Government Equalities Office

Putting equality at the heart of government

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Message from Lynne Featherstone MP, Minister for Equalities



Hello everybody! Nothing gives me greater pleasure to introduce the fourth edition of our e-bulletin on a day that marks a landmark on the journey to transgender equality.

Earlier this year we began a national conversation with the transgender community to find out from you the areas we needed to be focusing on to make a difference to your lives. We launched a series of online surveys to ensure we reached to ensure we reached the widest possible number of people. In total we received an amazing 2,172 responses – making our surveys the largest form of engagement with the transgender community ever to be conducted in the UK.

Today, and on the back of that work, I am proud to launch the first ever cross-Government action plan to advance transgender equality - Advancing transgender equality: a plan for action. It lays out our vision and the focus for our commitment to deliver equality for transgender people. It includes firm commitments from across the breadth of social policy aimed at making a real difference to your lives. This is a long overdue piece of work – and I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you who responded to our surveys and took the time to speak to us to make this action plan possible.

However, we cannot pat ourselves on the back for a job well done just yet. The challenges facing the transgender community should not be underestimated. While the action plan marks a huge step forward in addressing these challenges, it is not the magic bullet which will solve all.

This Government is committed to making change happen. But we cannot do this our own. It will take all of us working together to make change happen. Next year we will be holding a call for evidence which will give you an opportunity to tell which parts of the action plan you think have worked well and which parts need to be implemented more effectively. We want to see as many people as possible taking part. So please, help us spread the message by telling your peers about the action plan and posting this edition of the e-bulletin on your blogs and discussion forums.

It's only with your continued input, challenge and support that we will be able to make the changes necessary to make a real difference to transgender people's lives.

Click on the following link to view Lynne Featherstone talking about the action plan: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pi1mdqUevWU.

The video also includes a message from Harri Cole-Weeks talking about his personal experiences of being transgender and why he thinks it is so important Government takes action.

The Written Ministerial Statement can be found on the Home Office website.

Overview of our online surveys

To ensure the action plan addresses the needs of the transgender community, we have actively engaged with a wide range of transgender partners, public bodies, organisations and individuals throughout its development. As part of this engagement, we conducted a total of three online surveys asking you to contribute your ideas and tell us the areas you would like us to concentrate on. We have used the feedback included from these surveys as well as our engagement with the wider transgender community to shape the development of *Advancing transgender equality: a plan for action.*

The first survey opened in March 2011 and received an astounding 1,275 responses! The overwhelming message from this survey was that health is the most significant area of concern to respondents, closely followed by employment.

Following these results, we decided to conduct two further surveys one health and one on employment and identity so we could address these priority areas in more detail.

To see the headline findings from all three surveys, please click here.

What's new?

Lynne gives her support to Transgender Day of Remembrance

On 25 November, Lynne gave her support to Transgender Day of Remembrance, which is the day to commemorate those who have been tragically killed as a result of transphobia. Lynne reaffirmed the Government's commitment to tackling transphobia. She said: "*It is important we use anniversaries such as this to remember the sacrifices some people have gone through just to be themselves. Too many transgender people both here in the UK and abroad continue to face prejudice, discrimination and inequality and sometimes even violence. I am proud that this government will be publishing the first ever action plan to advance transgender equality. We can't turn back time, but together we can make a difference and honour the memory of those we have lost by working towards a future free from ignorance and prejudice.*"

A key commitment in the new *Advancing transgender equality: a plan for action* is the Government's announcement that the Criminal Justice Act 2003 will be amended to mean that those convicted of murdering transgender people as a hate crime attack will face life sentences with a starting point of 30 years. The Act will also be updated to make sentences more severe where any offence is shown to be motivated by hostility towards the victim because they are transgender.

Channel 4's *My Transsexual Summer*

Last month, Lynne attended the screening of the Channel 4 series, 'My Transsexual Summer' which follows seven people as they make the journey to realise their true identities. It is also the first major piece of trans-themed output since Channel 4 signed Trans Media Watch's Memorandum of Understanding. The series ran in four parts and finished on 29 November.

Exciting competition launched to find a logo for our sports campaign

On 21 November, we launched a competition to find a logo for our campaign to tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport. Budding designers have been asked to create an emblem for sports clubs, fans and players across the country to mark their support for the campaign. The competition is targeted at young people but is open to anyone with creative flair. Applicants have been asked to come up with a design that conveys a message of inclusion and respect in sport. The competition will run until 18 January. Rugby Union star, Ben Cohen will then shortlist the top designs from all the entries and then it will then be over to the general public to vote for the winning design through our Facebook page. For more information about the competition and for details on how to apply please visit our website.

For additional advice and information please visit our website:
http://www.equalities.gov.uk/what_we_do/lesbian,_gay,_bisexual_and_tra/transgender_equality.aspx

Please forward this message and bulletin to your trans friends and colleagues; post it on your blogs and discussion forums; and raise it in your community groups. Your support will make all the difference!!

Any projects you are involved in you would like to tell us about? Any questions? Please email us at transgender@geo.gsi.gov.uk