

Press release: New Government Action Plan Pledges to Improve the Lives of LGBT People

- action plan responds to the largest national survey of LGBT people in the world
- government to end conversion therapy as survey shows 2% of respondents have undergone conversion therapy, and a further 5% have been offered it
- plan includes over 70 commitments, including appointing a national adviser to reduce inequality for LGBT people
- government pledges £4.5million of funding to deliver the plan

The Government will eradicate the abhorrent practice of conversion therapy in the UK as part of a new 75-point action plan, published today (Tuesday 3 July), to tackle discrimination and improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in the UK.

The LGBT Action Plan will be published alongside the results of the largest [national survey of LGBT people](#) ever undertaken. The survey, which had over 108,000 respondents, shows LGBT people are experiencing prejudice on a daily basis.

More than two in three of those who participated in the survey said they avoided holding hands with a same-sex partner in public for fear of a negative reaction, while 23% said people at work had reacted negatively to them being LGBT and over half of those who accessed or tried to access mental health services said they had to wait too long.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

We can be proud that the UK is a world leader in advancing LGBT rights, but the overwhelming response to our survey has shone a light on the many areas where we can improve the lives of LGBT people.

was struck by just how many respondents said they cannot be open about their sexual orientation or avoid holding hands with their partner in public for fear of a negative reaction. No one should ever have to hide who they are or who they love.

This LGBT action plan will set out concrete steps to deliver real

and lasting change across society, from health and education to tackling discrimination and addressing the burning injustices that LGBT people face.

The action plan – announced today in response to the survey results – will include a £4.5m fund to address inequality and support the delivery of actions in the plan in areas including health, education, personal safety and the workplace. It says the Government will, among other actions:

- bring forward proposals to eradicate conversion therapy, as 2% of respondents had undergone and 5% had been offered conversion therapy. We will consider all legislative and non-legislative options to prohibit promoting, offering or conducting conversion therapy
- appoint a national LGBT health adviser, as one in five trans respondents said that their specific needs had been ignored or not taken into account. The adviser will focus on reducing the health inequalities that LGBT people face, and ways to improve the care LGBT people receive when accessing the NHS and public health services
- work with the police to improve the response to LGBT hate incidents, as two in five respondents had experienced them, with more than nine in 10 of the most serious incidents going unreported. A refreshed Hate Crime Action Plan will include measures to improve the awareness and skills of police officers and staff to respond to the needs of hate crime victims – including LGBT victims
- support LGBT students and teachers to improve diversity and tolerance in educational settings, as 19% of respondents had experienced verbal harassment, insults or other hurtful comments in education. We will invest in programmes that tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools, and ensure that the new subjects of Relationships Education, and Relationships and Sex Education will support all pupils, whatever their developing sexual orientation or gender identity.

Minister for Women and Equalities Penny Mordaunt said:

Everyone in this country should feel safe and happy to be who they are, and to love who they love, without judgement or fear.

I am incredibly proud of the UK's global leadership on LGBT equality and the fact that this is the largest survey of its kind, but many of the results are very disturbing.

It's unacceptable that people feel they cannot hold hands with their partner in public, and that they are unable to walk down the

street without fear of abuse. It is also deeply worrying that LGBT people experience difficulty accessing public services such as healthcare, and that so many are being offered the abhorrent practise of conversion therapy.

This Government has done much to promote a diverse, tolerant society and supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people – but it is clear we have more to do.

Our Action Plan is a step towards everyone – regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics – being able to live safe, happy and healthy lives where they can be themselves without fear of discrimination. It will mark a culture change to allow LGBT people to feel respected at every level of society.

The ground-breaking new plan will tackle some of the biggest issues facing LGBT people of different ages in the UK today, including: understanding the scale of LGBT abuse online; improving mental healthcare for LGBT people with a focus on suicide prevention; combating homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools, and increasing awareness of the services available for LGBT victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse.

Ruth Hunt, Chief Executive of Stonewall, said:

These findings reflect what many LGBT people already know, that there's still a long way to go until we reach full equality.

The simple act of holding hands is something all same-sex couples do with a high degree of caution. Attitudes have changed but there are still pockets of society where we're far from safe.

We're really pleased that the Government is listening to the thousands upon thousands of LGBT people who responded to this survey and are investing funds in areas where LGBT people face some of the harsher inequalities, such as health care.

We now need people in all of Britain's communities to also come out for LGBT equality and to stand up against the hate and abuse we face daily. Our recent research has shown that LGBT people who are also discriminated against due to their faith, race or disability experience alarming levels of abuse, from across all sectors of society, including within LGBT communities. We all have a part to play in creating a society where every lesbian, gay, bi and trans person is accepted without exception.

In addition to dealing with the issues facing LGBT people in the UK, the action plan has an international element to help defend the rights of LGBT people globally. The UK continues to be recognised as one of the best countries in Europe for LGBT rights by the International Lesbian, Gay

Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) Europe, and the action plan will further cement that reputation. The Government has promised to deliver an international conference with governments and civil society groups focusing on how to progress LGBT equality, and to provide funding to promote LGBT equality worldwide.

Paul Martin OBE, Chief Executive at LGBT Foundation, said:

We worked closely with the Government Equalities Office to help develop the National LGBT Survey and we encouraged as many LGBT people as possible to respond.

We are delighted that the Government has listened. The proposed Action Plan outlines the concrete steps it will take to address some of the challenges still facing LGBT communities in this country.

LGBT people continue to face significant health inequalities and we welcome the Government's commitment to tackling these through the appointment of an LGBT Health Adviser.

We hope that today's plan is a clear statement of the Government's commitment to work in partnership with the LGBT charity sector to achieve a fair and equal society where all lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people can achieve their full potential.

Notes to editors

- statistics relating to workplace, health, incidents and education typically refer to respondents' experiences in the 12 months preceding the survey.
- the LGBT survey was launched in July 2017