBT societies are a great place to find support if you are coming to terms with your sexuality or gender identity, or simply to meet like-minded people in a new



town or city. LGBT societies have held sexual health workshops for their members, worked with their institution to provide an online advice service for LGBTQA students, set up befriending schemes, and created resource libraries for their members.

### **What are you waiting for?**

As you can see LGBT societies have something for everyone – so it is really worth joining, even if you are already out and comfortable with being LGBT. And if what you like doing isn't what your local LGBT group is doing, then get involved and make it happen – go to meetings, join the committee and make the changes you want to see!

### **How can I join my LGBT group?**

Most LGBT societies will have a stall at the union freshers' fair where you can meet members and find out more about what they do. But you can join an LGBT society at any point during the year, so don't worry if you didn't feel like going along during freshers' week. Groups will usually have a confidential e-mailing list if you're not ready to be out to others, or just want to hear about what's coming up – check to make sure with your local group. To find out how to get in touch with them have a look at your students' union website, or NUS' list of LGBT societies online: [www.nusconnect.org.uk/lgbt](http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/lgbt)

Want some ideas about how to run your own society? Turn the page for our top tips on running an effective society...



# Running an LGBT Society

Here is our simple guide to running an effective society.

## What do LGBT Societies do?

It's really important to be really clear about what the purpose of your LGBT society is. The best LGBT societies often do lots of different activities, and consequently have lots of members, but remember that you don't have to do everything. Your society might just focus on one or two of the following:

- **Social Events**

Starting university or college for the first time is often scary, and meeting like-minded people is crucial to feeling at home and welcome. Social events are a great way of providing support for students and building a solid network; whether it's a club night, a coffee drop in session, trips to see films or anything else that might take your fancy. Remember to vary your events and that not all your members will drink alcohol.

- **Welfare and Support**

It's important for LGBT students to know where they can go when they need support. LGBT societies can 'signpost' towards support groups or sexual health provision in your town or city. It's also a good idea to build links with your institution's advice or counselling service, and the local sexual health clinic. Lots of LGBT groups provide valuable peer support, for example through coming out workshops or drop-in "befriending" sessions.

- **Campaigns**

Being a collective of LGBT students means you can come together to change things, or raise awareness of LGBT issues. This could be changing something specific on your campus, your institution or in the wider community. You may also want to campaign on issues that affect LGBT people around the world. Read the section on campaigning in this handbook for more ideas.

## • Representation

LGBT societies can be a great way of representing the views of LGBT students on certain issues; either at a union or institutional level. For example, your society could have a seat on your union's decision making council or executive. You might also represent the views of LGBT students to your institution's Equality and Diversity Committee or other relevant board.

## How do we get people involved?

Advertising your society is crucial as it is the only way your members will know what you're doing. You should advertise through many different avenues; e-mail, posters, flyers, speaking to people face-to-face (eg. on a stall at your freshers' fair), facebook, other websites or blogs. Your students' union will usually have access to a lot of communication channels so speak to them about how you can best get in touch with students.

Once you've got a good membership, you shouldn't just presume what they want from the society, but keep in touch with them and deliver what they want. You might want to do a survey or questionnaire, not just



looking at what they want from you, but also their experiences of going to your institution as an LGBT student to inform any campaigns that you run. There is some research available that may help you on this, such as;

- *The Experiences of LGBT Students and Staff in Higher Education*, Equality Challenge Unit (2009)
- *Research into Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Equality in Adult Learning*, Skills Funding Agency (2011)

## What if we don't have any money?

It can be hard running an LGBT society with a decent budget, let alone if you're running it on a shoestring. Here are a few ways of getting more money:



- **From the students' union**

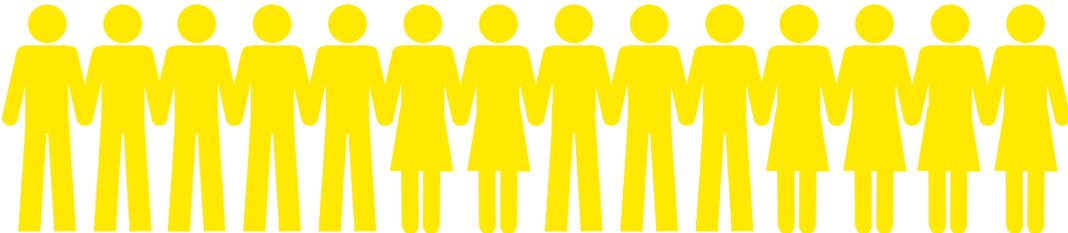
The money that you can access as a group will vary depending on which institution you are based at. You should always speak to your students' union in the first instance about funding, as they will give you an idea if there is money available for societies. You'll be more likely to get money if you provide a detailed budget plan about what you want to do and show that you are keen. You might find that there could be extra money available for specific campaigns work, and you may be able to dip into other pots of money if you do joint activities with other societies.

- **By Fundraising**

Another good idea is to put on fundraising events within your LGBT society. Themed social nights usually get people donating, as do pub-style quizzes. You might want to organise a raffle or auction, with prizes donated from local shops or LGBT organisations. People will always be more willing to donate if part of the money goes to an LGBT charity as well as your society.

- **Getting Sponsorship**

You may want to build links with local shops and clubs that have an interest in LGBT people. You might be able to get them to sponsor you, either by giving you money or by offering incentives to your society members. For example, a club might let you use their venue for free when they would charge other groups.



## What do we do next?

Building a network of support for your group is essential to ensure its long-term success and stability. You could start by getting in contact with:

- the staff member in your institution with responsibility for equality and diversity
- your student services department
- the staff trade unions represented on your campus
- your students' union president or executive
- union staff who can help you (e.g. the marketing department or your SSLO)
- other student societies who you could work with (e.g. Amnesty International)
- local community LGBT groups and sexual health charities
- LGBT societies at other universities and colleges in your area
- NUS LGBT!

All of the above will be able to give you support, advice and ideas about keeping your society vibrant and active throughout the year.

## Have fun!

Running an LGBT society can be hard work, but don't forget to enjoy yourself as well!



# Putting the LGBT into FE

There are thousands of LGBT students in further education across the UK, but despite this not many LGBT societies or campaigns in colleges exist. Students in the FE sector face particular challenges which can prevent them from setting up successful LGBT groups.

The NUS LGBT Campaign is dedicated to supporting LGBT students in further education, through setting up LGBT groups, getting recognition from your colleges, running campaigns and training activists.

## What NUS can do for LGBT students in FE

FE makes up 70 per cent of NUS' membership so it's important that your voices are heard throughout all aspects of the campaigns. The national LGBT officers and committee are here to help you with your groups, campaigns and supporting your arguments for LGBT representation in your college.

We can:

- come to your Freshers' Fair to promote an LGBT group you're setting up.
- visit your students' union or college to deliver a talk, participate in a debate or support an event.
- visit your LGBT group to talk about NUS LGBT, help you plan your own campaigns or run a workshop.
- come to a staff meeting and do a presentation or session on LGBT issues, or we can help you to write your own.
- offer training and development events to FE students at little or no cost, such as our activist training days in the winter, annual LGBT conference in the spring or our FE focus group!
- maintain contact with you throughout the year and provide briefings on a variety of subjects, free of charge.



## Resources for FE colleges

**Putting the LGBT into FE** – this pack includes ideas and tips for students who want to start their own LGBT group, and suggests ways to move forward once this has been achieved. It deals with the problems that FE students face which are unique to the sector, such as a lack of funding and the legacy of Section 28. It also includes research, information, and case studies. Download the briefing at [www.nusconnect.org.uk/lgbt](http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/lgbt)

**'Visible and Valued'** – is a training DVD exploring homophobia in colleges and how to deal with it. It contains interviews with students in LGBT groups, and staff members who have supported them, as well as providing examples of good practice for dealing with homophobia in a college environment. Order copies from [www.isis.org.uk](http://www.isis.org.uk)

### Case study – Basingstoke College

Our LGBT society, BCOT LGBT Aware, started in February 2009 at Basingstoke College of Technology. We set it up to give LGBT students a voice and a safe space to be themselves. Before we started, the college did not even know what LGBT stood for.

Our enrichment and SU liaison staff member was enthusiastic about the group being set up and suggested we did something for LGBT History month. We were pleased to have the support and held two stalls; one which displayed the movie Beautiful Thing, and another giving out Stonewall's "Some People Are Gay Get Over It" stickers.

Since then we have increased our membership and have held several successful events. We hold regular workshops for the students at BCOT, dealing with issues like coming out, pride safety, heterosexism, sexual health and what it means to be gay. Last year we were nominated for FE LGBT Society of the Year at NUS LGBT Conference.

It can be hard setting up an FE LGBT society, especially when you have limited resources and not many LGBT students that are "out", but one thing's for sure: the college definitely knows what LGBT stands for now!

# What are we fighting for?

NUS has been at the forefront of LGBT liberation for many years now: from campaigning to end homophobic legislation such as Section 28, lobbying to introduce new legislation such as Civil Partnerships and the Gender Recognition Act, to preventing the deportation of LGBT asylum seekers. Here is a low-down of our current activities.

## Donation Not Discrimination

Gay and bisexual men are banned from donating blood for life in the UK. We believe that basing blood donor selection criteria on sexual orientation rather than actual risk is discriminatory and perpetuates the myth that AIDS is a “gay disease”. We are campaigning against this ban by co-ordinating information pickets and petitions when the National Blood Service goes onto campuses, encouraging those who are allowed to give blood under the current rules to do so, and engaging in debate with the NBS and their advisory committee (SaBTO). Donation Not Discrimination calls for SaBTO to end the blanket ban on gay and bisexual men donating blood.



## Love Without Borders



LGBT people in the UK have won many rights over the past few years. But around the world, many LGBT people do not share our rights. Instead, they are criminalised, persecuted, imprisoned and even murdered by their own governments, just because of who they are, and who they love. The Love Without Borders campaign encourages LGBT societies to make links with international LGBT students, and play an important part in something much bigger – the international LGBT rights movement. The NUS LGBT Campaign continues to stand in solidarity with LGBT activists around the world and fight for LGBT asylum seekers to escape deportation to homophobic countries.

## Fighting Discrimination in Education

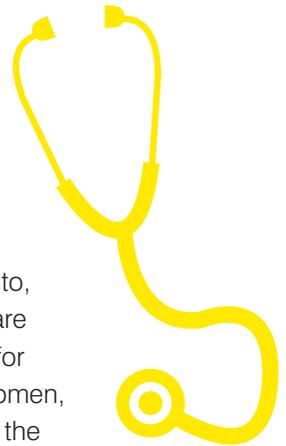
LGBT students face many barriers within the education system, and NUS LGBT Campaign is working to break down these barriers.

Estrangement is a devastating problem for some LGBT students and our research into the issue found worrying evidence of LGBT students who are estranged from their families being badly treated when applying for funding. We are lobbying the Student Loans Company to implement the recommendations of our Estrangement report and are fighting against fees: a free education system is the only way to achieve an LGBT-accessible education system. We also run workshops on liberating the curriculum and encourage LGBT societies to lobby their institutions to install anonymous marking systems and anti-bullying policies.



## LGBT Healthcare Manifesto

Ever suffered discrimination from your GP? Been ignored by a GUM clinic? Most LGBT people have stories to tell about their experiences with the health service, and many of them aren't good. We are campaigning to change the healthcare system in this country, and alongside Stonewall, Terrence Higgins Trust and Unison have launched the LGBT Healthcare Manifesto, detailing 10 demands for a more LGBT-inclusive healthcare system. The manifesto calls for training on LGBT issues for junior doctors, better sexual health provision for LGBT women, a review of the treatment protocol for trans people under the age of 18 and more.



## Pride Is a Protest

The NUS LGBT Campaign believe that politics still has a place in Pride and that Pride events should be about reclaiming our streets from bigotry and bringing our community together – and that can and needs to be done everywhere. As a result we campaign for free, community-led, accessible pride demonstrations and celebrations and encourage student groups to set up new prides in their local areas.

## Love Music Hate Homophobia

The rise of fascism in this country threatens the diversity of our students' unions and the society we live in. Fascist groups like the British National Party (BNP) advocate race-hatred and have described AIDS as a “friendly disease because blacks and gays have it”. NUS LGBT, alongside Unite Against Fascism (UAF), launched Love Music Hate Homophobia at NUS LGBT Conference 2009. This anti-fascist initiative seeks to promote fundraising music gigs and events across the UK with all proceeds going to UAF in the fight against fascism and the BNP.



### Is that it?

No, of course not! In addition to all of the projects above we also work in many other areas. We run events like our regional activist training days and annual conference, hold demonstrations and protests throughout the year, and champion LGBT students running in union elections. We've also got loads of materials, briefings and toolkits available for you to order: from our Under Construction guides that help you diversify and increase the membership of your LGBT society, to our Gender-Neutral Toilets and Trans Accommodation briefings, to posters to put up around your students' union and advertise your LGBT society.

For more information on any of our campaigns, see [www.nusconnect.org.uk/lgbt](http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/lgbt)



# NUS Scotland LGBT campaign

Recent studies indicate that LGBT people make up around 7–10 per cent of the population in the UK. This means that there are around 400,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people living in Scotland. The NUS Scotland LGBT Campaign exists to represent all those LGBT people that are students in further and higher education. The campaign works in much the same way as the NUS LGBT Campaign: combating discrimination, empowering LGBT students and representing LGBT students across Scotland.

Current areas of work by the NUS Scotland LGBT Campaign include:

## **There's More to My Education**

LGBT students are four times more likely to attempt suicide than someone who doesn't define as LGBT. We are campaigning to make sure that all mental health and student support services are LGBT-friendly, that they do not discriminate based on a student's sexuality and that students won't be judged when accessing services.

## **Sexual Health**

There is a significant lack of sexual health resources or information about how to get tested available around the country for LGBT students. We will be working with sexual health organisations, and campaigning for more resources to promote good sexual health and regular testing.

## **LGBT Networks**

We are working with universities and colleges to create and facilitate Regional LGBT Networks around Scotland to empower students who do not have an LGBT society to get involved with campaigning on their campus. LGBT Networks will be run in three cities: Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

NUS Scotland

e. [mail@nus-scotland.org.uk](mailto:mail@nus-scotland.org.uk)

w. [www.nus.org.uk/scotland](http://www.nus.org.uk/scotland)

# NUS Wales LGBT campaign

## **Croeso... Welcome...**

The NUS Wales LGBT Campaign exists to represent and support LGBT students in Welsh further and higher education institutions. Over the past few years, feedback has shown that students in Wales face different problems to students in both England and Scotland. The following are the priority campaigns for the year and reflect what students in Wales have said need to be improved. NUS Wales LGBT Campaign will also be looking other areas over the next year.

## **FE Out and Proud**

FE colleges make up a vital part of NUS Wales with record numbers of attendance at NUS Wales' events. This year NUS Wales LGBT Campaign will be focussing on the development and integration of Welsh FE students into the LGBT movement. This will be done through the means of launching LGBT societies, increasing their involvement in the NUS Wales LGBT Campaign, and helping them build links with neighbouring HE institutions with established LGBT societies and campaigns.

## **Sexual Health**

In Wales, the majority of FE and HE institutions offer sexual health information, yet very few offer LGBT-specific information. Further to this a lot of Welsh institutions are also based in rural areas where GPs and other sexual health based groups may lack the resources to support LGBT people with such queries. This is an important issue for Welsh LGBT students and so the NUS Wales LGBT Campaign will be lobbying student services at universities and colleges as well as the government to ensure that such information, if needed, is readily available for LGBT people in Wales.

Mae'r wybodaeth hon ar gael ar gais yn Gymraeg gan Ymgyrch LHDT UCM Cymru

NUS Wales

e. [office@nus-wales.org.uk](mailto:office@nus-wales.org.uk)

w. [www.nus.org.uk/wales](http://www.nus.org.uk/wales) | w. [www.nus.org.uk/cymru](http://www.nus.org.uk/cymru)

# LGBT Student voices

The LGBT community is a diverse one, and our movement is stronger because of this. In this section, hear from LGBT students speaking about different aspects of their identity – and what it means to them to be LGBT and black, disabled, bisexual, transitioning or a woman.

## Being LGBT and Black

How many Black LGBT celebrities can you think of, compared to white LGBT celebrities? Not many I bet! With this lack of role models it's not surprising that many Black LGBT students, like me, can find themselves segregated and isolated even within their own community.

20 per cent of students in the UK are Black – that is, of African, Arab, Asian or Caribbean descent, yet only 4 per cent of students' union officers are Black. Even less are Black and LGBT. This is why, within the LGBT campaign we have specific representation for Black students, and why we are fighting to get more of us involved and represented within the campaign and within students' unions.

The double discrimination of racism and homophobia can be a tough and painful experience for those who are faced with it, and coming out can often be more difficult for Black LGBT students, with religion sometimes creating a barrier, whether this is perceived or actual.

It's important that LGBT societies welcome and support all their members, no matter their ethnicity. The NUS LGBT Campaign wants more Black LGBT people to get engaged and active within local societies and the national campaign, to get Black LGBT issues recognised and voiced.

## Women in the LGBT community

Although many may argue that being a woman who sleeps with women is easier in today's society than a man who sleeps with men, what many do not realise or notice is the male dominance in gay culture. False assumptions about sex, and a lack of safe sex advice for LGBT women has resulted in a massive increase in STI transmission between women. In addition to this gay bars and club nights are overwhelmingly aimed at men and as a result the diversity of the female part of the LGBT community continues to be overlooked.

NUS LGBT aims to break down long held stereotypes of LGBT women by being an inclusive campaign. Having a diverse female presence in the campaign and on committee helps to reflect the diversity within the community and maximise the range of voices and opinions that are heard.

# LGBT Student voices

## Being a student and transitioning

I transitioned on my first day of university – I got on the train in London, a girl, and arrived in Manchester, a boy. I had all the usual worries about starting uni: fees, coursework and making friends, but on top of that, I had other concerns relating to my transition. I thought other students would bully me, or that my tutors wouldn't understand. I was unsure about how to change my name and gender on my records and library card. I thought I'd never fit in anywhere.

I joined my students' union LGBT society, and through this, I was able to make friends with people who I knew would 'get it'. I'm now a committee member, and although I've had some hassle with certain aspects of student life, such as living in single-sex accommodation, I know I've got the people at the LGBT society to listen, and give me advice.

I have also been really lucky, in that I have had the chance to meet loads of other trans students, through NUS LGBT events and conferences. Sometimes, going through gender transition can feel quite isolating and stressful, so having the ability to chat to other people with whom I have a lot in common helps me feel more positive about being trans, and more able to focus on my studies.

So if you are transitioning, or thinking about it, remember that you are not alone – your LGBT society is there to help you too!

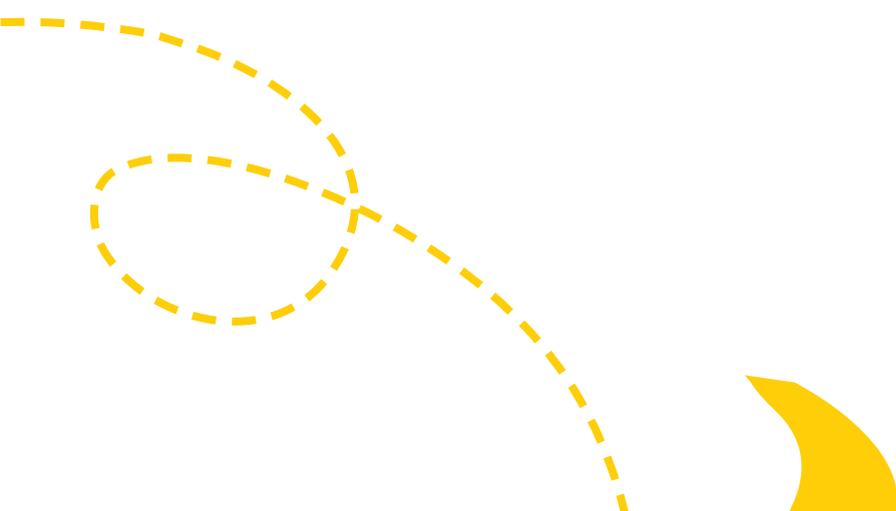
# LGBT Student voices

## Being a bisexual student

Confused, indecisive, promiscuous, dishonest, heart-breaker, sexual risk-taker: all of these are labels you are probably familiar with if you're bisexual. Unfortunately biphobia still remains a big problem in wider society, as well as within the LGBT community itself. NUS LGBT fights for recognition, equality and respect for all bisexual students and seeks to address issues which are important to them.

Coming out at university or college is difficult for bisexuals who face not only pressure to 'prove' their sexuality, but also to disprove numerous other stereotypes about their behaviour. How many times do bisexuals get told they are 'actually straight' with opposite-sex partners, and 'actually gay or lesbian' when they are with same sex partners? How many times are bisexual women dismissed as merely 'giving a show' to attract men when they show affection towards one another in public? Even when said in jest, as these things often are, they are still examples of biphobia.

It is important for bisexuals to have the space to discuss issues around coming out, sexual health, mental health, eradicating stereotypes and bisexual visibility. Contact us to find out how to increase bisexual inclusion, activism and awareness at your university or college.

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## Being LGBT and disabled

I wasn't diagnosed with a disability until university, but I pretty much diagnosed myself in high school. I didn't want to draw attention to it in the same way I didn't want to draw attention to the fact I was queer.

I didn't initially come to define as disabled because of my disabilities in themselves, but because I'd started to suffer from anxiety as a result of feeling the need to fit in. I reached a point where I had to make a decision; I could analyse everything in order to ensure I seemed normal (which just seemed to lead me in circles) or bite the bullet and acknowledge the fact that this was who I was and that it was other people's job to deal with it. I realised I could define myself on my own terms.

For me, having a hidden disability and being trans queer have a lot in common. I don't disclose I'm LGBT or disabled, but certain mannerisms of mine do make people question this or just make me stand out. The biggest barrier I've had to overcome throughout uni is people assuming either way. Some people claim to not have guessed I'm trans, queer or disabled whilst others claim it's really obvious. I've yet to work out which causes the most problems!

# Effective campaigning

## What is a campaign?

A campaign is where people work together to make a change or defend something. For example, a campaign could be to create new laws protecting from discrimination, or to stop proposed laws which discriminate. It can be used to create a wide change in society or to make people aware of something and change their attitudes. A campaign can be long or short term, on a national, international or local issue, about a group or even an individual.

Almost every advance in LGBT rights has come from the result of campaigning. The LGBT rights movement started from numerous direct actions and campaigns (such as the first Pride marches) following the Stonewall Riots in 1969, and campaigns have continued throughout the movement. The repeal of section 28 and an equal age of consent for gay and bisexual men all came from the result of campaigns run by LGBT activists.



## Change or Awareness?

The best campaigns are always clearly defined and planned, with well thought out aims and objectives. You have to think why you are campaigning; is it to change something, such as a law or a policy, or to gain a specific service for LGBT students? Or is your campaign an awareness-raising activity, looking to give people more knowledge about a subject?

Depending upon whether you are campaigning for change or awareness might lead you to choose different campaigning tactics depending on your subject and audience. For example, when trying to change a law, lobbying might be best, and for an awareness campaign, something like a poster campaign could help target your key audience better.

## Widely Felt, Deeply Felt

Before you start campaigning, think about the issue you choose. It's important that the campaign is winnable, so think whether it is an issue for lots of LGBT students on your campus (widely felt) and whether it is an issue

that LGBT people really care about (deeply felt). The best campaigns are often widely and deeply felt.

## Campaigning styles

There are lots of different ways to campaign and all have pros and cons. You can combine different campaigning tactics in order to create the change you want to see. It's up to you to decide what is best for the cause or issue you are fighting for, as well as who you are aiming the campaign at.

### Lobbying

**What?** Lobbying, or advocacy, is attempting to persuade others to make a change, or prevent something from happening.

**When?** Usually used when trying to convince a group or individuals who have the power to make a decision to bring the change you want, or can influence others to do it on your behalf.

**How?** It can be through meetings with decision-makers or those likely to influence them, or mass letter writing/emailing.

**Pros?** Cost-effective with little commitment from most people involved beyond writing a letter or forwarding an email. Decision-makers are likely to take notice of mass lobby on a certain issue.

**Cons?** Doesn't keep people engaged in your campaign beyond writing a letter, and therefore it is useful to combine with other campaign styles.

### Protests/demonstrations/pickets

**What?** A protest or demonstration is, in its literal sense, a physical objection to an issue, person, place or event. It is a public display of group feeling on an issue, and can take many forms, such as marching, chanting and holding banners and placards. A picket is very similar in nature, but involves being posted outside of a venue, giving information or making people aware of an issue.



**When?** A protest/demo or a picket is best used to raise objection to a concrete issue and at the right moment so as to have the maximum impact. So, for instance, a demo outside of parliament at the time of voting on a certain issue will have far more impact than holding a demo two weeks after the vote!

**How?** If you are planning a protest or demonstration, you **MUST** get permission to do so from the police. The best thing to do is tell the police exactly what you're planning on doing, with enough notice (at the very least a week).

**Pros** All types of demos are very good at involving people directly, and can make a great visual impact, as well as creating a lot of media attention for your campaign.

**Cons** You need to think about legal requirements of holding a demo, and the time this will take; for example, paperwork will need to be filled in and you will need to give plenty of notice. Sometimes going in 'heavy-handed' in a campaign may hinder your message rather than help it.

## Stunts

**What?** Stunts are creative ways of getting your message across. They use visual means to bring attention to a campaign or make a point about an issue. Examples could include: a flash mob, wearing certain colour clothing to symbolise something, a 'die-in' or 'kiss-in', or using objects to represent something – for example, using red liquid to symbolise how much blood could be donated if the ban on gay men giving blood was lifted.

**When?** Stunts can be used instead of, or in conjunction with a demonstration, and are really good for getting your messages across visually and a bit differently. Stunts are often good for things such as LGBT History Month, International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO) or Transgender Day of Remembrance.



**How?** The first thing you need for a stunt is a good idea, or a campaign which can be turned into a good visual stunt or action. The next thing you'll need are people willing to do a public stunt or make themselves look a bit silly! Then, of course, you'll need resources depending upon what you've decided to carry out. It is also a good idea to let whoever owns the property (ie. your university or college) know that you are going to carry out the stunt.

**Pros** Stunts and similar actions are great for getting your message across, grabbing people's attention and get people talking about your issue. The press will definitely be interested!

**Cons** Stunts are not always effective at actually securing a concrete change, which is why they are best combined with other methods, or with awareness campaigns.

## Campaigning tips

### Publicise what you are doing

You want to make sure your campaign gets a lot of attention, so always inform the press of what you're doing (even if that's only your student newspaper). If you are doing any sort of action make sure you take lots of photos so you can use them after to show what you did. If you are interviewed make sure you are confident and know what you're talking about!

### Get help from friends and allies

Running a campaign doesn't mean doing it all by yourself. There are always groups and people out there that will be willing to support you. Have a look at page 8 for ideas of who you can approach to help you with your campaigning.

### Keep people involved

Just because a campaign that you have been running is finished doesn't mean you have to say goodbye to everyone that's been involved – you can get them involved in something else, whether that be another campaign or helping out in your society or students' union.

# The Law and you



## A brief guide to your rights

Over the last decade LGBT people have gained rights and legal protections in a number of different areas. In this section we provide a brief guide to how the law protects you in college or university, your students' union, at work and in healthcare.

The Equality Act protects you against direct or indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of your actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender reassignment. These laws apply to you as a student in further or higher education, and they also apply in the workplace.

### At university or college

Your university or college has a legal duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

- If you suffer any discrimination, harassment or victimisation in your institution you are entitled to report it immediately and your institution is obliged to investigate the matter fairly.
- Your institution is not allowed to ask to see your Gender Recognition Certificate, although they can ask to see a Statutory Declaration of name change if you want to change the name on your qualifications.
- Your own institution's Equality and Diversity Policy may go much further than the law prescribes. This may include information about specific support services and action plans for supporting students from different groups.

### In your students' union

- Your students' union is not allowed to discriminate against you as an LGBT student regarding provision of any goods, services or facilities it offers. What this means in practice is that you cannot be thrown out of a club night

for kissing someone of the same sex or barred from any activities offered by the union because of your sexuality or because of gender reassignment.

### **At work**

- It is against the law for an employer to treat you less favourably than someone else because of your sexuality. The protection starts at recruitment and continues through to dismissal.
- Indirect discrimination means that practices which disadvantage LGB people compared with straight people are also illegal. Trans employees – as defined above – have the same protection.
- You shouldn't be asked your trans status or sexuality at any job interview.
- If your company has a dresscode for men and women you must follow it. However transitioning employees once notifying their employer of their circumstances should be allowed to wear the company's uniform for their new defined gender.

### **In healthcare**

- No Primary Care Trust should ban treatment for transsexual patients. However they may only provide funding in some cases.
- If you experience harassment, discrimination or have a complaint about your GP speak to your local Patient Advice and Liaison Services, who can be found by contacting your local PCT. They will help you with any complaint.
- If you feel your local practice hasn't dealt with your complaint you can take the matter to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

### **Useful Legal Links**

- Liberty – [www.yourrights.org.uk](http://www.yourrights.org.uk)
- Direct Gov Employment rights website – [www.direct.gov.uk/en/employment](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/employment)
- Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman – [www.ombudsman.org.uk/](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/)
- Equality Challenge Unit – [www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk)

# calendar of LGBT Dates

## January

- Register for NUS LGBT Conference [www.nusconnect.org.uk/events](http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/events)
- Submit a motion or two to NUS LGBT Conference – visit [www.nusconnect.org.uk](http://www.nusconnect.org.uk) to find out how.
- Download our **LGBT History Month briefing** to help you plan your event and book your NUS LGBT Committee member to attend – email [lgbt@nus.org.uk](mailto:lgbt@nus.org.uk)

## February

- It's LGBT History Month! Find out more at [www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk](http://www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk)
- Nominate your **LGBT Society** for an NUS LGBT Award! at [www.nusconnect.org.uk/lgbt](http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/lgbt)



## March

- NUS LGBT Conference

## April

- Why not start organising for your local Pride event or set up your own?

## May

- (17 May) International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) – [www.idahomophobia.com](http://www.idahomophobia.com)

## June

- It's the end of the academic year so make sure you go out on a bang – **plan an end of year event**. It's important to celebrate your successes and everyone's hard work!
- Are you an FE student? Make sure you attend the **FE leadership training** to get you ready for next year.



## July

- Are you an LGBT Officer or an LGBT Society Leader? Apply for our LGBT Officer Residential in August – visit [www.nusconnect.org.uk/lgbt](http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/lgbt)

## August

- Make sure you order materials and a visit from a national committee member for your fresher's fairs! [lgbt@nus.org.uk](mailto:lgbt@nus.org.uk)
- It's LGBT Officer Residential time!

## September

- Freshers begins! What have you got planned? Download our fresher's briefing for ideas: [www.nusconnect.org.uk/lgbt](http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/lgbt)

## October

- Register for the annual NUS LGBT Activist Training Days

## November

- It's time for the annual NUS LGBT Activist Training Days!
- (20 Nov) Transgender Day of Remembrance [www.transgenderdor.org](http://www.transgenderdor.org)

## December

- (1 December) World AIDS Day [www.worldaidsday.org](http://www.worldaidsday.org)



# LGBT Directory

## **EACH (Educational Action challenging Homophobia)**

w: [www.eachaction.org.uk](http://www.eachaction.org.uk) e: [info@eachaction.org.uk](mailto:info@eachaction.org.uk)

t: 0808 1000 143 – Actionline for young people in England and Wales  
(freephone: Monday–Friday 10am to 4pm)

## **Equal Marriage**

w: [www.equalmarriage.org.uk](http://www.equalmarriage.org.uk)

e: [contact@equalmarriage.org.uk](mailto:contact@equalmarriage.org.uk)

## **Equality challenge unit**

w: [www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk)

e: [info@ecu.ac.uk](mailto:info@ecu.ac.uk)

t: 020 7438 1010

## **Broken Rainbow**

w: [www.broken-rainbow.org.uk](http://www.broken-rainbow.org.uk)

e: [mail@broken-rainbow.org.uk](mailto:mail@broken-rainbow.org.uk)

## **Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES)**

w: [www.gires.org.uk](http://www.gires.org.uk)

e: [info@gires.org.uk](mailto:info@gires.org.uk)

t: 01372 801554

## **Gendered Intelligence**

w: [www.genderedintelligence.co.uk](http://www.genderedintelligence.co.uk)

## **IGLYO** w: [www.iglyo.com](http://www.iglyo.com)

## **International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA)** w: [www.ilga.org](http://www.ilga.org)

## **LGBT consortium**

w: [www.lgbtconsortium.org.uk](http://www.lgbtconsortium.org.uk)  
e: [information@lgbtconsortium.org.uk](mailto:information@lgbtconsortium.org.uk)

## **The Lesbian and Gay Foundation**

w: [www.lgf.org.uk](http://www.lgf.org.uk)  
e: [info@lgf.org.uk](mailto:info@lgf.org.uk)  
t: 0161 235 8035

## **LGBT History Month**

w: [www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk](http://www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk)  
e: [information@lgbtconsortium.org.uk](mailto:information@lgbtconsortium.org.uk)

## **Press for change**

w: [pfc.org.uk](http://pfc.org.uk)  
e: [editor@pfc.org.uk](mailto:editor@pfc.org.uk)

## **National Aids Trust**

w: [www.nat.org.uk](http://www.nat.org.uk) e: 020 7814 6767

## **Stonewall**

w: [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)  
e: [info@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:info@stonewall.org.uk)  
t: 08000 50 20 20 – for all information, resource requests and enquiries about Stonewall (Mon–Fri 9.30am to 5.30pm)

## **Terrence Higgins Trust**

w: [www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk)  
t: 0845 1221 200 (THT Direct)

## **UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group**

w: [www.uklgig.org.uk](http://www.uklgig.org.uk) t: 020 7922 7812

## **Unite against Fascism**

w: [www.uaf.org.uk](http://www.uaf.org.uk)  
e: [unite@ucu.org.uk](mailto:unite@ucu.org.uk)  
t: 020 7801 2782

**World Aids Day** w: [www.worldaidsday.org](http://www.worldaidsday.org)



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