

Linking SCOTLAND Planning Futures

Connecting lesbian gay bisexual and transgender people across Scotland and beyond. Report of the two day conference held in Inverness in September 2003.

beyond
barriers

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Introduction



In September 2003, 120 people took part in Scotland's first national conference on the needs of LGBT people in rural areas across Scotland.

LGBT people and representatives from LGBT organisations, from government, statutory bodies, voluntary organisations and from the LGBT community had an opportunity to meet, discuss, listen to one another and most importantly to begin considering together how best to meet the diverse needs lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transexuals living in rural areas throughout Scotland.

The conference offered participants the opportunity to:

- * identify the action and services that are required in their area to challenge LGBT social exclusion, isolation and invisibility
- * make a connection with people from across Scotland and build strong networks
- * develop new skills to help challenge discrimination, prejudice and social exclusion in their local community.

Two days of uplifting presentations, lively and informative workshops, debate, networking and socialising in a warm and welcoming environment produced many recommendations, ideas and strategies for progressing the agenda. These are summarised within the main body of the report and given as an action plan at the end of the report.

Some key words and phrases emerged again and again throughout the day:

- * access to services and support
- * mainstreaming of existing services
- * funding for initiatives that address need
- * development and provision of better information, better circulated

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- ✦ training at all levels within and outwith the LGBT community
- ✦ challenging homophobia and promoting equality
- ✦ promotion of positive messages and positive images
- ✦ the need for personal commitment

The Plenary Sessions



The conference heard from 4 speakers during the two days. Summaries of their messages follow.

Setting the context

Ruth Henry, Director of Beyond Barriers, warmly welcomed participants to Inverness and to the conference, the first of its kind.

She explained that the idea for the conference had come about during the Scotland-wide consultations with the LGBT people, which were part of the recent Beyond Barriers research. During the consultations, it had quickly become clear that there were very specific issues affecting LGBT people living and working in rural areas and a conference to explore these in detail was proposed.

Participants had come to Inverness for many different reasons: some to network and socialise; others as policy makers keen to hear what individuals and organisations had to say. The workshops were organised to reflect this broad range of interests, including policy, health, work, the law and communities and as an opportunity to share expertise, information and experiences.

This was a unique and historic moment, being the first conference for LGBT people on rural issues, the first LGBT conference in Inverness and something of a milestone. Three years ago, an event like this would not have been possible: funding would not have been available and the equality movement in Scotland was simply not adequately developed.

Yet despite significant progress in the equality agenda in recent years, many people - some of whom had been in touch with Beyond Barriers about the event - were still simply too intimidated to attend. Ruth invited the audience to take a moment to remember them.

Fuller transcripts, where these were provided, can be found on the Beyond Barriers website on www.beyondbarriers.org.uk.

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LGBT is about inclusion. Those working at Beyond Barriers believe in just that: extending our individual reach across the divisions within our community to work together for equality. It is in this spirit that the decision was taken not have any special spaces for particular groups: everything would be open to everyone, with all welcome.

So, after the conference, what next? The aim of the conference was, through the workshops, to identify issues for LGBT people, find out what the LGBT community wants to see happen and to feed the results into policy making. And, if it seems appropriate, Beyond Barriers will consider holding a follow-up event sometime in the future. A full report of the event, which all participants will receive, will be published.

Finally, Ruth thanked everyone for coming to the event.

Margaret Smith, MSP - A Personal View

Margaret Smith, MSP, Deputy Convenor of the Equal Opportunities Committee, Reporter on the Sexual Orientation Working Group and Scotland's first "out" lesbian MSP opened her speech by sharing some advice she had received, when younger from Paddy Ashdown, former leader of the Liberal Democrat Party : don't talk about what you don't know about.

However, she was about to break that rule, knowing nothing about rural areas and having lived and worked in Edinburgh all her life. She would break another rule, too, by talking about her personal life: voters elect politicians, not their families but she'd like to share her experiences just this once and at this event, as it had been a big year and a huge journey for her and for her family: the year she had been "outed". While some couples quietly lived as "straight" for 40 years, invisibility was not an option for an MSP with the tabloid press around!

Surveys show that some people don't want an "out" MSP. However, she had actually received an incredibly positive response from her constituents, despite representing a former Conservative constituency with a strong church membership, and she had been both touched and surprised by the support received from the most unlikely quarters. Being an MSP is a bit like being in a rural area: you can't be out to only one person! You may not be ready. You may not have the information and support you need. Looking at how much she and her family paid in terms of mental well-being, it was humbling to gain an understanding of just how much harder that is for those who are isolated from any kind of support network. On a positive note, there is currently funding coming through the Lottery and the Scottish Executive into projects which can give that much needed information and support - the Beyond Barriers conference being an example.

Margaret explained the work of the Equal Opportunities Committee, which has six strands, covering sexual orientation, race, gender, disability, age and faith. Within that, she is also

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Reporter for the Sexual Orientation Working Group. She was here to listen and to learn from those at the conference who lived and worked in rural areas and to find out what participants would like to see happening.

There are many parallels between coming out in the country, in a small village or town and coming out in the city, for example "you think you are the only one!". Events like the Beyond Barriers conference are important because networks are crucial, wherever you are. It was moving to hear Ruth talk about those who were too afraid to come along to the event. Not so long ago, this had been her own experience.

The people of Scotland want to see their democratic institutions working. Because of the Working Groups and Committees here in Scotland we know at least that there will be consultation and evidence taken. If the Parliamentary committees are doing their jobs properly, they should be challenging the Executive as well as working constructively with it. And everyone should use the institutions, write to the Minister, to the Convenor of the Equal Opportunities Committee, to local representatives, send evidence to the Hate Crimes Working Group and the groups on age, disability, etc. They do care; it does make a difference.

Recently, Margaret realised that none of the LGBT people she knows, except her, lives in the same place where he or she was raised: they have left villages, small towns, islands. We must fight to make sure that when someone leaves a community it is out of choice and for their own positive reasons and not because they are driven out through prejudice. Indeed, the Equal Opportunities Reporters had already discovered that those in rural areas suffered significantly more incidence of discrimination and lack of access to services.

There is a documented problem with access to services: we all think twice about entering the doctor's surgery; hesitate before filling in an insurance form. In a rural area, it might be the first time that a service has encountered an LGBT person; the first time they have gay parents in a school. In an urban setting, services may still have individuals within them who are homophobes but it is likely they will have encountered LGBT people before.

Those of us in the LGBT community deserve access not just to services, but to well trained staff who are aware of and sensitive to our issues. To some extent this is beginning to happen. There is a movement towards better training in the fiscal services, the Crown Prosecution Service, the police. But it is still some way down the track for this to filter beyond our cities to our towns and islands.

We need to address the culture, not just the legislation. We need to be brave just to go out there and do our jobs, love our kids and get on with life in peace. Understanding of the issues needs to be taken to the level of people. It is always amusing to dwell on the perception of a "gay" lifestyle. For most of us this entails fixing the garage roof or popping into Safeways on the way to collect our partner's kids from school. In actual fact, people who are confronted with the reality of what many LGBT people face or have faced, are often appalled. When asked "How would you like it if ...?" they are moved by their humanity, by

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common decency and by a concern for human rights. We need to reach out with our own stories and to touch this human core. We need to show people through our own lives “We are just people, like you”.

The Parliament also needs data, facts, and research. Those in politics need these so that prejudice - both legally enshrined and cultural - can be challenged. The projects already gathering data and information - such as through the Equality Network, the Beyond Barriers conference - are crucial to change.

Although it is debatable whether a Sewell Motion is the best route for the civil partnership legislation, there is little doubt that we will eventually see the introduction of civil partnership in Scotland as the majority of the Scottish Parliament supports some form of legislation on this. MSPs have been reassured that if the Bill is massacred in the Lords it will be sent back to the Scottish Parliament and the Criminal Justice Bill sets a precedent for this.

Civil partnerships presented a real opportunity for the Scottish Parliament to give out a clear and positive message on its commitment to equality. Instead, one could be forgiven for thinking that the press statements issued by the Minister for Justice had an underlying message of “we don't really want to give them rights, but we have to”. Margaret assured the conference that Liberal Democrat and Labour back bench MSPs have taken this issue up vigorously with Ministers. She believes discrimination is challenged not only by changing legislation but by changing culture and politicians should be aware of the impact of their statements.

The Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, which has just been completed, is not pleasant reading for us, with results showing discriminatory views are more likely to be held against LGBT people and ethnic minorities than women and disabled people. Fortunately, new European legislation is having a very positive influence and has helped to push the LGBT equality agenda forwards.

Margaret made a plea “Don't split up. Fight hands on. Write to the MSPs. And stick together. Acknowledge the differences between the LGBT community and other groups fighting for equality and social justice, but find common cause and work together. Or those who resist equality will pick off individual groups one by one”.

“Let's build a Scotland in the 21st century where everyone has the right to live their life in peace” and finally, she wished the delegates an interesting day and ... an even more interesting night.

Ellen Galford - The Activist's View

Ellen Galford, lesbian writer and coordinator of Edinburgh's Remember When Project, launched the day's discussions with a talk on the value of reclaiming, recording, and celebrating the histories of Scotland's diverse LGBT communities.

She began by conducting an on-the-spot survey of people's geographical "identities"--- urban, small town, or entirely rural--and noted that among the many longstanding myths and stereotypes about LGBT people was the fact that we only existed in cities. "Back in the 1970s , a right-wing journalist named John Junor wrote a piece in one of the right-wing tabloids entitled "There are no gays in Auchtermuchty", implying that we were all merely some kind of decadent urban minority, and nothing to do with "real" people in the heartlands. This was promptly followed by another piece, in a more progressive paper, in which a journalist who actually knew the place wrote something to the effect that X and Y, those nice chaps who ran the antique shop, and Ms. So-and-So who owned another popular local business in the town, would be very surprised to learn that they didn't actually exist..."

She said that the LGBT community was part of a truly global village---in spite of our differences, and the Scottish tendency to exaggerate schisms (urban vs. rural, Rangers vs. Celtic, north vs. south of Princes St. lowland vs. highland, or whatever..) we really did have an enormous amount of common ground, and a shared history to celebrate. Natives and incomers alike, we've all made a massive contribution to enhancing and improving the quality of life in contemporary Scotland---"LGBT Scotland is richly endowed with talent--- I'm not sure if we start out brilliant in the womb, or if we simply become ever more fabulous..."

She then went on to speak about The Remember When Project, which has been created to record and celebrate the histories of Edinburgh's LGBT communities. She described how it first came about-- "Various LGBT activists realized that the city's museums had all sorts of exhibitions honouring the contributions of such local communities as Leith dockers, Asian Scots, Newhaven fishwives, etc., and asked, Well, what about us? What about our contributions? And as anyone who knows the city will confirm, these have been out of all proportion to our numbers--the capital has become a far more interesting and livable place because of us!" She described how the project has been funded and managed, summarized some of the ongoing discussions about what it should involve, and how it currently works---a small group of volunteers recording oral history interviews with people from all age groups and backgrounds across the different communities, the gathering of LGBT memorabilia (badges, banners, photographs, documents, etc.) for preservation by the city's museums as part of Edinburgh's social history archives, and outlined plans for a major exhibition scheduled for late 2005. She stressed the importance of breaking down barriers, such as the "age ghettos".

A key part of the project would be setting up ways for older and younger generations to share and compare their own experiences. For instance, very young LGBT people may be unaware of the dark ages, only a few decades ago, when male homosexual acts were against the law, and when many lesbians felt pressured into marriage.. Meanwhile, older LGBT people with their own lives and homes may not realize that some younger members

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of the community can only go to LGBT events at times of day when they don't need to explain where they are to their parents.

As well as being an exciting and entertaining creative project, the very act of celebrating LGBT history has political importance. The reactionary "mainstream" often conveniently manages to lose or forget the history of marginalized groups... Even if things are vastly better than they once were, "We're still stigmatized, and even if it seems that the love that dare not speak its name now won't shut up, it's important not to be complacent." She emphasized that although Remember When focussed on LGBT people with Edinburgh connections, it was part of a larger set of developments in Scotland and beyond. The project also had links with the Glasgow-based community history project Our Story Scotland, and both groups wanted to find ways to develop the whole area of LGBT history into something that would be Scotland-wide, and bring people together to explore our common ground and make sure that we aren't written out of Scotland's history.

John Wilkes, Director, Equal Opportunities Commission, Scotland - Toward Equal Opportunities

John congratulated Ruth Henry and the Beyond Barriers team for their vision and creativity in organising the conference - an equality milestone.

He presented himself [John Wilkes] as a long-time gay activist and campaigner, fortunate to be Director of the Equal Opportunities Commission in Scotland. He introduced the work of the EOC, the oldest equal opportunities commission in Europe, set up in 1975, to enforce the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act. Its principal remit is in gender equality. The EOC has taken forward some cases for transgender people and for lesbian and gay equality on the basis of the Sex Discrimination Act but is concerned that with no protective legislation and no statutory body to promote LGBT equality, at present, there is little the EOC can do to combat discrimination against LGBT people.

On the legal front, there has been massive progress in the last 20 years: it was only in 1980 that the law criminalising homosexuality was repealed in Scotland but with an age of consent of 21 (the law was changed in England in 1967) and only three years since the age of consent has been equalised to 16.

The pace of change in Scotland now feels both rapid and positive in terms of recognition, legislation, media open-ness and in visibility in general.

The Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive can promote equality through legislation in an extensive range of issues including sexual orientation and gender. The Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee and Executive's Equality Unit have been crucial in ushering forward an equality agenda. There has been legislation on housing and local government which include equality provisions for LGBT people. Legislation on civil partnerships and

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gender recognition are pending - which seemed unthinkable back in 1980 - with further opportunities in the forthcoming Health Bill; and thanks to European legislation, it will soon become illegal for employers to discriminate against or sack people because they are or are perceived to be lesbian or gay.

The Westminster government has decided, partly as a result of these new European directives, to review the statutory equality structures and is likely to replace the current 3 equality commissions on sex, race and disability with a single body. For the first time there will be a statutory institution to proactively support and protect LGBT people. And as this unfolds, the EOC will be working hard over the next couple of years to use its influence and work with others to ensure the best possible outcome and arrangements for Scotland under the new arrangements.

Institutions and public authorities at a more local level are beginning to sit up and take notice: the health service in Scotland is developing an equality strategy which will specifically include the needs of LGBT people - a far cry from the 1980s when the NHS had to be forced to acknowledge the health issues faced by the thousands of gay men who were dying in the AIDS crisis. In many areas even the police are facing up positively to the challenge of supporting and protecting LGBT people. What a contrast between the Manchester Stop the Clause demonstration in the 1980s, when John Anderton, then Manchester Chief Constable described lesbians and gays as "swirling in a cesspit of their own making" (shortly before his daughter came out as a lesbian) and this year's Manchester Mardi Gras, when for the first time lesbian and gay officers were allowed to march in uniform - followed, to huge applause, by lesbian and gay fire and ambulance crews.

It is not a time to be complacent: the Scottish Social Attitudes survey shows that just under half of all people interviewed think that lesbians and gay men are discriminated against "a great deal" or "quite a lot". We know from our own experiences that LGBT people are more likely to experience abuse and violence, more likely to be estranged from families, more likely to suffer bullying in the workplace or school.

It is only in the 20th century that LGBT people have truly started to be recognised and be included in Western society. It is fascinating to observe how invisible our history is. It is almost as if LGBT people were a 20th century invention, like television or the double decaff espresso! On a more sobering note, it is at our peril if we forget that we, like many other minority communities, were systematically exterminated in the concentration camps of the 2nd World War - during many of our parents' lifetimes. The systematic campaign of misinformation and targeted hatred against the Jews in 1930s Germany is a lesson for us; without suggesting that we live in a society anything like Nazi Germany, we should recall how easy it is for a large segment of the population to be manipulated with a campaign of misinformation and fear - as during the debate on the repeal of Section 2A. It is not that the 1 million people who signed the petition to retain Section 2A were intrinsically bad, it is that they didn't know or have experience of LGBT people in their lives. The fact that the

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Parliament stuck to its guns, repealing Section 2A by an overwhelming majority, is something to be remembered and celebrated.

The impact of that public debate is that the current Executive is far more nervous of any issue to do with LGBT equality. The statement given by Scotland's Minister for Justice suggested that equality was not a priority and implied that our relationships and families are second best. It is not that Ministers believe this, but they think it's what they have to say. What we need now in Scotland is the vision and leadership to say things that may not be popular, but are intrinsically right. But ... we will survive (it is always essential to include at least one reference to Gloria Gaynor in a speech!).

Laws and policies are not the only solution. They are critical, but in themselves they cannot change things: it is 30 years since the Sex Discrimination Act and there is still huge gender discrimination. We need commitment. Personal commitment. We know and understand the feeling of being different, the uncertainty and fear of how that may impact on us: how will our family react? what does it mean for our work, or for our school? are we safe where we live? And another feeling that brings everyone to this conference: the sense of injustice.

We know that we are legitimate and valuable human beings, that our sexuality or identity does not make us bad people, that we have so much to contribute, that our relationships are as meaningful and real as anyone else's. Yet we have to justify ourselves. Until our lives are valued, protected and not used against us, then we have not yet achieved equality. Equality must be unconditional, something that those living in the smallest village and the largest city have the right to expect. Being in rural or remote areas is without doubt the hardest if you are different, as anyone who grew up in a village and the countryside knows. Which is why conferences like this are hugely important. Being who you are freely and without fear, wherever you live, is the most important goal and indicator that equality has been achieved. And we can achieve it!

We all have a job to do, to take on the challenge. We can all play a part. We don't all have to stand on platforms, go on demonstrations, storm town halls - though that can be fun! - we can all help change attitudes by doing what we do best: being ourselves. Recognising that we are experts and that we have lots of help and support and lots of potential allies. Our experience of injustice is the driving force that will make things happen, that will drive change, that will make things better for ourselves and for other LGBT people in the future. It is amazing what dedicated people can achieve - look at how far we have come in the last decade. It wouldn't have happened without courageous LGBT people pushing at the gates of prejudice and discrimination, persuading and extending understanding.

The best advice I can offer when deciding what you want to do next is to set yourself goals which seem impossible - look at how far we have come in the last 20 years, in the last 10, in the last three - you may surprise yourself!

The Activists and Campaigners Stand

A Panel of four individuals whose organisations are working towards different aspects of LGBT equality - Ali Jarvis, Stonewall Scotland; Alistair Pringle, NHS Health; Helena Scott, Age Concern; and Kate Joester, Equality Network - presented the work of their organisations and took questions from the participants.

Presenting Stonewall Scotland, Ali Jarvis highlighted that Stonewall was the national organisation for LGBT equality, working across the UK on issues of legal equality and social justice. Stonewall works particularly closely with the Equality Network which does more detailed work on the legal side of campaigning work, while Stonewall focussed more on the post-legislative side of the agenda, in other words, once laws have been passed by Parliament. Stonewall is about changing policy and about changing practice.

Alistair Pringle introduced "Towards A Healthier LGBT Scotland", a 2 year project funded by the Scottish Executive, which is addressing the low awareness and lack of understanding of LGBT health issues within the NHS. Since October, the project has been gathering evidence through a range of channels including previous research reports, working with LGBT youth and auditing the NHS to see what is being done - and not being done - around LGBT issues. Following the launch of the preliminary findings by Susan Deacon, MSP on 17 October, the project would work with 5 NHS services across Scotland on demonstration projects prior to the final report being completed in October 2004.

Helena Scott, Equality Officer from Age Concern, said she was delighted to be part of the conference and that this was a first for Age Concern Scotland. The organisation has a tradition of promoting equality and diversity through one strand of its work, focussing on race and ethnicity; this is now being widened to LGBT issues. Age Concern is now working with Stonewall Scotland on LGBT Health Forum; with the Equality Network on Housing and Care Issues including how LGBT people experience age and aging. It is a major task to ensure that equality policy addresses age and aging and that LGBT communities are aware of the issues, too.

Kate Joester spoke on behalf of the Equality Network, whose focus is on law and policy. She introduced "Your Scotland", a consultation project already well underway, which invites LGBT people to comment on a wide variety of their experiences across a range of issues, including health, hate crime, etc. The data from these consultations informs the Equality Network's campaigning work and as part of this wider research, EN has set up a number of working groups. including the Older People Forum, which addresses the housing needs of older people; the Transgender Group (one of the longest standing groups) looking at issues including legal recognition and discrimination at work; and other groups looking at health and education. A new steering group on Disability is to be established shortly, with the Disability Rights Commission. In short, EN is constantly working on ways to connect LGBT people to policy and methods of consultation; and everyone was invited to sign up to the

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regular e-bulletins!

During the brief question, answer and comment session, the wide range of interests became evident as participants raised concerns about progress in civil partnerships; in the treatment of lesbians by fertility services and clinics; in the impact of anti-discrimination legislation from Europe on employment in the UK; on Scotland's formal links with parallel campaigning bodies across the UK; and on involvement of the LGBT community at local level in campaigning for rights and recognition.

One participant pointed out that there were two sides to the civil partnership coin: currently lack of recognition for same sex partnerships entitles both to claim the (higher) individual benefits of single people including in state pension schemes, etc. Panellists pointed out that with legal recognition come responsibilities and rights. While couples may do better financially as unregistered, at least they have the same choices extended to them as mixed sex couples. And this enables same sex couples to open up a wider discussion about what we, as LGBT families, can offer.

One of the Glasgow Lesbian Mothers Group raised concerns about the treatment of lesbians by fertility services and the very minimal services available in Scotland in relation to England and in particular, London. Alistair Pringle acknowledged that there were many individual poor experiences of treatment of lesbians by the Scottish health services, but that there was also some good practice, both of which would be addressed in "Towards A Healthier LGBT Scotland".

A participant enquired whether the forthcoming European anti-discrimination laws in employment services would impact positively on LGBT people. Ali Jarvis pointed out that while this is good news for those in employment, the new Directive doesn't actually cover the provision of goods and services. Under the new legislation, LGBT people can still be legally be discriminated against if, for example, a hotel refuses a lesbian or gay couple a double room or a restaurant refuses to serve a transsexual. So it is not as extensive as campaigners would wish.

In response to the issue of building contacts and networks with parallel organisations in England, raised by one of the participants, panellists noted that while there are many organisations and networks on race and ethnicity, the LGBT lobby is quite a latecomer. Scotland is in some ways ahead of the game in terms of organisations working constructively together across issues. In terms of work around age and ageing, the approach in England and Scotland to consultation and working together is different, though both are effective. Scotland is ahead in terms of housing and care of older LGBT people, which is simply not being addressed in England to the same extent.

How to involve the local community in consultation and campaigning was raised as an issue. This is very labour intensive but is crucial. Panellists acknowledged this. It is important not to over-professionalise services and organisations need to look at how to

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build capacity, with the people at the top being sensitive to the ways in which people want and are able to respond. There was no reason, either, why all LGBT people should have an opinion on all the issues! Organisations are resourced to work on behalf of the community and to be informed and to lobby. Attracting macro-level funding is often needed in order to stimulate financial support at a more local level. While a community by community approach is important, an overall strategic framework is crucial to success. The NHS and Beyond Barriers are investing in community involvement. They are not about adding, but about mainstreaming services so that these are available equally to all throughout Scotland.

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The Workshops



Challenging Homophobia

Adrienne Hannah, who facilitated the workshop, works with the Family Planning Association and is involved in delivering training on all aspects of sexual health for professionals working with young people.

The workshop took an interactive approach based on working in groups - which included the Pink Cows, Monkees and the What's New Pussycats! The workshop explored the importance of language in dealing with homophobia, looking at definitions of homophobia and heterosexism. It looked at the messages received by young LGBT people in rural areas about themselves and their sexuality from a range of different individuals and communities; and people's responses to those messages and their experiences. Looking at ways of breaking the cycle of oppression, the group came up with some concrete recommendations for challenging homophobia.

Key issues:

- ✳ Homophobia is an irrational fear of homosexual people, according to the dictionary; discrimination against people based on their sexual preference for the same gender. It is based on fear (including of the impact of homosexuality on society and fear of sexuality in general), ignorance, hatred and defensiveness and was felt to be the result of poor social education and a historical habit. Terms associated with homosexuality are used in a derogatory manner, as an insult. This all results in stereotyping, misrepresentation, invisibility; exclusion, physical violence and discrimination in employment, social and legal fields.
- ✳ Heterosexism is understood to be the belief in the superiority of heterosexuality; the presumption that it is normal and natural, better, healthier and morally superior as well as being more socially acceptable. This is reinforced by the use of Mr and Mrs in the media, in magazines and in areas such as club memberships. The imposition of a single kind of sexuality on society results in the glass ceiling for LGBT people, for example, the lack of partnership laws for LGBT people in committed relationships.
- ✳ In exploring the messages that young LGBT people in rural areas get about themselves from family, carers, schools, teachers, faith groups, tv and films, the law, friends, newspapers and magazines, there was a strong sense of stereotyping; and

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bullying was common. Young people felt alone, isolated, inadequate, confused, unsupported, guilty, left out, suicidal, and usually determined to escape.

- ✳ The normal response to these negative feelings is denial: rejecting help, withdrawing, internalising feelings, pretending or trying to be straight, self-harm, alcohol or drug use. Some find the internal resources to try to join up with like-minded people.
- ✳ All this leads to feelings of being different - "no one else is like me" - special, invisible, worried about "how others will see me", a sinner, negative, unnatural, undesirable, isolated, confused about gender. And with a real need to meet others.
- ✳ It is crucial to break the cycle of oppression. Some of the means of doing this include: making sure young people and others have access to forums; including sexual preference in equalities policy; publicising acceptance of LGBT; mainstreaming - "gay" should be included in the school curriculum, with positive role models; educating; challenging; personally listening; counselling and signposting.

Some strong messages came out of the workshop about challenging homophobia:

- ✳ Be sensitive to language - it is the medium through which homophobia is expressed and perpetrated
- ✳ Promote positive sexual language
- ✳ Include the "B" in LGBT (more resources and information needed)
- ✳ Everyone can and should challenge homophobia, including internalised homophobia
- ✳ Challenge all prejudice
- ✳ Celebrate all forms of sexuality

LGBT Health

The workshop was led by Alistair Pringle, NHS Scotland, who is currently coordinating the two year health initiative on LGBT needs.

The workshop aimed to explore the full range of LGBT health issues, including the contexts in which these develop and available health services. The workshop, which was based on informal group work, included a presentation offering some startling facts and statistics on LGBT health and summing up some of the key influencers in LGBT health such as social factors and attitudes of NHS staff. It also outlined the Scottish Executive funded project to examine the health and well-being needs of Scotland's LGBT population. The two year project will gather together evidence, run demonstration activities, influence policy, provide training and carry out further research and its findings will be integrated into the

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NHS's evolving Diversity and Equality strategy. In a recent White Paper for health "Partnership for Change", the Minister for Health committed to "extend the principles set out in Fair for all Across the NHS to ensure that our health services recognise and respond sensitively to the individual needs, backgrounds and circumstances of people's lives".

Key points from the health workshop participants:

- ✦ Most issues which impact on LGBT people's health are either significantly affected by or a direct consequence of homophobia, heterosexism and social exclusion. There are major factors in LGBT well being in all areas of life including relationships, schools or working environment, general identity and the political arena.
- ✦ There are specific issues for LGBT people in relation to awareness of and provision of health services; access to treatment, including alternative treatment; poor services for Transgender people in particular; poor mental health or addictive behaviour levels in the LGBT community, including alcohol, smoking and drug use; risk taking behaviour; attitudes of health professionals; the stress of coming out to health services, where there can be poor understanding of issues or homophobia; low self esteem based on hiding identity from early age; and the stigma of using specialised LGBT health services.
- ✦ Well-being: stress and low self-esteem based on internalised homophobia are common; bullying in schools may lead to poor confidence and isolation; emotional patterns are set at an early age.
- ✦ Relationships: sexuality impacts on relationships with parents, friends, children, neighbours and the church and may result in being made homeless, losing family, friends or even children; feeling unsafe; being rejected or depending on a bar/club environment for social support.
- ✦ Identity: the importance of geographical location to the challenge of exploring gender or going against the stereotypical image; safety at home and on the streets; places where LGBT people can socialise or have sex; where Transsexuals can get access to support as well as to clothing and hair styling; sensationalist focus on homophobia in the media, which is strongly heterosexist and ageist, too.
- ✦ Work: visibility versus invisibility and choosing to be hidden; discourse versus confidentiality; relationships with colleagues - and the stress, isolation, and inability to express yourself if you feel safer not coming out; pressure on career choices (which impact on childcare, too);
- ✦ Politics: legislation and a support infrastructure are essential.

Transgender: from Tokenism to Inclusion

The workshops were facilitated by Nick Laird, Community Development Officer with Beyond Barriers and the LGBT Health Inclusion Project.

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The Transgender workshops looked at a range of issues through group and individual work: the importance of names to identity, including gender identity; the labels associated with the umbrella term 'transgender'; personal experiences of gender including messages received about gender identity throughout participants' lives and how these messages affect all people in a community; and exploring issues of inclusiveness within the context of the LGBT community. Participants discussed their views and experiences of their own gender, and of transgender issues, through a creative workshop process, including how, as individuals and organisations, we can create more inclusive LGBT communities. The workshops concluded with a discussion about specific transgender issues in rural areas. A good balance of genders, including transgender people, joined the workshops and contributed a diverse range of experiences and some very moving testimonies to the feedback sessions. The following points from the Transgender Workshops summarise the key issues about rural areas:

- ✦ The need for peer support: it was clear from the workshops that trans people often feel extremely isolated and constrained by transphobia, which seems to be even worse in rural areas. Peer support was seen as the best way to relieve the isolation experienced by some trans people. Although there are some peer support groups in Scotland they have no money and are therefore difficult to develop and sustain. It was also felt that it would be beneficial to have a network of support groups throughout Scotland, as any current support is focused on Glasgow and Edinburgh.
- ✦ Access to treatment: there was some discussion about access to treatment (hormones, surgery, counselling) for trans people and it was clear that this was very dependant on what part of Scotland people live in. However, even in Glasgow, where there is a very good Gender Identity Clinic, there are still problems trying to access surgery (particularly good chest surgery).
- ✦ People from the Highlands and Islands having to travel to Glasgow for treatment : this discussion followed on from talking about access to treatment and highlighted the additional difficulties people in rural areas experience trying to access treatment. It was felt that the best solution to this would be a managed clinical network in Scotland, as this would ensure equal treatment for all transsexual people regardless of which part of Scotland they came from.

Have Your Say! Workshop for young LGBT people

The workshop was run by LGBT Youth Scotland and Dumfries Youth Enquiry service as part of a larger project called "Have Your Say" which works to enable young LGBT people to express their opinions both individually and collectively to the whole of Scotland in the hope that their lives and experiences will be acknowledged and celebrated; and that their views will be listened to in the development of national policy. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people were all represented in the group of 7.

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Have your Say! was a workshop for LGBT people under 26. It was designed to give young people the chance to spend time with people their own age, and participate in a creative, interactive and youth focussed alternative to the other workshops which were running at the conference. The workshop aimed to look at the issues which affect young LGBT people from rural and remote areas, to improve networking, develop partnership working and share skills & practice across the network of LGBT youth group leaders from across the country.

The sessions focussed on interactive group work, looking at a range of issues and taking as a starting point how the participants felt about being LGBT in their home towns. On the broad theme of being LGBT in rural areas, the workshop group created a large banner in collage, which decorated the main conference hall (with very positive feedback!) with images which they felt in some way represented their feelings or experiences. Words or phrases drew out main themes. As well as being a lot of fun to produce, the process enabled participants to objectify their issues via a creative medium, rather than having to share and own personal issues which may have been difficult to talk discuss in a group of strangers. It also allowed individuals to develop their creative skills and enabled them to bond as a group as they worked together to create a joint project.

The workshop created an excellent opportunity to bring both young people and leaders of LGBT youth together in order to strengthen the network and build the capacity of the LGBT youth sector. Having a youth event at a mixed age conference allowed young people to participate at their own level, as well as allowing them the option to take part in more 'adult' workshops. It also broke down some of the barriers between the different generations of LGBT people. In addition, it provided LGBT Youth Scotland and Beyond Barriers with an insight into the lives of LGBT young people from rural areas, which can then be fed into local and National planning and decision making.

Key issues

Things that are good for young people about individual local areas:

- Good pubs / clubs / meeting places ... but there are not enough options

- Good bus services

- Gay groups - may be the only facility

Things that are bad for young people about local areas

- Not enough facilities

- Lack of resources

- Nothing for LGBT needs

- Local agencies may be against LGBT projects

- Lack of women-only space

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Recommendations:

- * Better outreach services
- * More facilities for LGBT people
- * More funding for existing LGBT services and resources
- * Provision of space for LGBT young people
- * A gay night club!
- * Better information for LGBT young people to increase awareness of services and facilities

Ageing and Ageism: the situation facing older LGBT people

The workshop was facilitated by Helena Scott, Equalities Policy Officer with Age Concern Scotland, who is responsible for developing the equalities and diversity programme and for mainstreaming equalities within the organisation.

The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to share their experiences of ageing and age-related discrimination with LGBT communities. It aimed to explore ways in which services could be created or developed to meet the needs of older LGBT people.

The workshop explored who Scotland's older people are and what is meant by equality and diversity. Age Concern Scotland was presented: its equalities statement, agreed in 2001, includes sexual orientation. Age Concern Scotland and the Equality Network facilitated setting up the Forum for Older LGBT people, and with LGBT organisations there is now some means for disseminating information and discussing policy issues relating to older LGBT people in Scotland.

Age Concern England hosted the first conference on older LGB people's needs "Opening Doors" in 2002.

Key Issues

- * **Socialising:** the importance of socialising for older LGBT people was seen as significant, and possibly for gay older men this was more difficult than it was for lesbian older women. Older gay men are more likely to socialise when there is a focus or activity, eg a walking club or badminton club. Granite Sisters, based in Aberdeen started out as a small group meeting in private houses but now has members across Scotland and some in the USA; the oldest member is 87 years old.

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- ✳ What is an older person? It was suggested that in some LGBT communities the term 'older person' became relevant at around the age of 40 years. The Highlands Gay Men's Club has membership of people between 35 years and 70 years of age.
- ✳ Meeting places: gay pubs and clubs were perceived as too commercial and too youth orientated. As older people are too scared to 'come out' this was symptomatic of there not being many older LGBT groups, particularly in Scotland. There was reference to LGBT communities, but in rural areas it was about LGBT people living in rural communities and the need to recognise that whereas LGBT people may acquire invisibility in urban areas, safety in numbers and so on, this was not the case in rural areas.
- ✳ Housing: there was concern that older lesbians who have lived their lives mainly with women might end up in mixed sex older people's homes. Helena Scott described the proposed research project on housing and community care for older LGBT people initiated by the Older LGBT Forum and taken forward by the Equality Network and Age Concern Scotland.

Recommendations:

- ✳ Switchboard networks should have expertise on older LGBT people's needs and advertise this service widely
- ✳ Age Concern Scotland should run courses on older LGBT issues. For example, could the Older LGBT Forum which meets in Glasgow/ Edinburgh meet in other areas of Scotland. Could there be an equivalent of LGBT Youth Scotland for Older LGBT people?
- ✳ Age Concern Scotland should introduce links to other LGBT sites on their own website (advice would need to be sought as to which sites would be appropriate).
- ✳ Encouraging LGBT organisations in Scotland to take age into account was an ongoing strategy sought by Age Concern Scotland. The Beyond Barriers conference was one example of how age could be included. Age Concern Scotland should consider hosting a conference on older LGBT people in Scotland: in view of the housing and community care research, this might be a good time to hold such an event.

LGBT Law Reform

Kate Joester - member of the core group of the Equality Network and Community Consultation Worker on the Your Scotland Project, connecting LGBT people with the law and policy making process - and Doogie Hothersall, Equality Network, led the workshop.

The workshop looked at current advances in the law affecting LGBT people, and how we can campaign effectively as a community to achieve change. It explored who participants felt the opponents of LGBT law reform are and the arguments against equality; who the

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allies are and what the counter-arguments are; and how to campaign for change.

- ✦ Key opponents were seen as: some churches, politicians, tabloid press, certain rich individuals (eg Brian Souter) and the general public, through a lack of understanding of the issues. Some local authorities were felt to be unhelpful in some cases.
- ✦ Key allies were felt to be: supportive religious groups, such as Christians for an Inclusive Scotland, as well as individuals within all religious groups; family law groups; some politicians; and some parts of the media, notably the BBC.
- ✦ Key arguments against LGBT law reform included: biblical arguments against LGBT people in general (there are some key phrases that recur); the notion that civil partnership undermines marriage; that LGBT people are a threat to children or are unfit as carers or parents; that LGBT people are a minority therefore not a priority; ignorance of the actual level of inequality
- ✦ Counter arguments to LGBT law reform include:
 - Simple equality: the same rights other people already have.
 - Separate religion from politics
 - “Live and let live”.
 - There is a diversity of interpretation of the bible
 - A moral and social framework accessible to everyone is needed
 - Families come in all shapes and sizes
 - LGBT relationships have always existed
 - Heterosexual marriage is far from perfect - ask family lawyers!
 - Society is changing, and will change no matter what the law does or doesn't say.
 - Research shows LGBT people are excellent parents
 - Tell the truth about the situation and what it means for LGBT people and our families.
- ✦ How to campaign for change:
 - Find common cause with other equality organisations
 - Raise awareness
 - Use the media (carefully) to tell real stories about what legal change would mean for LGBT people
 - Support those who choose to speak publicly.
 - Tell our own stories to friends and colleagues
 - Live our lives without apology
 - Network amongst ourselves and with allies

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- Manage differences of opinion within LGBT communities while retaining the ability to campaign strongly
- Encourage open-mindedness in children
- Respond to government consultations
- Write to MSPs, MPs, committees
- Make legislation work after it is enacted (encourage remote reporting in hate crimes, diversity training)
- Move quickly!

As a result of the morning workshop, some people decided to start a networking/campaigning group on civil partnership, which is now active via email.

Community Planning

The workshop was led by Suzie Parker, a part-time community consultant to voluntary sector organisations.

Community Planning was given a statutory framework in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. The Act gave statutory recognition to community bodies, both formal and informal, in the community planning process. This is a real opportunity for LGBT people and groups. The first part of the Community Planning workshop looked at what community planning actually is; when it started, how it works, why individuals and/or groups should become involved ... and how. The workshop then explored how to develop an LGBT vision of community, the barriers to achieving that vision and the process.

Community Planning is led by Local Authorities bringing community, voluntary, and private sector agencies together to develop and implement a shared vision. Key factors are community leadership and involvement, partnership working and strategic vision. These lead through the planning process to the development of a joint strategy or "Community Plan". So, the effective engagement of communities is at the heart of community planning and effective planning ensures that work in areas like community regeneration, health improvement and sustainable development will be informed by inclusiveness, disability and equality agendas.

Individuals and groups can find out what is happening in their area and get involved by contacting either the Chief Executive's Department of their local Council or their local Council for Voluntary Services, Citizens Advice Bureau, Health Board or Enterprise Agency.

There are a number of ways to influence community planning:

- * Consultation: consult community groups or communities of interest so that their needs are represented, for example through open days or questionnaires. This

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includes asking non LGBT communities about their views on LGBT issues. In rural areas, tactics can include use of mobile groups and consultations and the internet, for example through a rural gateway website. Then feed the results of consultation to lead agencies and partners.

- ✳ Training: get training and support for local LGBT groups in order to build local capacity in areas such as consultation, submitting funding applications, project planning & website development.
- ✳ Research: carry out needs assessments: identify who makes up the community; what the needs are; what resources/services already exist; what partnerships and links exist; explore new possibilities for partnerships and links;
- ✳ Have fun: create a fun element to ensure maximum involvement; celebrate successes with all partners; ensure media coverage through regular press releases.
- ✳ Plan: create a local LGBT vision & action plan

Some of the barriers LGBT people might experience in developing an action plan include:

- ✳ differences between each local authority; lack of diversity training in statutory agencies; lack of time, cost of travel, geography of area, meeting space (choice of space, safety of space, cost of space); lack of funding, visibility or community activists; attitudes, for example, of the church, local community etc; fear; getting information out.

Key factors for success include:

- ✳ sustainability; communicate in a language everyone can understand; ensure that the intent amongst statutory authorities and agencies is genuine; process and consultations must be credible.
- ✳ ensuring that: all partners have a discrimination and diversity policy; there is transparency in the process of building networks and partnerships; resources are used to engage the community at a grass roots level; and create access by breaking down barriers including transport, language used and the cost of attending planning sessions.

Breaking Barriers: valuing yourself and others

The workshop was facilitated by David Bingham, Gay Men's Development Worker for Ayrshire and Arran at PHACE Scotland.

Breaking Barriers: valuing yourself and others aimed to explore the factors that have an

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impact on self-esteem, through a series of exercises enabling the participants to focus on their own self worth, what boosts self esteem and what destroys it.

Key points that came up from the workshop included:

The difficulty of being self-complimentary ! Most of the time the LGBT community are stopped or discouraged from saying or doing anything positive and over time this has a huge impact on self-esteem. The workshop helped participants to focus on finding ways of complimenting themselves.

Where there are examples of experiences which might have a positive impact on LGBT people's lives, conversely, we are likely to find evidence of the difficulties that are faced by LGBT people. For example, while parenting of children had an incredibly positive impact on individual's lives this is likely to be offset by a lack of support received from the education department when children encounter homophobia at school; coming out can result in the building up of a support network, leading to a better quality of life. This is essential in sustaining LGBT people against abuse encountered on regular basis.

The LGBT wish list for valuing self and others includes:

- * equality
- * respect
- * promotion
- * acceptance (the word acceptance was used in reference to being able to talk freely about same sex relationships in the same way that their colleagues talk about their partners of the opposite sex. It is important for LGBT people to be able to find support from work colleagues when a relationship ends; when this is not possible, LGBT people feel that their relationships are not valid).

Most of this wish list is already in place for most heterosexual people. But there is a long way to go for LGBT people. More specifically, for those that are isolated there is very little in the way of equality and respect and in most cases very little or no support system. This can only have a negative impact on self- worth.

Recommendation:

- * One way of tackling isolation would be by setting up more local support. Realistically this can only happen if local services actively offer their support and recognise that support is needed. We have to work together to make this happen and seek the assistance of those who are confident in asking for advice and support.

Arts and Crafts at the LGBT conference



mosaic by conference participants

The arts and crafts space at the LGBT conference was occupied from early morning to late evening and became something of a drop in centre, chat room, respite haven, relaxing and calming space, a place for regenerating a safe space to talk, to be and to be creative ... in the words of those who used the space. The space was coordinated and facilitated by Su Inman, teacher, artist and potter.

An "art room" full of boxes of materials, from coloured ceramic tiles and glitter glue to bright paper, the Conservatory, a lovely light space, glassed on 3 sides overlooking the river and flooded with natural light became a central meeting point of the conference - for all ages, genders and sexualities!

Over the weekend there were 13 small individual mosaics completed, a pair of gloves mosaiced, several pairs of hands & several lanterns decorated. The large mosaic was almost completed; some worked on it diligently, others laid a few pieces and some people popped in to lay just one piece because they wanted to be part of the group creation.

The Mosaic is now complete & will be hung in the Beyond Barriers office.

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Planning Futures

The final plenary session was introduced by Suzie Parker, part-time community consultant to voluntary sector organisations.

Conference delegates went into four groups, representing North, South, East and West of Scotland, to identify gaps and need, to share information and skills and to start to think about how they could develop and promote positive change in their regions. This workshop was a preliminary step towards the Regional Meeting to be held in spring 2004, which will aim to:

- ✦ develop regional champions for LGBT issues in each of the geographical areas of Scotland
- ✦ provide Beyond Barriers with good working regional partners, through whom information can flow and action be taken

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Key Recommendations of the Conference



- ✦ **Information.** Coordinate efforts to produce and circulate information to all target groups. Often services or groups exist, but potential users are unaware of them. Isolation is a crucial issue for LGBT people in rural Scotland and although efforts, particularly with website, email groups and existing publications have been a big improvement, there is a long way to go.
- ✦ **Services.** Service and support providers in rural areas should explicitly include LGBT people in the development of their strategies. "Open to all" strategies, particularly those employed by public services are ineffective in dealing with LGBT issues as these communities are accustomed to being overlooked, ignored, misunderstood or misrepresented, often even more than their urban equivalents. The mainstreaming of services to LGBT people is desirable but requires genuine hard work on the part of providers to ensure they are aware of the issues at a corporate and individual level and that those within organisations are trained to provide appropriate services in an appropriate way.
- ✦ **Investment.** Local Councils, the Scottish Executive and other major revenue providers should increase investment to support the development and promotion of good practice within services and the mainstreaming of services to LGBT people. There has been a real step change in awareness by government as well as by mainstream services of the needs of the LGBT community in recent years. While being inclusive costs nothing, training, producing information, setting up networks and creating new images have a price tag. Funding, particularly through the Scottish Executive and the Health Boards have already made a real difference in enabling groups to develop and promote good practice. However, in rural areas, many service providers fall far behind the cities in addressing need.
- ✦ **Training.** Public and statutory services and voluntary organisations including those within the LGBT community should identify where training in LGBT awareness is needed - and then provide it. The goodwill of individuals within organisations or the good intentions embodied within an equality or diversity strategy is inadequate to ensure that those in need are dealt with sensitively. National and local government should use their powers to promote the need for training and ensure it is provided.
- ✦ **Positive Messages.** All organisations in a position to promote positive images of LGBT people and their lives - from government to LGBT lobby organisations - should take this on as a way of challenging homophobia and promoting equality. Discrimination stems from widespread misunderstanding, reinforced by misrepresentation. Organisations can actively engage the media and partners within their professional networks, while individuals can share their personal experiences and the impact of

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these within their family, social and professional circuits. Access to positive images by those in the LGBT community, especially those in marginalised groups or areas, and sensitivity to language around LGBT issues, are essential to providing the bedrock for a healthier LGBT Scotland.

- ✳ Diversity. Work together and respond to all the diversity in society, not just our own. We must work together across communities, organisations and interest groups, including ethnic, cultural and religious groups, as well as divides of age, ability and health. As well as changing legislation, together, we need to make a real impact on the environment in which we live and work and to strive for an equitable society by supporting one another. National policy, grass roots work and individual commitment should be part and parcel of the same effort.

Key steps for

LGBT people in rural areas

- ✳ Find the support to come out and make demands of the statutory and voluntary service providers and support others to do the same.
- ✳ Be courageous - you are not the only one! Help make a difference and have fun by joining a group, volunteering or making contact with other LGBT people.
- ✳ Engage with Scottish politics! Write to MPs, MSPs and Councillors to express support for LGBT equality.

LGBT and voluntary organisations

- ✳ Recognise and celebrate LGBT diversity and help to make all parts of our community, of all ages, races, faiths and abilities, welcome
- ✳ Switchboard networks should have expertise on all aspects of LGBT people's needs - for example older LGBT people - and advertise this services widely to respective communities
- ✳ Continue to provide the support to all parts of the community to come out.

the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive

- ✳ Recognise that LGBT equality is not "marginal". Quite the reverse, equality is a priority, being the fundamental basis on which our society must be built in Scotland and the basis on which services should be provided, in health, in education, in welfare. The Scottish government must give out a clear signal that equality is one of the fundamental principles upon which the future nation must be built.

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- ✳ Implement full civil partnership legislation and end discrimination over issues such as pensions, housing, next of kin decision, fostering and adoption.
- ✳ Ensure the basic human rights of transsexual people by recognising them in law in their true gender and by providing their legal protection for their access to goods and services and in the workplace.
- ✳ Collect and monitor data on sexual orientation so that plans for future provision of services can meet LGBT needs in all areas of Scotland

Local government

- ✳ Recognise and use existing powers in areas such as tenancy to provide equal housing rights for LGBT partners
- ✳ Seek existing good practice wherever it exists, including cities, and adapt it to meet local need
- ✳ Welcome LGBT groups into the community planning process
- ✳ Support the infrastructure needs of LGBT people, such as social spaces, the provision of transport and mobile libraries which can be crucial to young and old alike
- ✳ Monitor and promote services for their LGBT-friendliness to enable people to access services equally and throughout Scotland

Statutory services

- ✳ Recognise services' responsibility to promote equality of opportunity and be proactive in implementing equal opportunities and diversity policies, e.g. through outreach services
- ✳ Train and educate staff to be LGBT aware and inclusive
- ✳ Consult LGBT people and build on successful models to develop targeted services

Age Concern

- ✳ Courses on older LGBT issues could be organised to raise awareness. The Older LGBT Forum which meets in Glasgow/ Edinburgh could consider meeting in other areas of Scotland and consideration should be given to creating an older persons' equivalent of LGBT Youth Scotland.
- ✳ Links to other LGBT sites should be introduced on the Age Concern website.
- ✳ A conference should be hosted on older LGBT people in Scotland: in view of the housing and community care research, this might be a good time to hold such an event.

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Resources



Many of the contributors to the Linking Scotland Planning Futures conference have their own websites with information on lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and rural issues and/or links with other relevant Internet resources:

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Many of the contributors to the Linking Scotland Planning Futures conference have their own websites with information on lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and rural issues and/or links with other relevant Internet resources:

Equal Opportunities Commission

St Stephens House
279 Bath Street
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scotland@eoc.org.uk
www.eoc.org.uk

Stonewall Youth

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Please refer to the Beyond Barriers website, research section for LGBT studies, reports and articles.

Beyond Barriers is a Scotland wide project which aims to challenge discrimination and prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Through the provision of information, training, research and capacity building, we hope to offer LGBT people, and others, the tools to challenge homophobia and other forms of discrimination in the workplace, in education, in their local communities and nationally.

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