



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

1st Commonwealth Parliamentary Association British Islands and Mediterranean Region LGBT+ Forum

24 November 2025, Westminster, London, UK



Introduction

1. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is divided into nine geographic regions: Africa, Asia, Australia, British Islands and Mediterranean, Canada, the Caribbean, the Americas and Atlantic (CAA), India, the Pacific and South East Asia. The British Islands and Mediterranean region (BIMR) is made up of branches from Alderney, Cyprus, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey, Malta, Northern Ireland, Sark, St Helena, Scotland, United Kingdom and Wales.
2. The first CPA BIMR LGBT+ Forum took place in London on 24 November 2025 and was attended by Jamie Greene MSP, the Scotland Branch representative of the BIMR LGBT+ Network.
3. The Forum included two round tables, one on the level of LGBT+ visibility in politics across the BIMR; and one on the state of play in the Commonwealth on LGBT+ equality examining recent progress as well as challenges.
4. The Forum provided delegates with the opportunity to strengthen their regional network; and benefit from peer-to-peer exchanges on LGBT+ issues affecting parliaments and parliamentarians in the BIMR and beyond.

Background

5. The CPA BIMR LGBT+ Network was officially launched at the 54th BIMR conference in June 2025 and is the first official LGBT+ network in the CPA.
6. The Network was co-founded by Jamie Greene MSP and Adam Price MS, from the Welsh Parliament, with the purpose to:
 - **Support and empower LGBT+ parliamentarians in the BIMR**
Build a support network for LGBT+ parliamentarians in the CPA BIMR with members providing each other with mentorship and peer-to-peer support; including encouraging members to pursue leadership roles within their legislatures, while also providing a safe space for allies and those not publicly identified as LGBT+ to participate and contribute.
 - **Promote full representation and inclusivity in the CPA BIMR**
Share good practice amongst members of the network on how to ensure that BIMR parliaments, and parliamentary groups and parties, foster inclusive political cultures encouraging LGBT+ parliamentarians to participate and encourage others to stand for election. Increasing the visibility of LGBT+ parliamentarians

- in the BIMR as role models and influential advocates for equality.
- **Combat discrimination and advance legal equality in the CPA BIMR**
Members of the BIMR network advocating for the repeal of discriminatory laws and promoting comprehensive anti-discrimination and equality legislation in BIMR parliaments.

Recommendations

- Jamie Greene MSP will report back to Members of the Scottish Parliament the deliberations of the Forum.
- The International Relations Office will continue to highlight the establishment of the BIMR LGBT+ Network and invite Members to engage.

Programme

11:00 Arrive to Portcullis House

11:30 Steering Committee Meeting

14:00 Roundtable 1: The level of LGBT+ visibility in politics across the BIMR—do we still need advocacy programmes for LGBT+ participation in politics, or is the battle won?

15:15 Tea and Coffee Break

15:30 Roundtable 2: The state of play in the Commonwealth on LGBT+ equality examining recent progress as well as challenges. Exploring the role of BIMR parliamentarians in supporting members and activists outside our region.

17:00- 19:00 Reception

Monday 24 November 2025

Steering Committee Meeting

7. The Steering Committee members met in the morning for the first formal Steering Committee meeting. They discussed what would be the best format for the network, analysing the pros and cons if the network should be formal or more informal. They agreed that the network should be formalised but with a flexible route to electing the network Chair.

8. They then discussed upcoming activities and engagements and how to manage sending the network's message across the CPA.
9. They suggested that the network organises an online training session aimed at allies for the LGBT+ community.
10. They also suggested that the region asks branches to promote a voluntary survey to gather statistics on LGBT+ parliamentarians.
11. Finally, it was suggested that a website is created to help spread awareness of the network.
12. "We held a frank and informative discussion about the nature of how the steering group will work in the short to medium term and also discussed our wider and more long term ambitions.

It was agreed that our current convenor and co convenor would remain in post.

We discussed the terms of reference of how the group might seek fully accredited CPA status such as the women's network, or disability network, we debated the pros and cons of such options and decided that full and regular accreditation would serve our needs best.

We discussed the issue of who can and should participate in the working of the steering group and decided to leave this open for future members of the group to be as inclusive as possible whilst offering a space for LGBT+ politicians who may not wish to be publicly identified.

We discussed our modus operandi in terms of working and communication practices and agreed that whilst online meetings are helpful we also feel like in person meetings help form relationships within the group members.

It was agreed that we may look to hosting future meetings in another parliament other than Westminster.

It was agreed that we would continue our work remotely and virtually so as not to stall progress.

It was agreed that we will seek to develop a strong case for the group to attain official recognition as a bona fide BIMR group." Jamie Greene MSP



Roundtable 1: The level of LGBT+ visibility in politics across the BIM region

13. In the afternoon the Steering Committee was joined by other Members of the BIMR in two round table discussions.
14. The first of these discussed the question 'do we still need advocacy programmes for LGBT+ participation in politics, or is the battle won?' Panellists included Adam Price MS, Chair of the BIMR LGBT+ Network (Wales); Deputy Louise Doublet (Jersey) and Lord Smith of Finsbury (UK).
15. The panel discussed the difference between being 'out' and visibly part of the LGBT+ community.
16. They spoke about the importance of everyone being invited to events, and the difficulty of navigating spreading the message and preaching.
17. They also highlighted the importance of mentorship and visibility and willingness of 'openly public' LGBT+ members to speak to colleagues.
18. Finally, they discussed the visibility of LGBT+ communities across the world and the role that political parties play in selecting candidates to stand for election.
19. "This interesting debate focussed on the wider need both within the BIMR and also other regions who do not have an LGBT+ network. We noted that for many commonwealth countries it is still dangerous and illegal to be LGBT+. Therefore, we can lead by example in this space. It was also noted that even in developed nations with strong LGBT+ legislation things can slip easily. We agreed that best practice and respectful spaces to debate live societal issues are positive. We

helpfully discussed the importance of allyship and those who are not 'within' the community but do want to support us.

We debated that the third sector is struggling financially too and recognised the good work they do on health, mental health, homelessness and tackling abuse and stigma.

Essentially, we concluded that our group was necessary and would be a positive influence within and outwith our region." Jamie Greene MSP



Roundtable 2: The state of play in the Commonwealth on LGBT+ equality examining recent progress as well as challenges

20. The second round table explored the role of BIMR parliamentarians in supporting parliamentarians outside the region.
21. The panellists included Rt Hon. David Mundell MP (UK); Stelios Foteinopoulos, International Policy and Advocacy Manager, Kaleidoscope Trust; Hon. Christian Santos GMD MP, Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture, Tourism, Youth, and Training (Gibraltar) and Rico Jacob Chase, Human Rights Consultant.
22. Panellists discussed that many Commonwealth states still criminalise LGBT+ communities and how to communicate with communities that do not want to listen.
23. They discussed inclusive language, mentorships and the importance of cultural transformation; having political courage to stand up for what you believe in and thinking about the most vulnerable people in society.
24. "As in the first session we held an interesting debate about the wider state of play in the commonwealth which painted a grim picture of countries where it is illegal and dangerous to identify as LGBT+ and where there is precious little representation in politics. In saying that

we also identified progress and credit where it is due in some countries that have made progress, in others things are going backwards, such as Uganda.

We agreed that dictating to parliamentarians how they should tackle these issues does not work, but instead work with third party groups to support and assist those on the ground, often in hiding to be able to live safely and freely something we take for granted in the BIMR.

We also agreed to engage with third party organisations including charities and on the ground support organisation who are either independently funded or assisted by the UK gov to support grassroots organisations facing difficulty and threat in country.” Jamie Greene MSP



Feedback

25. “The conference was extremely helpful as we had previously held a number of online steering group meetings, and it was a) good to meet in person and develop relationships with colleagues and b) get to debate and air out views on how the caucus might operate. It was also good to hold it in Westminster on this occasion as it was convenient for members from across the BIMR.

I am happy to report back to the branch the deliberations of the meeting, and more importantly I think it would be helpful if all MSPs knew of the establishment of the BIMR LGBT+ caucus and invite others to engage, even those who do not traditionally participate in CPA events or activities. I also believe the parliament itself should inform all MSPs of its existence and creation and more importantly let people know that I am the Branch representative and people are free to contact me in confidence with any questions.” Jamie Greene MSP

Conclusion

26. The first CPA BIMR LGBT+ Forum took place in London on 24 November 2025 and was attended by Jamie Greene MSP, the Scotland Branch representative of the BIMR LGBT+ Network.
27. The Forum included two round tables on the level of LGBT+ visibility in politics across the BIM region; and the state of play in the Commonwealth on LGBT+ equality examining recent progress as well as challenges.
28. The Forum was attended by representatives from Gibraltar, Guernsey, Jersey, Northern Ireland, Scotland, United Kingdom, Wales and CPA HQ; and provided delegates with the opportunity to strengthen their regional network; and benefit from peer-to-peer exchanges on LGBT+ issues affecting parliaments and parliamentarians in the BIMR and beyond.

International Relations Office
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