

COME OUT FOR TRANS EQUALITY: HOW YOUR GROUP CAN TAKE ACTION FOR GENDER RECOGNITION ACT REFORM

Activities to introduce the campaign to LGBT youth and community groups.

The government is planning to reform the Gender Recognition Act and the voices of LGBT groups need to be heard in support of trans rights. Taking part in the campaign for reform is an opportunity for both trans people and their friends to speak out with power and passion, countering the current negative media climate. A reform like this takes place only once a generation – if we succeed, it could have a huge positive impact on trans people’s lives and show that the UK is still making progress on LGBT equality.

Many of these issues will be personal for young LGBT people. The progress of the Gender Recognition Act reform may be slow, months or even years, and we may not get all the positive changes that we want. Therefore, we must manage expectations, and ensure that any young people involved understand the process and how any contribution they make to the consultation will be used.

This resource includes activities to provide information, prompt discussion and generate action. Use the icons to help you choose which activities to use. Please adapt these activities however best suits your group.



INFORMATION:
Find out about the Gender Recognition Act.



DISCUSSION:
What needs reforming and why reform matters.



ACTION: Take part in or plan a campaign action on trans equality.



SETTING THE SCENE

Fourteen years is a long time – what were you doing 14 years ago? Were you a baby, in school, or not even born yet?

Fourteen years ago: YouTube didn’t exist; the first civil partnerships hadn’t happened and no one was even talking about same-sex marriage;

Fourteen years ago: Tony Blair was Prime Minister in the UK, there were only five Harry Potter books. *Add in any other facts relevant to your group.*

Fourteen years ago: the UK government passed the Gender Recognition Act – the last time there were specific laws made about how trans people could get legal recognition for their gender identity: At the time, this was ground-breaking.

IT’S NOW OUT-OF-DATE, AND THIS YEAR WE HAVE THE CHANCE TO CHANGE IT.



TRANS VOICES

Earlier this year, some trans and non-binary people produced these short films about their lives. Watch two or three of these films as a group. *You can find the films and transcripts to read if you can’t show the films at www.stonewall.org.uk/trans*

TALK ABOUT:

What problems do the people in the films talk about experiencing?

What have they said that inspires or interests you?

What in the films relates to your own life or the lives of people you know?



GENDER RECOGNITION ACT QUIZ

Read out these statements as a true/false quiz. You could ask people to move to one side of the room if they think a statement is true, and the other if it is false.

The current process for a trans person to get their gender identity legally recognised requires them to be diagnosed with 'gender dysphoria', which is classified as a mental illness. Getting this diagnosis involves a series of medical assessments and interviews with psychiatrists. *(TRUE)*

A gender recognition panel has the power to approve, or deny, an application for a gender recognition certificate. It means that trans people cannot decide their own personal identity. *(TRUE - the panel do not even meet the person applying)*

You must be 16 years old or over to apply for a gender recognition certificate under the current law. *(FALSE – it is currently 18 years or over)*

You need a gender recognition certificate to change the gender marked on your passport. *(FALSE – you can change this without a gender recognition certificate. A gender recognition certificate enables you to change your birth certificate)*

People who are non-binary aren't covered at all under the current law. *(TRUE)*

The current process requires a trans person to live 'in role' in their 'acquired gender' for two years and to pay an application fee. *(TRUE)*

In other countries, laws have already changed to enable trans people to legally determine their own gender identity. *(TRUE – this is now the case in Argentina, Ireland, Malta and Norway)*

Write up the issues with the current law on a flip chart. Add others that the group highlight.

Long, medicalised process

Non-binary people not included

Has to be approved by a panel you've never met

Have to be 18 or over to apply for a gender recognition certificate.



LAW-CHANGERS

What problems can you spot in the current law?

What issues do trans people face that wouldn't be covered by the reform of this law? (Eg media representation, access to the NHS).

What could a new law do better?

IMAGINE YOU CAN PRESENT YOUR CASE TO THE GOVERNMENT TO CHANGE THE LAW.

In small groups, agree the top three things your group would change – and why this matters to you. (For example, if you think the age limit should be lowered, say how you think that would make people's lives better). Write your changes on individual post-it notes or display in another creative way.

Groups can present their top three changes and reasons why to the whole group, or the group organiser can summarise the notes, or the notes can be displayed for people to read. It may be helpful to share Stonewall's top three changes:

Enable trans people to declare their own gender through signing a legally binding statement, without needing medical evidence

Introduce the same process for 16 and 17 year olds, and access to recognition for under-16s with parental consent

Include non-binary recognition



HAVE YOUR SAY

The government is asking you to have your say about changing the law. Anyone – trans or not – can respond to a government consultation or ask their MP to take action for them. But it's especially important that trans voices are heard.

Every reply to the government consultation will be read and analysed. These will all be confidential: no one has to know how you've responded and your reply won't be published. Recommendations will be made about how the law should be changed, and then MPs in parliament will have to agree them.

We want to see lots of positive responses to the consultation, so that our voices are not drowned out by responses from people opposed to trans rights. You don't have to know everything about the law, you just have to know why change matters to you.

There is an easy-to-use form on www.stonewall.org.uk/gra where people can submit responses. **The consultation will be open until 19 October 2018.**

You could choose a couple of people to submit a response, based on the discussion, on behalf of the group – or you could borrow some laptops so each group or individual can make their own response. You might want to print out the questions for everyone and collect in the completed forms. It doesn't matter how you respond – just make sure you do!



TELL OTHERS

Not enough people know that this consultation is happening – how can your group let people know that you have responded and encourage others to do the same?

Share ideas and choose one or two to do as a group.

Use this list for inspiration: write an article for a newsletter or website, give a talk to another group, create a poster or banner, make a film, share on social media, tell a friend, put up posters, give out stickers, email your MP. You will have loads more ideas!

There are Stonewall resources, including posters, stickers and a guide for contacting your MP at www.stonewall.org.uk/gra



CAMPAIGNING WORKS!

In the UK and around the world, we have a history of successfully speaking out for LGBT rights. From same-sex marriage to parenting rights to making discrimination against LGBT people illegal, people like us have made history and we're still doing so.

Look for films or articles about recent campaign successes to share. For example, Ireland or New Zealand's same-sex marriage campaigns.



SHARE YOUR SUCCESS

Please tell us at Stonewall about what you do – we'd love to see any pictures and hear about your campaigning! Stay in touch with campaigns@stonewall.org.uk or [@StonewallUK](https://twitter.com/StonewallUK) on Twitter.

VISION FOR CHANGE: *Reforming the Gender Recognition Act is really important – it can influence how the whole of society understands trans people's identities. But it's just one way in which we can stand up for trans equality. Read Stonewall's full action plan here: www.stonewall.org.uk/visionforchange*
