

News story: New Action to Promote LGBT Equality

New measures to deliver greater equality for the LGBT community have been announced by the Minister for Women and Equalities Justine Greening, ahead of the 50th anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality.

Proposals to streamline and de-medicalise the process for changing gender will be part of a broad consultation of the legal system that underpins gender transition, the Gender Recognition Act.

Currently individuals need a diagnosis of gender dysphoria and have to provide evidence that they have been in transition for at least two years before they can apply to legally change their gender.

Justine Greening also announced the launch of a national survey today (Sunday 23 July) that will ask the 1.5million LGBT people in the UK to share their views on public services to help inform Government policy.

The Government has also announced that the deferral blood donation period for men who have sex with men, will be reduced from 12 months to three months increasing the supply of donor blood available for life-saving operations.

Minister for Women and Equalities Justine Greening said:

This government is committed to building an inclusive society that works for everyone, no matter what their gender or sexuality and today we're taking the next step forward.

We will build on the significant progress we have made over the past 50 years, tackling some of the historic prejudices that still persist in our laws and giving LGBT people a real say on the issues affecting them.

Since Parliament voted for the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967, there has been significant progress on LGBT equality. In 2013 the law was changed to allow same-sex couples to marry. Earlier this year, Turing's Law was passed, posthumously pardoning men who had sex with men for these now abolished offences. And the recent election saw the highest number of openly lesbian, gay and bisexual MPs voted into Parliament. Today's announcement looks to build on this progress.

The consultation on the Gender Recognition Act, to be published in the Autumn, will look to improve the recognition process and reduce the stigma faced by the trans community. Proposals will include:

- Removing the need for a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria before being able to apply for gender recognition. The current need to be

assessed and diagnosed by clinicians is seen as an intrusive requirement by the trans community; and

- Proposing options for reducing the length and intrusiveness of the gender recognition system.

It will aim to relieve the bureaucratic and medical burdens for those who choose to change their gender.

Suzanna Hopwood, a member of the Stonewall Trans Advisory Group, said:

I am really pleased that the Government is making good on its commitment to review the Gender Recognition Act. Reform is one of the key priorities in our vision for removing the huge inequalities that trans people face in the UK. The current system is demeaning and broken.

It's vital that this reform removes the requirements for medical evidence and an intrusive interview panel, and finally allows all trans people to have their gender legally recognised through a simple administrative process. That's what we'll be calling for during this consultation, and I'm looking forward to seeing the law change soon after.

The [LGBT survey](#), launched today, will allow the Government to understand the experiences of LGBT individuals across the UK. This will help identify ways to improve public services for LGBT users, including in health and education, and to understand how individuals might face discrimination. The survey will run for 12 weeks until 15 October

Ruth Hunt, Chief Executive of Stonewall said:

We're pleased the Government recognises there is still more to be done to ensure all lesbian, gay, bi and trans people are accepted without exception, and welcome the announcement of new measures to tackle some of the remaining inequalities. The consultation on reforming the Gender Recognition Act is hugely encouraging.

The 2004 Act was ground-breaking in giving trans people a way to have their gender legally recognised, but the process is in dire need of reform. We need a simple process which isn't medicalised, intrusive or demeaning. We would urge the Government to ensure that all trans communities are consulted and to act quickly on their concerns.

Change to the blood donation rules are also welcome. However, while this is an important move, it's vital that this is a stepping stone to a system that doesn't automatically exclude most gay and bi men. We would like to see individualised risk assessment, and are encouraged that the Government and NHS Blood and Transplant Service are committed to exploring how to do this. And we welcome the

Government's intention to better understand the inequalities LGBT people face in Britain to identify key areas for future action, and to ensure that this Government maintains the UK's impressive record as a world leader on LGBT equality.

Ethan Spibey, Founder, FreedomToDonate said:

Today's announcement from the Government marks a world-leading blood donation policy for gay and bisexual men and the other groups previously restricted. I'm so proud that the work of FreedomToDonate and our supporters will help ensure more people than ever before are allowed to safely donate blood.

I began this campaign because I wanted to repay the donor who saved my granddad's life after a major operation and this announcement means I'm closer than ever to doing that, with the invaluable help of our team of volunteers, and the charities and organisations FreedomToDonate represents.

The Government has also accepted the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBT0) to change the deferral periods for blood donation for men who have sex with men. The usual deferral blood donation period will be reduced from 12 months to three months for men who have sex with men. These reductions are based on the most up to date scientific evidence and medical advances, which will offer more people the opportunity to donate blood without affecting the safety of the blood supply – helping to increase the supply of donor blood and save lives. Further work on more personalised risk assessment is also under way to allow as wide a pool of donors as possible while maintaining the safety of the blood supply.

The UK has one of the safest blood supplies in the world. These rules are in place to keep blood donors and the patients who receive their blood safe. The UK Government will now work with NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) to implement the changes to deferrals for sexual behaviours from early 2018, and submit evidence on the other recommendations on blood donation announced today to a wider European evidence evaluation.

[Press release: Minister Burt statement on recent violence in Jerusalem and](#)

the West Bank

I deplore the violence which took place yesterday in Jerusalem and across the West Bank.

I condemn the horrific attack during a Shabbat dinner last night, which led to the death of three Israelis in the settlement of Halamish.

I am deeply concerned by the deaths of three Palestinians and the large numbers injured during clashes yesterday. I urge the relevant authorities to swiftly investigate these incidents.

The increase in tensions at the Haram Al-Sharif / Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem is of serious concern. Jerusalem is a sacred place for millions of people in the world. We call upon all parties to restore calm, avoid provocation and through engagement reach a solution that ensures the safety and the security of the site and upholds the status quo.

News story: Drones to be registered and users to sit safety tests under new government rules

Drones will have to be registered and users will have to sit safety awareness tests under [new rules to better regulate their growing use](#), the government announced today (22 July 2017).

Owners of drones weighing 250 grams and over will in future have to register details of their drones to improve accountability and encourage owners to act responsibly.

Users may be able to register online or through apps, under plans being explored by the government. The move follows safety research that concluded drones could damage the windscreens of helicopters.

In addition, a new drone safety awareness test means owners will have to prove that they understand UK safety, security and privacy regulations.

Drones represent an exciting opportunity for the UK, are already of substantial benefit to business and the public and are central to the government's [Industrial strategy](#).

They can help boost productivity and safety, aid the emergency services and bring pleasure to those who use them for fun. We want Britain to be the first

choice for businesses, scientists, innovators and investors in technology.

The government also plans to bring forward and expand the use of 'geo-fencing' in the UK that acts like an invisible shield around buildings or sensitive areas. The technology, which works on GPS coordinates, is built into the drone and stops it from entering zones such as prison or airport space. [1]

In line with the government's 'Industrial strategy', will continue working with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to help commercial drone users grow their businesses by making sure measures are updated to reflect the needs of the emerging market worth over £102 billion globally.

Aviation Minister Lord Callanan said:

The UK is at the forefront of an exciting and fast growing drones market and it is important we make the most of this emerging global sector.

Our measures prioritise protecting the public while maximising the full potential of drones. Increasingly, drones are proving vital for inspecting transport infrastructure for repair or aiding police and fire services in search and rescue operations, even helping to save lives.

But like all technology, drones too can be misused. By registering drones, introducing safety awareness tests to educate users we can reduce the inadvertent breaching of airspace restrictions to protect the public.

These measures come after a [consultation looking at ways to make drone use safer while maximising their potential](#).

Findings by the Department for Transport (DfT), British Airline Pilots' Association (BALPA) and the Military Aviation Authority (MAA) published today in a [summary report](#), reveal drones weighing 400 grams could damage the windscreens of helicopters in particular. However, airliner windscreens were found to be much more resistant. It would take a heavier drone of around 2 kilograms to critically damage an airliner windscreen, and only if the airliner is flying at a high speed; not during take-off and landing.

The government is feeding the data into relevant security and safety bodies alongside manufacturers, to ensure they implement improvements to safety.

The government worked with the CAA to develop a new [drone code](#) launched last year which has 6 key principles:

- always keep your drone in sight
- stay below 400 feet (120 metres) to comply with the drone code
- every time you fly your drone you must follow the manufacturer's instructions

- keep the right distance from people and property
 - you are responsible for each flight
 - stay well away from aircraft, airports and airfields
-

[Press release: 11 caravanning hacks you don't want to leave the house without](#)

With thousands of caravanners expected to head off on their travels this weekend, it's never been a better time to remind yourself of some top hacks to make caravan holidaying easier.

1. Invest in extending towing mirrors

Go big or go home! It's pretty much a given that no-one has ever wished they'd bought smaller extending mirrors. Invest in a decent set to see you through. They'll be a worthwhile investment.

2. Don't rely on man-power

Picking up a decent adaptor for a hand-drill means you avoid the hard labour (and potential back injury) that goes with using a hand lever to lower the van legs.

3. Go old-school and bring a map

Technology is great. Until you get stuck in a country lane near Aberystwyth with a 2 mile journey to reverse. Make it an adventure in the best possible way by planning your journey and packing a map – ensuring that the sat nav doesn't ruin your plans.

4. Awning erection survival kit

No matter how many times you do it, putting up the awning can prove to be a stressful situation. Head this off by packing a survival kit to occupy the kids – a large picnic and new colouring books often buys you some quiet time to set up.

5. Porch light

Don't let the longer summer evenings lull you into a false sense of security. Remember to pack a light for the awning so when the kids are tucked up in bed (finally) you can enjoy card games into the evening without worrying about making too much noise.

6. Trug basket

Muddy shoes + enclosed space = hours of cleaning up after yourself. Invest in a large enough basket to chuck all outdoor shoes into at the door and help maintain your high standards.

7. The 'know before you tow' check

Towing rules depend on when the driver passed their driving test. If you're planning on taking a trailer or caravan on holiday this summer you can find the latest advice from DVLA on what you can tow as well as guidance on [towing safely and legally](#).

8. Laptop with pre-loaded films

For those rainy day emergencies. Handy for the child or adult in your life who needs distracting. Don't forget the charger and headphones!

9. Hot water bottle

Fill it with cold water and freeze it – it will turn any sealed box lined with tinfoil into a cool box.

10. A flat hot plate will cook most things

Indoor or outdoor cooking is made easier with one of these electrical essentials. Most meals can be cooked on it, it's easy to clean and doesn't take up much space.

11. Baby wipes

Not just for those with babies. These pocket-sized miracles will mop up spills, clean windscreens, remove oil from hands, clean shoes...a 'must' for life, not just for caravanning!

Ian Hewlett, Technical Manager of the Camping and Caravanning Club, said,

Fitting additional towing mirrors will help you see behind your caravan, and if you're new to caravanning check your driving licence covers the car and caravan combination you plan to tow.

Caravanning is a perfectly safe and enjoyable pastime, and we at the Club are committed to helping ensure caravanners feel confident and relaxed on their way to their holiday destination.

More information is available at www.gov.uk/towing-with-car.

News story: Thousands of volunteers aged over 50 recruited as organisations share £2.7m

More than 6,500 new over-50s volunteers will be recruited to support charities and organisations across the country, Minister for Sport and Civil Society Tracey Crouch has been announced today.

Thirteen projects have been awarded a share of £2.7 million from the Second Half Fund to help them tap into the time and talents of people aged 50 or over. The innovative projects will work alongside public services to trial new ways of working.

The fund, launched by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Nesta in September 2016, provides grants of up to £250,000 for projects supporting children and young people, parents and families, people to age well, and the creation of resourceful and resilient local places.

The new volunteers will be recruited into a variety of roles, including tutoring disadvantaged students, befriending elderly people at risk of loneliness and isolation and promoting reading to help increase wellbeing. This forms part of a series of work from the partners to explore how people can support the important work of our public services.

Tracey Crouch, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, said:

“These projects will benefit hugely from the wealth of talent and experience that older volunteers bring. By volunteering in later life, people can share their valuable skills, build new friendships and help transform lives within their community.”

Vicki Sellick, Director at Nesta, said:

“We know we have much to gain from the considerable talents of people as they enter the second half of their lives, given freely alongside public services. By supporting these innovative social action projects to grow we know they will transform lives, and make a significant impact on some of the biggest social challenges we face.”

The Second Half Fund grantees are:

- FareShare, £177,500: FareShare works with volunteers to distribute thousands of tonnes of food classified as waste by the food and drink industry to charities and community groups. Already helping to feed 500,000 people each week, by mobilising the time and talents of 1,053 over 50s they aim to support 800,000.

- Volunteering Matters, £225,000: Matches young care leavers with a 'grandmentor' – a volunteer aged 50+ – to support good mental and emotional health, positive relationships and independent living skills. They will replicate their model in five new local authorities, supporting 500 more young people during the lifetime of the Fund.
- Aesop Arts and Society, £246,919: Dance for Health uses dance techniques to help in fall prevention. The organisation will grow their programme from six to 35 locations across the country, with the support of over 583 volunteers aged 50+.
- Access Project, £83,500: Volunteers tutor disadvantaged students weekly to boost grades and improve access to top universities. The Access Project will expand their work through mobilising the time and talents of at least 150 new 50+ volunteers.
- BuddyHub, £115,000: A new tech-enabled befriending service aimed at older adults considered at high risk of loneliness and social isolation. The funding will help it grow in North London and mobilise 228 50+ 'Friendship Buddies'.
- St Joseph's Hospice Hackney, £233,844: Will replicate its Compassionate Neighbours programme, which encourages and equips volunteers to support vulnerable neighbours who are in the last years of life, to eight other hospices across London and the South East, mobilising 420 people aged 50+.
- Eden Project Ltd, £136,811: Will mobilise the time and talents of 150 volunteers aged 50+ to support grandparents and their grandchildren (aged 0-5) to explore and learn together – improving school readiness. Particular focus will be with local families where grandparents are taking on a significant caring role or need additional support.
- The Reader Organisation, £270,000: The Reader pioneers 'shared reading' as a way of improving wellbeing, reducing isolation and building community resilience and connectedness. The Fund will help it to make the transition from a staff-led to volunteer-led model by recruiting 474 new 50+ volunteers and establishing 213 new groups across the north west of England.
- Home Start – Greater Manchester, £284,970: HomeStart will grow its Baby Bond programme, which supports parents with mild or moderate mental health issues, from Tameside and Glossop to nine other areas of Manchester. 505 new 50+ volunteers will support at least 370 new families.

- Spice Time Credits 50+, £247,260: Will grow their Time Credits approach – which offers local rewards for volunteering – to adult social care and recruit isolated, low income and over 50s with poor health to volunteer. The model will be rolled out in Westminster, Kent and Greater Manchester, working with at least 1,000 new recruits aged 50+.
- Family Action, £249,900: Will launch a new virtual and telephone helpline and one-to-one befriending service, staffed by 350 50+ volunteers, which will aim to improve emotional and mental well-being of parents and children.
- Volunteer It Yourself, £201,000: 14-24 year old NEETS learn practical trade and building skills by committing to fix local youth clubs and other community buildings. Will recruit 500 over 50s to volunteer their time as mentors and help young people gain qualifications and access to employment and further training.
- St John Ambulance, £249,993: The First Aid Community Advocates initiative will raise awareness of the importance of first aid in target communities – such as carers, those in deprived areas, older and vulnerable groups, – and recruit and train 593 50+ volunteers.

Read [more information](#) about the fund and 13 grantees. Each of the organisations' progress will be documented and findings published in autumn 2018 on Nesta's website.