Achieving Inclusive Education.

A strategy paper by
Time for Inclusive Education (TIE)
Foreword.

"The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community have made fundamental contributions to our society, our history, our literature and our culture. Despite this, many within the community are still subject to discrimination, abuse and hostility on a daily basis - primarily our youth. While Scotland has made considerable progress in the advancement of equality and LGBTI rights, unfortunately our education system is yet to catch-up.

Our research shows that LGBTI youth are still being bullied because of their identity; there are disproportionately higher rates of self harm, suicide and mental health problems among LGBTI youth and homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic language, attitudes and behaviours are commonplace within most school communities. Further, the lived experiences of LGBTI youth and their heterosexual, cisgendered peers are in stark contrast.

Over the last year, we have worked closely with teachers and young people - and this strategy paper compiles a collection of proposals which we feel would work best to tackle the issues that remain for LGBTI learners and their families within education.

Ultimately, we are clear that the attainment-gap cannot be fully closed until the issues facing LGBTI learners are rectified.

Our goal is to ensure that all Scottish schools are offering an LGBTI inclusive education, and that they are places where LGBTI learners feel safe, supported and encouraged to thrive. Scotland can lead the way here, but only if we get it right."

Time for Inclusive Education (TIE)
Evidence.

There is a wide range of research, both qualitative and quantitative, which supports the need for LGBTI inclusivity within education. Key findings have consistently highlighted higher rates of self-harm, attempted suicide and mental health among LGBTI youth as a result of prejudice-based bullying. Further, teachers consistently highlight the need for specific CPD training and in-depth, improved guidance regarding LGBTI inclusion within school curricula.

Our research, 'Attitudes Towards LGBT in Scottish Education' (2016) has highlighted the following:

- 91% of LGBT youth reported experiencing homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia while at school.
- 65% of LGBT youth reported being bullied because of their gender identity or sexual orientation.
- 86% of LGBT youth reported that LGBT issues were never discussed or taught in a progressive manner at their school.
- Only 5% of LGBT youth believed that their teachers were adequately equipped to discuss LGBT issues in the classroom.
- Only 4% of LGBT youth believe that the Scottish Government has done enough to tackle homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia in schools.
- 27% of LGBT youth have attempted suicide at least once as a result of bullying.
- 15% of LGBT youth have attempted suicide more than once as a result of bullying.
- 45% of LGBT youth regularly self-harm as a result of bullying.
- 95% of LGBT youth believe that being bullied has had long lasting negative effects on them.
- 97% of LGBT youth who were bullied at school believe that it would have helped if their school was inclusive of LGBT.
• 96% of LGBT youth who faced a personal struggle with their identity believe that it would have helped if their school was inclusive of LGBT.
• 80% of teachers believe that they have not been adequately trained on how to tackle homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia in schools.
• Only 6% of teachers think that the Scottish Government has done enough to tackle homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia in schools.
• 87% of teachers reported hearing homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic language in schools.
• 94% of teachers believe that all schools should offer an LGBT inclusive education.
• Only 9% of teachers believe that the Relationships, Sexual Health & Parenthood (RSHP) education guidance is extensive enough, while 34% have never read it and a further 21% do not know what it is.
• Only 8% of teachers believe that LGBT inclusive education should not be a legislative requirement for all schools, while 79% of teachers believe that it should be.

Other key research includes:

• TIE: 'Time for Inclusive Education' (2015)

• LGBT Youth Scotland: 'Life In Scotland For LGBT Young People: Education Report' (2012)

• Stonewall Scotland: 'School Report' (2012)
• Stonewall Scotland: 'Teacher Report' (2014)


• Terrence Higgins Trust: 'SRE: Shh.. No Talking' (2016)
Proposals.

A re-evaluation of the current strategy in this area is very much required. We are calling for a new approach from the Scottish Government, which goes further than before and is underpinned by legislation. While the issues facing many LGBTI learners within education are serious and current, we understand that in order to get this right, any strategy cannot be rushed and should be subject to review and an inclusive consultation process which involves campaigners, the third sector, ministers and parliamentarians, educators, trade unionists, anti-bullying specialists and young people. It is vital that the Scottish Government is central to this process.

Overall, we are calling for:

- The establishment of a cross-party working group - which involves MSPs as well as representatives from TIE, Equality Network, LGBT Youth Scotland, Stonewall Scotland, Education Scotland, EIS, NASUWT, SSTA, NUS and other relevant bodies - to begin immediate consultation on LGBTI inclusive education and work on the following:

- The creation of a new, cost-free and CPD accredited teacher training programme which focuses specifically on LGBTI issues. Fundamentally, this should focus on the needs of LGBTI learners and addressing the issues that they face. We would recommend that such a programme be structured around an early consultation process, which involves young people, teachers, specialists and campaigners. It is vital that this is approved and monitored by the Scottish Government, to be provided to schools at Local Authority level. Initial focus should be placed on ensuring that guidance teachers and those on promoted posts undergo training, as well as any teachers who may initially be keen to attend regardless of post or position, but the eventual expectation should be for all teachers to receive this.
Thus, student trainee teachers should receive specific LGBTI inclusion modules during Initial Teacher Education (ITE), both for undergraduate and PGDE (primary and secondary) programmes. This is crucial and we are prepared to work with the Scottish Government and the eight universities who provide ITE in order to achieve this.

- LGBTI inclusion in individual subject areas, achieved via approved LGBTI curriculum mapping guidance which can exist by itself, as well as alongside an updated and mandated RSHP education framework. This should be made available to all schools with a clear requirement of uptake under the Health and Wellbeing and Social Studies curriculum areas.

- New guidance which makes clear to both teachers and pupils what their rights are concerning LGBTI in school, with specific reference to the Equality Act (2010) and the General Teaching Council Scotland's 'Standards for Registration'.

- All local authorities to record incidents of homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying - in accordance with existing guidance and expectations for the recording of bullying concerning other protected characteristics.

- The Scottish Government to monitor any steps that are taken in this regard in order to ensure that all schools are following and practicing any issued guidance. This should include the collection and evaluation of relevant data across all Local Authorities as well as the addition of a specific LGBTI inclusion requirement in the Education Scotland school inspections process, in line with the How Good is Our School 4 'Inclusion and Equality' indicators.

- A legislative requirement for all schools to deliver upon any LGBTI inclusion programme which is established. This will act to enshrine LGBTI inclusion in education and ensure that future Governments do not become complacent about the issues facing LGBTI learners.
Analysis.

• From the outset, we are keen to stress the importance of ensuring that any proposal or programme of inclusive education which is developed is done so following an initial consultation process which includes the LGBTI young people who have been directly affected by the issues that we are trying to address. We believe that the best way to tackle the issues facing particular marginalised identities is to listen to the individuals themselves, and to ensure that their voices and experiences are understood during the process of finding a solution. By the same token, educators should also be involved in initial consultation.

• It is crucial to understand that there is a distinction between tackling homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic attitudes and behaviours in school, and inclusive education. The former centres primarily around challenging any direct, immediate displays of prejudice within schools with the goal of wholly eliminating them, while the latter is a wider-scale project concerning the social inclusion of LGBTI identities and issues into school communities and curricula. For example, teaching key moments in LGBTI history and culture to allow for a comprehensive understanding of the inequalities, discrimination and prejudice that LGBTI people have faced and continue to face across the globe. Teacher training programmes should incorporate elements of both.

• On the teaching of LGBTI histories, a potential starting point would be to work in partnership with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). The ultimate goal should be the inclusion of LGBTI histories and current issues in relevant subject areas (such as History and Modern Studies) at National and Higher levels. The expectation in this regard is that LGBTI histories should be taught and studied in the same way that other relevant historical events related to the advancement of equal rights are, such as the Civil Rights and Suffrage movements.
• It is important to be aware that LGBTI inclusive education is not about creating a new subject which revolves solely around LGBTI, but rather about incorporating LGBTI into the existing curricular frameworks and educational standards and expectations. Inclusive education can, and should, be achieved without significant additional workload for educators.

• Operating within a context whereby individual institutions or head teachers act as both judge and jury on whether LGBTI equality issues are discussed in classrooms is not acceptable. While this modus operandi may function well for other educational outcomes, with regards to ensuring that schools are socially inclusive of LGBTI identities (or any other protected characteristic) this will not do. If we are to truly address the issues facing LGBTI learners and ensure that Scottish schools are inclusive environments, then we cannot allow for the continuation of a ‘postcode lottery’, whereby some schools are carrying out good practice on LGBTI and others are not. Fundamentally, this situation would not be true to the principles of an education built on ‘equal opportunity’ and ‘Getting It Right For Every Child’. There has to be a clear requirement for schools to partake and this is likely best achieved through a legislative process.
External Influence.

- It is important to ensure that external groups or organisations with a specialised interest in LGBTI issues are involved in the practical delivery of services within a wider schools inclusion project. For example, we offer free-of-charge school assemblies and workshops specifically on LGBTI, which are delivered from a personal and relatable perspective. Feedback thus far has been unanimously positive. The inclusion of such services and external groups also allows for particular equalities aims to be achieved at school level.

- Involve external groups or organisations to encourage students to establish their own LGBTI or Equalities societies, groups or committees within their schools. This allows for a pupil-led initiative to combatting the issues facing LGBTI learners (which can work in conjunction with a wider inclusion agenda) and also ensures that there is an established safe and supportive space for LGBTI young people within their own school communities. Our 'TIE Pupil Pack' outlines the steps that pupils can take to establish their own society, group or committee. Specifically, an example of best-practice in this area is the LGBTI committee being run by pupils at the Vale of Leven Academy in West Dunbartonshire.

- Pupils should be made aware that specialist groups and organisations offer various services; such as: information, resources, advice, one-to-one or group counselling sessions, anonymous web-chats and telephone helplines. By sign-posting to organisations such as 'LGBT Health and Wellbeing' and 'LGBT Youth Scotland', LGBTI pupils can also seek support outwith their school community.
Rights & Acts

The delivery of LGBTI inclusive education is in accordance with numerous acts, legislative requirements, duties and human rights conventions.

- **Equality Act (2010)** - covers those who identify as one of the Act's protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity. The act enshrines in law that anyone who identifies as one or more of the protected characteristics must be supported and treated equally. The act covers teachers in the workplace, as well as pupils and families within the school and their wider community. Further, under the act, all public bodies - including schools - are bound by the *Public Sector Equality Duty* (Section 149) which, in essence, requires public bodies to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations. Crucially, public bodies cannot just seek to prevent discrimination; rather, they have to be proactive in doing so. Thus, schools cannot just say that homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia is unacceptable - they must take action to tackle and eliminate it.

Specifically relevant from an educational perspective are:

**Section 149 (1)** "A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to: (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act."

**Section 149 (5)** "Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to— (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding."
• 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child' - this protects children's human rights, and those relevant to the advancement of LGBTI education within schools include:  
  23. Better protect children against discrimination by urgently dealing with the intolerance and negative stereotypes of children and young people in society and in the media.  
  24. Do more to raise awareness about and prevent discrimination against children. This might need to include work to help certain groups of children, including traveller children, migrant children, young refugees and asylum seekers, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children and children from minority groups.  
  74. Provide better sex and relationship services and education to teenagers, and make sure that sex education is taught in schools.  
  83. Put more money into making sure that all children get a fully inclusive education. Children from disadvantaged groups should receive an excellent education.  
  89. Do more to stop bullying and violence in schools, including by using education about human rights and tolerance.

• 'Getting It Right For Every Child' - the delivery of LGBTI inclusive education allows educators to fulfil the principles of GIRFEC. With more young people from diverse family backgrounds entering the education system, it is important that they feel accepted and included in their school and the contents of their learning. The school community as a whole should recognises the diversity in the personal arrangements of young people and their families, and this includes the acknowledgment and early-years 'normalisation' of LGBTI. Further, there are often issues facing LGBTI learners that are unique to them and it is vital that these young people have access to information and support that is relevant to their own identity. Without including LGBTI identities and the issues facing LGBTI learners, schools cannot claim to be Getting It Right For Every Child.
• **Education Scotland** 'How Good is Our School 4, Quality Indicator 3.1 - Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion' - specifically mentions sexual orientation. Education Scotland believe that "...inclusion and equality leads to improved outcomes for all learners" and that "learners, parents and carers, staff and partners feel treated with respect" regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Further, they believe that best practice allows children to "explore diversity" and be "knowledgeable about equalities and inclusion". This document further emphasises the importance of teaching about LGBTI issues as part of a school's wider equalities agenda, as the principles outlined in HGLOS4 cannot be fully achieved without the inclusion of LGBTI.

• **General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) 'The Standards for Registration'** - the GTCS has standards which must be met in order for a teacher to become fully qualified in Scotland. The standards expect that every teacher shows Professional Values and Personal Commitment. Values relevant to the advancement of LGBTI education, which the GTCS recognises as core, are:

  "Committing to the principles of democracy and social justice through fair, transparent, inclusive and sustainable policies and practices in relation to: age, disability, gender and gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion and belief and sexual orientation."  (Standards for Registration, 2012)

  "Demonstrating a commitment to engaging learners in real world issues to enhance learning experiences and outcomes, and to encourage learning our way to a better future.”  (Standards for Registration, 2012)

  "Providing and ensuring a safe and secure environment for all learners built on an ethos of care."  (Standards for Registration, 2012)
• 'Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland' (June 2016) - the Scottish Government’s delivery plan focuses on closing the attainment gap and notes that "...there are wider issues which can affect children's attainment and equality of outcomes", while highlighting that "...we are intent on delivering equity for all children". Naturally, 'all' children must therefore include LGBTI children or children from LGBTI families. It is simply not possible to reduce nor close the attainment gap without addressing the issues facing LGBTI learners and their families in all schools, without exception.