

# The Scottish Government

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# The Scottish Government

## **LGBT equality in Scotland: The Government perspective**

- Context - where are we now?
  - where are we going?
- Principles underpinning our work
- Key themes
- Challenges
- leadership

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**Where are we now.....?**

- significant progress (since decriminalisation, since devolution) but more still to do
- LGBT activism has been hugely influential



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**And where are we going.....?**

- negative attitudes persist, especially towards transgender people
- homophobia and transphobia is still a fact of day-to-day life for many LGBT people in school, at work and in the community
- harassment and hate crime is not uncommon
- we are still on a journey to achieve full LGBT equality – partnership between people and policy-makers
- **we need to equip and support young people to stand up and speak out**

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## **We believe....**

- Discrimination is destructive and costly, it damages individuals, their families and communities and undermines what the Government is trying to achieve.
- Tackling prejudice and discrimination is a shared responsibility
- We believe in celebrating diversity!



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## Principles underpinning our approach

- The aims/achievement of national and local government need to apply to all the people and communities of Scotland – as contributors and beneficiaries
- Equality doesn't happen automatically – need to take steps to ensure equality and inclusion for people who have historically been marginalised and excluded



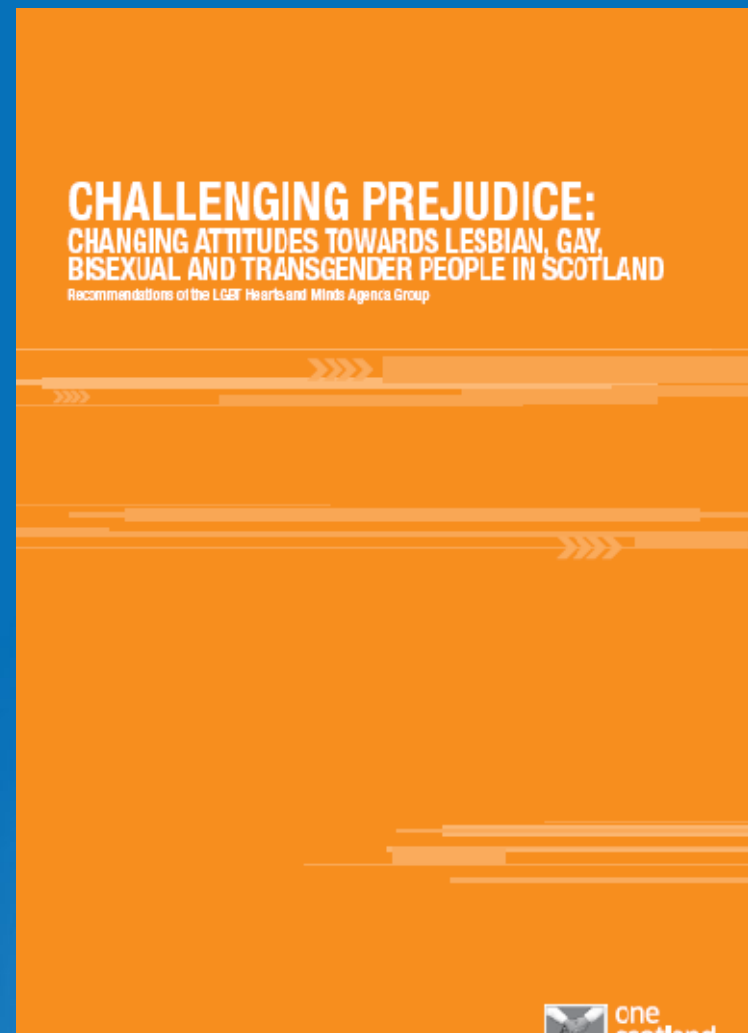
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*“We are moving the whole of government to an outcomes-focused approach to performance. This means that we will be judged - as we should be - on the results that we achieve; results which reflect real and meaningful improvements in public services and quality of life for people in Scotland”*

National Performance Framework, 2007

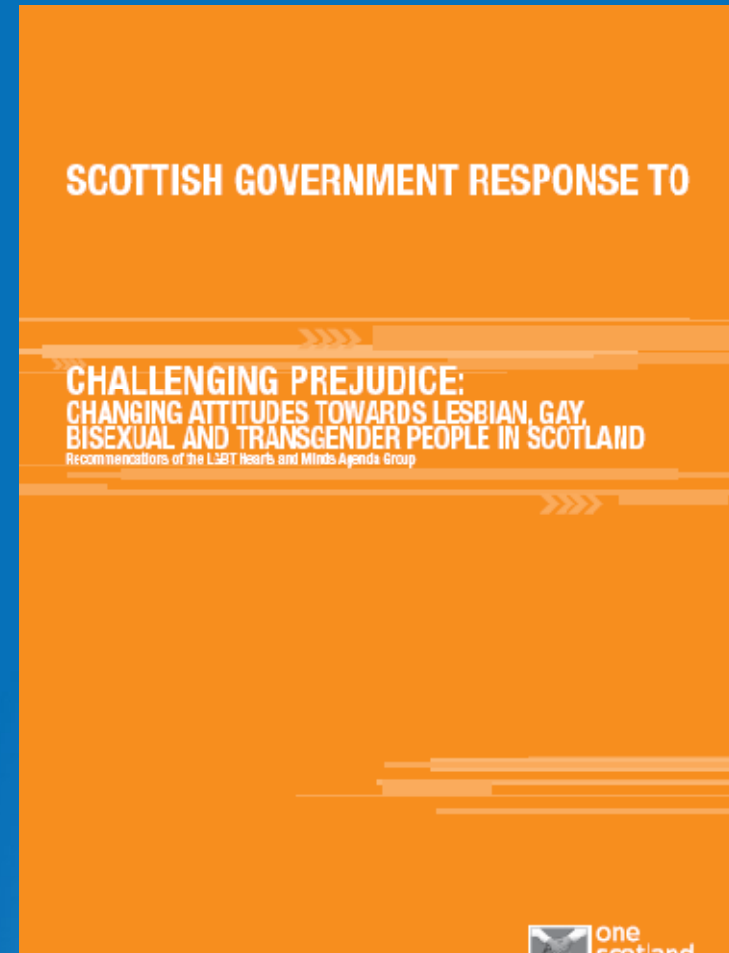
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- The 'Challenging Prejudice' report by the LGBT Hearts and Minds Agenda Group set out practical steps for changing attitudes (Feb 08)



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- Our approach to challenging homophobia and transphobia, and actively promoting equality and inclusion for our LGBT citizens is set out in our response to that report (Nov 08)





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- Our approach is underpinned by funding to support nine projects through the three National LGBT organisations, including **LGBT young people policy and participation project:**
  - to encourage young LGBT people to become confident and ambitious individuals within their communities
  - to enable the views of young LGBT people to impact positively on issues which affect their lives.



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## Engaging with civil society

- For policies and services to meet peoples needs we must work in partnership with civil society.
- Funding to support capacity building and engagement with communities (including young people).

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## Partnership working

- LGBT activism has been hugely influential in the journey so far.
- Close working relationship between national LGBT orgs, Scottish Government, and Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Joint website and conference, shared planning through 'summit'.



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## **LGBT equality and public policy**

- Mainstream public services/policies created by Government should meet the needs of all the diverse people/communities in Scotland:
  - Equality impact assessment includes LGBT
  - Stonewall Scotland good practice projects
  - LGBT domestic abuse project
  - Scottish Transgender Alliance – ‘T’ focus crucial!



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## Challenges (1)

- It's no big deal to be gay these days.... Or is it?
- Relevance of sexual orientation and gender identity to policy makers
- The post-legislative agenda/Hearts and Minds

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## Challenges (2)

- Perceived conflict between different rights and freedoms
- Community capacity, particularly in local areas – particularly where there is no visible or vocal community activity
- Ensuring that trans doesn't get lost
- Encouraging active citizenship and energising activism

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## Challenges (3)

- Once around the table, change approach
- Help policy makers understand issues
- Demonstrate why LGBT inclusion should be on their agenda
- Become a helpful (invaluable) resource
- Show how progressing your agenda contributes to achieving their outcomes
- Have your arguments outside of the meeting - present a united front



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## Showing leadership

- Political leadership on LGBT equality – in Scotland and in Europe
- Participating in the Network of LGBT Government Focal Points
- Practising what we preach in the workplace



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**Alex Neil MSP**

**Minister for Housing and Communities**



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**“As Scottish Minister with responsibility for equality, I have great pleasure in welcoming IGLYO to Edinburgh, and to Scotland.**

**We are very proud to host the opening session of the IGLYO General Assembly 2009. We see this is a valuable opportunity to learn more from other countries about their approaches to tackling discrimination, and we are happy to share our own experience.”**



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**“The Scottish Government is firmly committed to equality and inclusion for our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens. We have made good progress over the last 30 years, but we know that there is still much more to do to ensure that LGBT people can live without fear of discrimination – at school, at work or in the community”.**



# The Scottish Government

**“We have worked closely with LGBT communities over the years to achieve change and we recognise their significant contribution. I want to pay tribute to those of you who are playing an active role in campaigning for equality in your own countries”.**



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**“I like you want to live in society in which LGBT young people can play a full and active role in daily and public life in Scotland – a society in which the contribution of LGBT young people is recognised and celebrated. I recognise that we need to work together to achieve this”.**



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**“I am really sorry I can’t be with you in person today, but I hope that you will find the Scottish welcome warm and friendly, even if the weather is colder than some of you are used to!**

**I hope you have a very successful and productive meeting”.**

**ALEX NEIL MSP**

**Minister for Housing and Communities**