

A hand holding a white card with text, wearing a rainbow-striped sleeve. The background is dark and textured.

**LGBTQ
EQUALITY**

& Northern Ireland's
Political Parties

An independent survey
General Election 2015

UPDATED VERSION (1)

In April 2015 I emailed all the political parties in Northern Ireland that have candidates standing in the 2015 General Election. I enclosed a list of questions about their policies and active records on important lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* and queer issues.

The following pages contain the original information and questions sent to the parties, along with their replies and some additional facts about each party's record on LGBTQ rights.

All replies are printed exactly as received, except where edited (with due respect and care for key facts) to keep them roughly around the requested 150 word limit.

Parties are listed in the order their answers were returned.

Where parties have not responded, I have researched their available policies, manifestos and records online and compiled some information.

While most of us who identify as LGBT or Q are unlikely to vote based on a party's LGBTQ policies alone, it does help to know what each party thinks of some of the issues that effect our lives.

And, more importantly, what they have already done and what they plan to do to tackle some of the serious problems caused by homophobia and transphobia; invisibility; institutionalised discrimination and exclusion. I hope that it will be updated and added to over time.

This is an independent survey. It has no agenda other than to give each party an opportunity put on paper what they intend to do to help us build a more equal Northern Ireland in terms of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Of course there's no such thing as being completely impartial when you feel passionate about social change and so I recommend that this document is just used as a starting point; a launch pad to discussion for political parties as well as ourselves.

I created this because I want to live in a modern, vibrant, open Northern Ireland. A Northern Ireland that doesn't just "tolerate" difference but that visibly celebrates and embraces difference and treats all of its citizens and visitors with equal respect, dignity and legal protection.

I hope that we can ALL continue to challenge those who we privilege to make decisions on our behalf and work together in our own communities to ensure that difference is celebrated and welcomed.

Original Version 21st April 2015

Updated Version 24th April 2015

With thanks to all who took the time to reply and special thanks to the community activists and friends who helped out with Facts Checks.

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ORIGINAL INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS SENT TO PARTIES

Introduction

It is estimated that between 5% and 7% of adults identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ). (Stonewall report).

Many of you will already be aware that LGBTQ people and our families still live with serious inequalities in Northern Ireland, not just in terms of legislation but also due to the impacts of stigmatisation, invisibility and social exclusion.

Here are some key facts and statistics:

- Up to 50% of LGBTQ teens experience abuse at school, ranging from deliberate exclusion to serious physical assault and threats of death
- More than 20% of people who identify as LGBTQ in Northern Ireland have experienced physical violence or extreme verbal abuse
- LGBTQ people are three times more likely to experience suicide ideation because of the many impacts of homophobia and transphobia, stigmatisation, invisibility and social exclusion
- LGBTQ people in NI are up to six times more likely to experience depression because of the mental health impacts of homophobia and transphobia, stigmatisation, invisibility and social exclusion.
- Up to 45% of LGBTQ people in NI have self-harmed, with highest percentages for people who are trans*
- Northern Ireland does not have Equal Marriage for same-sex couples. People who are trans* must end existing marriages in order to legally transition.
- There is still a total ban on gay men giving blood in Northern Ireland, despite the ban being lifted in the UK and official medical evidence to support lifting the ban.

There many other important issues that we also need to address, including older LGBTQ people in care; lack of mandatory awareness training for teachers and health professionals; lack of visibility and support for queer families; trans* healthcare issues; poverty; LGBTQ youth homelessness and much more.

If you would like more information on LGBTQ issues or access to the research reports that provided the above statistics, please visit the websites of some of our local LGBTQ community organisations and umbrella groups:

www.rainbow-project.org
www.transgenderni.com
www.cara-friend.org.uk
www.hereni.org

QUESTIONS

We kindly ask that all answers are a maximum of 150 words. In order to make this document reader-friendly, a brief 'jargon-free' summary of your party's ideas, policies and actions is ideal.

If you would like to signpost readers to more detailed reading, documentation or multimedia files, please include web links at the end of your answers.

Any answers above 150 words may be subject to summary, to support accessibility and readability.

- 1a** Does your party visibly support LGBTQ equality issues in your party manifesto, on your website and in election campaigning materials?
If YES, please give examples. If NO, please state why.
- 1b** Please give any other examples of how your party supports LGBTQ visibility.
- 2a** What is your party policy on tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?
- 2b** What is your party's record in actively tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?
- 3a** What is your party's policy on addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?
- 3b** What is your party's record in actively addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?
- 4a** Does your party support Equal Marriage for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland?
- 4b** What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?
- 5a** Does your party support the Conscience Clause?
- 5b** What is your party's record in actively opposing the Conscience Clause?
- 6a** Does your party support a total ban on gay men giving blood?
- 6b** What's your party's track record in opposing the blood ban for gay men?
- 7** Does your party have any LGBTQ-identified candidates standing in the 2015 General Election?
- 8** Does your party have any mandatory training or education for staff around LGBTQ issues? If NO, do you plan to change this? Please outline when.
- 9** Trans* communities in the UK And Ireland have united to produce a simple three point manifesto that they are asking all 2015 Election candidates to support or decline. It takes less than a minute to read and you can find it at www.transmanifesto.org.uk
Does your party support or decline the three main principles?



1a. Does your party visibly support LGBTQ equality issues in your party manifesto, on your website and in election campaigning materials? If YES, please give examples. If NO, please state why.

Yes, the SDLP visibly support LGBTQ equality issues in our Westminster manifesto, on our website and on the doorsteps while campaigning. In the 2015 SDLP manifesto we have stated that 'The SDLP are proud to stand up for the rights of all on our society regardless of sex, race, ethnic or social origin, language, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.'
The SDLP will continue to work tirelessly to make Northern Ireland a progressive and inclusive place to live.

1b. Please give any other examples of how your party supports LGBTQ visibility.

During a debate on marriage equality in the Northern Ireland Assembly in April last year, the SDLP voted in favour of the motion, with Dominic Bradley MLA saying that 'The LGBT community is not asking for more, as some suggest. It is simply asking for the same. Extending the rights to those who are denied them should not be seen as a threat to anyone or to those who already have those rights or to their faith, belief or right to hold a different view.'

2a. What is your party policy on tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

There is a clear need for more tolerance. Respect for others is something that is instilled at the earliest stage of a child's education and we are fully supportive of moves to create an open and accepting culture for everyone.

2b. What is your party's record in actively tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

Every class in every school will have LGBTQ pupils and it is important that they feel accepted and part of a community. The SDLP will press for more to be done to address and prevent bullying.

3a. What is your party's policy on addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

It is well documented that the LGBTQ population show higher levels of anxiety, depression and suicidal feelings than heterosexual men and women. We believe that more must be done to ensure that these and other health inequalities are addressed.

3b. What is your party's record in actively addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

The SDLP have welcomed the recent guidelines announced by the Royal College of General Practitioners for family doctors to deliver the best care to LGBTQ patients. We believe that this will help to address the health inequalities faced by the population, while enabling health professionals to accurately deal with issues which affect the LGBTQ community. We recognise that more still needs to be done to ensure these inequalities are actively dealt with, and we will work towards addressing these issues.

4a. Does your party support Equal Marriage for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland?

The SDLP supports the equal marriage campaign and we believe that civil marriage should be available to all regardless of sexual orientation.

4b. What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?

The SDLP have actively supported marriage equality. In Westminster, the SDLP voted in support of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act during both the second and third readings of the bill in February and May 2013 respectively. In April 2014, the SDLP voted in favour of Marriage Equality in the Northern Ireland Assembly; however the motion failed due to a petition of concern.

5a. Does your party support the Conscience Clause?

The SDLP is opposed to the DUP's proposed Conscience Clause legislation. We believe that it is a cynical attempt to hijack a case for political and electoral gain by proposing a clause that will discriminate exclusively against the LGBTQ community.

5b. What is your party's record in actively opposing the Conscience Clause?

The SDLP has been vocal in their opposition to the Conscience Clause. West Belfast MLA Alex Attwood spoke at the protest against the Conscience Clause in January 2015 where he stated that if this bill is tabled in the Northern Ireland Assembly, the SDLP will sign a petition of concern to block this legislation.

6a. Does your party support a total ban on gay men giving blood?

The SDLP do not support the discriminatory ban on gay men giving blood. We have long argued for this policy to come to an end, and we want it to be overturned immediately.

We believe that the previous Health Minister's blood ban impinges on LGBT rights. We welcome the fact that this policy has been discredited by judicial rulings. The SDLP will continue to push to ensure that the ban on gay men donating blood is lifted.

6b. What's your party's track record in opposing the blood ban for gay men?

The SDLP have continuously opposed the ban on gay men giving blood, and our health spokesperson Fearghal McKinney has called on the previous and current Health Ministers to cease any further court action and overturn the ban.

7. Does your party have any LGBTQ-identified candidates standing in the 2015 General Election?

Unfortunately the SDLP does not have any LGBTQ identified candidates standing in the 2015 General Election. While there are no candidates running in the current election, the SDLP does have a number of elected representatives who identify as LGBTQ.

8. Does your party have any mandatory training or education for staff around LGBTQ issues? If NO, do you plan to change this? Please outline when.

As part of our induction process, SDLP staff go through mandatory equality awareness training which covers amongst other areas sexual orientation and this is reviewed on an annual basis. The SDLP has a firm commitment to equality in the workplace, public life and in society.

9. Trans* communities in the UK And Ireland have united to produce a simple three point manifesto that they are asking all 2015 Election candidates to support or decline. It takes less than a minute to read and you can find it at www.transmanifesto.org.uk. Does your party support or decline the three main principles?

The SDLP supports the three points of the Trans Manifesto. We believe that trans people should have dignity and respect, and that they should be regarded as equal citizens with equal rights. We agree that trans individuals should be authorities on all aspects of their own lives. We also agree with the third manifesto point of developing diverse, representative, realistic and positive portrayals of trans individuals.

It is important to recognise that members of the LGBTQ community are affected by everything government does. We will press for the strongest equality protections that exist in England and Wales to extend to Northern Ireland through a single equality bill. We will push to ensure that the ban on gay men donating blood is lifted and that the rights of those who identify as LGBT are enhanced.

INDEPENDENT FACT CHECK

This fact check is based on available public information and not on personal opinion. The aim of the check is to ensure that the factual information supplied by all parties is in their answers is correct.

1b. Please give any other examples of how your party supports LGBTQ visibility.

The most recent debate and motion on Marriage Equality was in April 2014. 8 SDLP MLAs voted in favour of the Marriage Equality Motion. Alex Attwood, Dominic Bradley, Mark Durkan, Colum Eastwood, Dolores Kelly, Alasdair McDonnell, Patsy McGlone and Ferghal McKinney. The SDLP have 14 MLAs. 6 MLAs, Joe Byrne, John Dallat, Alban McGuinness, Karen McKevitt, Pat Ramsey, and Sean Rogers were not present/did not vote. The official report can be found here:

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/plenary/details.aspx?&aff=2482&per=307&sel=1&ind=0&prv=0&doc=195843&pn=0&tab=4&sid=ms&cid=&cn>

4b What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?

The SDLP have 3 MPs at Westminster. There were 4 relevant votes in relation to Equal Marriage at Westminster. Mark Durkan was absent for 1 and voted in favour 3 times. Alasdair McDonnell missed 3 and voted in favour 1 time. Margaret Ritchie was absent for all 4 votes.

http://www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/11589/mark_durkan/foyle/divisions?policy=6686

http://www.theyworkforyou.com/mla/11402/alasdair_mcdonnell/divisions?policy=6686

http://www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/13856/margaret_ritchie/south_down/divisions?policy=6686

At the NI Assembly in April 2014, a petition of concern was attached to the motion, which invariably meant that the motion would not succeed. 8 of 14 SDLP MLAs voted in favour. 6 MLAs did not vote.



1a. Does your party visibly support LGBTQ equality issues in your party manifesto, on your website and in election campaigning materials? If YES, please give examples. If NO, please state why.

Sinn Féin openly supports LGB and T equality and examples of our support include:

- In this year's Westminster Manifesto, we included two specific actions relating to the LGB and T communities, which are:
 - Champion the cause of Transgender people to ensure that they have equal access to goods, facilities and services;
 - Support the right of the lesbian, gay and bisexual community to marriage equality;
- On our website, we have numerous news statements such as: the Gender Recognition Bill in the 26 counties; MLA and TD support of and attendance at LGB and T events; Minister John O'Dowd's support for the Youthnet App; welcoming and calling for equal rights for LGB and T people; the launch of our LGBT rights document.

We have outlined 10 Proposals for LGBT equality that Sinn Féin believe will lead to a more tolerant, rights based and equal society.

LINK:

http://www.sinnfein.ie/files/2014/LGBT_Document_June2014.pdf

1b. Please give any other examples of how your party supports LGBTQ visibility.

- We recently launched our LGBT rights document, "EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, SOLIDARITY – Fighting with PRIDE for LGBT Rights in Ireland".
(see PDF document in 1a)
- We proposed and are spearheading the Sexual Orientation Strategy. The Strategy has key objectives to promote: an environment free from harassment and bullying and equality of opportunity for LGB people. The Strategy is currently being developed;
- We are calling for the introduction of gender recognition legislation in the 26 Counties
- We have proposed over a dozen motions at our Ard Fheisenna over the last 7 years in support of LGB and T rights and issues. All motions passed unopposed;
- We proposed and passed a motion calling for a third gender option of "other" to be included in all Sinn Féin forms as a means of being more inclusive of transgender people;
- Sinn Féin actively campaign for marriage equality north and south.

2a. What is your party policy on tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

Sinn Féin has worked hard to tackle homophobia and transphobia in our schools:

- We have called for an island-wide strategy to deal with homophobia;
- In the Department of Education in the 6 counties:
 - Minister John O'Dowd introduced an all-encompassing anti-bullying policy which states that all forms of bullying are wrong, regardless of motivation. This obviously includes homophobic bullying;
 - All schools in the 6 counties are legally obliged to have an anti-bullying policy, and the Department sets guidelines as to how they are developed, including the definition that all bullying is wrong, regardless of motivation;
- OFMdfM's Sexual Orientation Strategy includes a section on education to deal head on with homophobic bullying, sex education, counselling services, teacher training, further education, and stereotyping;
- Our LGBT rights document contains three proposals specific to homophobia and transphobia in schools.

2b. What is your party's record in actively tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

- Our Dáil team has put motions forward against homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools, and we have proposed legislation to combat homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools;
- In the Department of Education in the 6 counties:
 - The Department of Education funds and is a member of the Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF). There's a Regional Anti-Bullying Coordinator who's responsible for implementing the 3 year anti-bullying strategy, including making arrangements to promote an annual Anti-Bullying Week. There is a range of different Task Groups focusing on anti-bullying themes; one of the groups focuses on Homophobic Bullying; another focuses on Transphobic Bullying. Each ELB has a designated officer who works with schools to tackle bullying through assisting in the development of whole school policies and supporting individual pupils who have been victims of bullying;
 - Since coming into office John O'Dowd has had a directive in place that any report of bullying received by the Department, must be brought to his personal attention.

3a. What is your party's policy on addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

Sinn Féin has strongly opposed the decision taken by the former DUP Health Minister Edwin Poots in the North to ban gay men from donating blood. We will continue to stand up against such discrimination and ensure that the Health Minister fully complies with the court judgments and his equality obligations as a member of the Executive and Assembly.

Sinn Féin are committed to securing access to appropriate healthcare for all. In particular we recognise that transgender citizens should have access to appropriate healthcare including specialist treatment and gender reassignment where needed.

3b What is your party's record in actively addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

Sinn Féin has strongly opposed the decision taken by the former DUP Health Minister Edwin Poots in the North to ban gay men from donating blood. Sinn Féin are committed to securing access to appropriate healthcare for all. We recognise that transgender citizens should have access to appropriate healthcare, including specialist treatment and gender reassignment where needed. We are conscious that further work needs to be done. We know there are difficulties in data collection given that the vast majority of gay men never inform their GP of their sexual orientation and this practice of 'don't ask and don't tell' permeates throughout and means that little or no data is available to underpin policy specifically designed to tackle health inequalities for LBG&T people. However our Party has been to the forefront of addressing issues such as mental health and suicide, both of which are areas of concern to the LGBTQ community. Additionally we have actively challenged cultural attitudes within health institutions and staff to ensure that everyone is treated equally.

4a. Does your party support Equal Marriage for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland?

Yes. Sinn Féin actively campaign for marriage equality north and south. Sinn Féin have put forward motions for marriage equality before the Assembly and local councils across Ireland. Representatives from the Marriage Equality Campaign gave a keynote address at Sinn Féin Ard Fheis 2015 alongside elected representatives from Sinn Féin LGBT.

4b. What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?

- In the 6 counties, we were the only party to have all MLAs bring forward motions in support of

equal marriage. These motions brought forward Catriona Ruane were blocked by the DUP using a petition of concern.

- Equal marriage was raised during the constitutional convention in the 26 counties. We supported the vote to change the Constitution to allow for civil marriage for LGBT people,
- In our LGBT rights document, we have called for:
 - o A date for a constitutional referendum in the 26 counties on equal marriage;
 - o Legislation to provide for civil marriage for LGBT people in the 26 counties;
 - o Equal treatment across Ireland of prospective LGB and T parents in reproductive and adoptive services, and in related social and other public services;
 - o The law to treat all children equally regardless of family status or the sexual orientation or gender identity of their parents.

5a. Does your party support the Conscience Clause?

No.

5b. What is your party's record in actively opposing the Conscience Clause?

Sinn Féin has openly opposed the Conscience Clause:

- We were at the forefront of protests against the Conscience Clause across the 6 counties;
- We made numerous public statements to the media and at Stormont opposing the Clause;
- At this year's Ard Fheis, we proposed and passed a motion opposing attempts by the DUP to pass their so-called 'Conscience Clause' which would seek to deny equal rights to LGBTI citizens.
- We led and signed a Petition of Concern, effectively ensuring that the Conscience Clause could not pass into legislation.

6a. Does your party support a total ban on gay men giving blood?

No.

6b. What's your party's track record in opposing the blood ban for gay men?

Sinn Féin has a strong track record opposing the blood ban for gay men:

- MLA Maeve McLaughlin, chair of the 6 counties Health Committee, has been our spokesperson on this issue. She has been open in her opposition to the ban and has spoken to the media and issued multiple press statements where she makes it clear that Sinn Féin is unequivocally opposed to the ban;
- Before Maeve took over as chair of the Health Committee, Sue Ramsey was chair. Then, she spoke out strongly against the blood ban and she openly supported lifting the ban;

- In the 26 counties, we have called for the Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) to review its policy on blood donations from men who have sex with men;
- We have proposed and passed Ard Fheis motions opposing the blood ban.

7. Does your party have any LGBTQ-identified candidates standing in the 2015 General Election?

None of our Westminster candidates are identified LGBTQ. Sinn Féin Westminster 2015 candidates actively work in solidarity with the LGBT community to create positive change in our society. Sinn Féin Westminster actively engage with our All-Ireland LGBT group. Sinn Féin LGBT is a strong and active group with convenors and members who are active north and south. Sinn Féin LGBT are driving forward policy and campaigning on LGBT issues and work with membership across the party and Sinn Féin elected representatives within local councils, the Assembly, the Dáil, Westminster and the European Parliament. Members of Sinn Féin LGBT hold elected positions at local government level.

8. Does your party have any mandatory training or education for staff around LGBTQ issues? If NO, do you plan to change this? Please outline when.

From a recent Ard Fheis, Sinn Féin passed a motion to ensure that all full-time activists would have a general education and training programme made available to them dealing with general LGB and T equality awareness issues. We are currently developing this programme and plan to roll it out to activists when completed.

9. Trans* communities in the UK And Ireland have united to produce a simple three point manifesto that they are asking all 2015 Election candidates to support or decline. It takes less than a minute to read and you can find it at www.transmanifesto.org.uk. Does your party support or decline the three main principles?

We support the three main principles in the trans manifesto and we are in the process of bringing forward motions in several councils across the 6 counties calling for council to adopt the manifesto.

EDIT NOTE: Answers 1a, 1b, 2a, 3b and 4b were edited minimally to keep within the given 150-word limit per question. Most deleted text was repeated information or details on policies, most of which can be found in the PDF document link in answer 1a.

Due care was taken not to delete important points.

INDEPENDENT FACT CHECK

This fact check is based on available public information and not on personal opinion. The aim of the check is to ensure that the factual information supplied by all parties is in their answers is correct.

2b. What is your party's record in actively tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

Sinn Fein MLAs have been chosen as the Minister of Education since 1999. Martin McGuinness held office from 1999 to 2002. Catriona Ruane held office from 2007 to 2011. John O'Dowd is the current Minister and will hold office until 2016.

Sinn Fein introduced legislation in the Dail in December 2012, to address bullying. No legislation as yet has been introduced in Northern Ireland. In June 2014, Minister O'Dowd has signalled his intention to bring forward legislation.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/sinn-fein-bullying-schools-712049-Dec2012/>

<http://www.theyworkforyou.com/ni/?id=2014-06-23.6.98>

4b What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?

Correction: Other parties have had all MLAs vote in favour of marriage. In April 2014 both NI21 MLAs and the sole Green MLA all voted in favour of Marriage Equality.





1a Does your party visibly support LGBTQ equality issues in your party manifesto, on your website and in election campaigning materials? If YES, please give examples. If NO, please state why.

Yes. The manifesto of the Green Party in Northern Ireland explicitly commits us to combating homophobia and transphobia, and to seeking equality as of right for the LGBTQ community, including extending equal marriage to Northern Ireland. Our candidates and their election literature will explicitly talk about equality on the basis of sexual orientation and gender (inclusive of gender identity). Our candidate in South Belfast, Clare Bailey, spoke at the conscience clause rally and a photograph from this event will be included in her literature. We have established a new Queer Greens group, which has representation on the party's Executive Committee and can propose rule changes (such as quotas or targets) and policy changes, and we regularly have comment, blogs and press releases attributed from this group on the party website.

Within the party we use "Queer" to mean the entire community, as decided by our LGBTQ caucus, the Queer Greens. As such, some of our responses will use this terminology.

1b. Please give any other examples of how your party supports LGBTQ visibility.

As a Party with 1 MLA and only 3 Councillors, there are some limits on what we can achieve. However, we hope that what evidence we can outline, will show our full commitment to the community.

In February of this year, the Party re-constituted our Queer Greens Group. This group will have representation on the Party executive and we envisage that this will further reinforce our Party's commitment to these issues.

The re-establishment of this group is something that the party very publicly announced and is something that we are very proud of.

We have a regular visible presence at the various Prides throughout Northern Ireland as well as rallies and protests such as the protest against the Conscience Clause.

This is something that our Party are working to continue to promote and we expect that our Queer Green group will lead us in this.

2a. What is your party policy on tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

We support the idea of such training. Our Party has repeatedly lobbied for and challenged OFMDFM to bring forward a sexual orientation strategy. This would be the best strategic way to begin to address outstanding inequalities in sexual orientation. We also support a gender strategy which is fully inclusive of trans* people. We also support inclusive sex and relationship education which does not focus on cis gender and heterosexual relationships, as we recognise the different education needs of the wide variety of relationships which can exist

2b. What is your party's record in actively tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

The Green Party supports an education system that celebrates and promotes diversity and acceptance. We believe that issues of sexual orientation and gender identity should be mainstreamed in the curriculum. Teachers should access mandatory training on these issues, including training in how to address transphobic or homophobic bullying. Sex and relationship education should be fully inclusive and age-appropriate, taught from a young age to promote values of respect and consent, and to provide safe advice for all kinds of relationships. The party has been challenging the Minister for Education for a number of years on these issues. We support the Minister in his commitment to bringing forward anti-bullying legislation and have repeatedly called for a review of the failure to designate schools under Section 75.

LINKS:

<http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2013/07/06/northern-ireland-mps-participate-in-fieece-debate-around-lgbt-issues/>

<http://www.theyworkforyou.com/ni/?id=2012-09-17.5.12>

3a. What is your party's policy on addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

We have long campaigned for a robust sexual orientation strategy. We believe that an inclusive gender strategy and a sexual orientation strategy would make significant impact ameliorating the health inequalities experienced by these communities. Actions to deepen queer equality and liberation and promote diversity and acceptance will go some way to redressing these.

We believe that resources should be targeted at need.

We believe that where there is an evidence base of health inequalities experienced by queer people, it is incumbent on the Department of Health and its arms-length bodies to develop and resource strategic interventions to redress these inequalities and prioritise queer populations.

We also support increased accessibility to healthcare for trans* people. We strongly believe that healthcare should be accessible to everyone and that gender and/or sexual orientation should only affect healthcare provision where it is directly relevant to the service provided, and then only in a constructive way, never punitive.

We also have a policy to make conversion therapies for LGBTQ people illegal.

3b What is your party's record in actively addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

Alongside campaigning for the sexual orientation strategy, the Party has repeatedly and consistently challenged homophobia and transphobia regardless of where this has come from. We will continue to do so. In particular, we have challenged some of the decisions taken at Stormont which will only serve to reinforce prejudice and discrimination against queer people and exacerbate the health inequalities experienced by this community.

LINKS:

<https://sammymorse.wordpress.com/2013/02/20/steven-agnew-cleans-arlene-fosters-clock-on-gay-marriage/>

<http://www.greenparty.org/green-mla-highly-critical-of-reparative-therapy-conference/>

4a. Does your party support Equal Marriage for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland?

Yes. We support freedom of religion and freedom from religion. We believe that faith groups should be able to decide for themselves if they wish to solemnise same-sex weddings and this will work similarly to the recognition of divorce in the UK, whereby individual religious organisations can choose whether or not to recognise it or not, but it is state-recognised. We also support humanist groups being allowed to conduct same-sex marriages.

4b. What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?

We have a very proud track record on this issue. We put a motion forward in 2011 in support of equal marriage. Unfortunately, as a minor Party, we could not get this through the business committee in the Assembly. Thankfully in 2012, Sinn Fein supported Steven Agnew's motion and this was debated in October 2012. We lost by 4 votes on this occasion. We have a party policy in favour of equal marriage, and expect our representatives to vote accordingly.

We see it as a key issue that our representatives cannot compromise on. If members from both the SDLP and Alliance Party had voted with their respective party policy, we would have achieved a significant majority. See link below to original motion on marriage equality.

There have been two more motions on this issue, which have not yet received a majority.

On both occasions, Alliance and SDLP MLAs failed to support their party policy.

LINK:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CBaQeyCwTA

5a. Does your party support the Conscience Clause?

No. We have been unequivocal in our opposition to this amendment. This would create exemption from equality laws for one group of people only against one other group of people. This is damaging to community relation, is a poorly considered amendment and is a retrograde step in achieving queer equality and liberation.

5b. What is your party's record in actively opposing the Conscience Clause?

Clare Bailey spoke strongly at the protest against the conscience clause on behalf of the party. We have uploaded and widely shared footage of this speech through our social media platforms, and posted an article from Clare on our main party website. Our party has confirmed that we will join Sinn Fein and NI21 in bringing forward a petition of concern should this amendment reach the assembly floor. This will effectively veto this amendment. Although the petition of concern mechanism will effectively make our votes redundant (as we do not designate as unionist or nationalist) we are prepared to use it for the greater good and to stop attempted erosion of queer equality legislation.

LINK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=la9kkjwHQsY>

6a. Does your party support a total ban on gay men giving blood?

No. We support evidence based policy and fully support the implementation of the SABTO recommendations from 2011.

6b. What's your party's track record in opposing the blood ban for gay men?

We would move Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK and change the deferral period from a lifetime ban, to 1 year for those men who have sex with men who have not been sexually active. We have been challenging the Minsters for Health on this issue since 2011. And we have exposed the cost of these issues to the public purse. We hoped that the changeover from Minister Poots to Minister Wells

would have seen a change in policy, particularly with the admission that there is NO evidence to support the continued lifetime ban. We will continue to lobby until this change is brought about, and will continue to expose the misuse of public funds to support personal prejudices. We strive for policy that is informed by evidence and expert opinion rather than homophobia, and have publicly said so on our website:

LINKS:

<http://www.greenpartyni.org/bailey-blood-ban-policy/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-30878210>

7. Does your party have any LGBTQ-identified candidates standing in the 2015 General Election?

No. We have nominated 5 candidates for Westminster 2015. None of these are publicly out as LGBT – though all fully support the party's position on these issues, and one of them, Clare Bailey, helped in setting up the newly established Queer Greens, a group with a growing and active membership. We fully expect that this will translate into candidates in forthcoming elections. We also have a party Equalities Officer who is LGBTQ and sits on the Executive Committee and is aiming to have openly LGBTQ-identifying candidates standing in upcoming elections where there will be more Green Party Candidates running.

8. Does your party have any mandatory training or education for staff around LGBTQ issues? If NO, do you plan to change this? Please outline when.

No. We fully expect that the work of the newly established Queer Greens will begin to make changes on these issues. We offer training and information days on various topics for members and hope to include LGBTQ issues in these. We have also had a presentation by GenderJam (a charity and community for young transgender, intersex and questioning people) to our Queer Greens group and hope to invite them to do training for all members in future on trans* issues; we hope to have training and information days on similar issues across other marginalised groups. We are in the process of putting together a full accessibility document which includes accessibility and terminology advice for the inclusion of LGBTQ people in all levels of the party - this will be made available to all members, and will be strongly encouraged reading for all of the Executive Committee and organisers of local groups.

9. Trans* communities in the UK And Ireland have united to produce a simple three point manifesto that they are asking all 2015 Election candidates to support or decline. It takes less than a minute to read and you can find it at www.transmanifesto.org.

Does your party support or decline the three main principles?

The party supports the three main principles of the trans manifesto:

- Regard trans individuals as equal citizens with equal rights,
- Empower trans individuals to be authorities on all aspects of their own lives, and
- Encourage diverse, representative, realistic and positive portrayals of trans individuals.

INDEPENDENT FACT CHECK

This fact check is based on available public information and not on personal opinion. The aim of the check is to ensure that the factual information supplied by all parties is in their answers is correct.

Factual information all clear.

We were unable to check if the Trans* Manifesto had officially been signed at time of publishing due to website being down.

**ELECTION
2015**



1a Does your party visibly support LGBTQ equality issues in your party manifesto, on your website and in election campaigning materials? If YES, please give examples. If NO, please state why.

Yes. Our manifesto contains a specific section on LGBTQ equality issues. This is also hosted on our website along with press statements in relation to LGBTQ issues. (www.allianceparty.org) We have also highlighted issues such as the conscience clause in recent election material.

1b. Please give any other examples of how your party supports LGBTQ visibility.

We have selected a number of openly-gay candidates for election to Westminster and to local councils. Several LGBTQ councillors have been elected. We have also raised LGBTQ issues in the Assembly, including a motion calling for a Single Equality Bill and rejecting the conscience clause, questioning OFMdFM over the lack of progress with the sexual equality strategy and questioning the Health Minister over the blood ban for gay men and the ban on adoption by unmarried couples.

In his Ministerial role, Stephen Farry has produced a LGB workplace strategy and David Ford has highlighted the particular needs of LGBTQ people in the justice system.

2a. What is your party policy on tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

We believe the Department for Education should produce guidance for schools on tackling homophobic bullying. This should be in place as soon as possible and supported by a wider Sexual Orientation Strategy.

2b. What is your party's record in actively tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

Alliance MLAs have questioned the Education Minister on the failure to produce guidance on homophobic bullying.

During 2013, Stephen Farry's Department conducted an audit of how our colleges and universities were taking forward policies to combat homophobia. He has been a strong advocate of ensuring these policies are effective.

3a. What is your party's policy on addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

Alliance is deeply concerned about health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people. These inequalities arise from several different barriers to fair access including; a lack of knowledge about LGBTQ health issues, lower or delayed rates of attendance at screening etc. and barriers to communication.

3b What is your party's record in actively addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

Alliance have raised individual issues that have prevented access to health services by LGBT people directly with the Minister in the Assembly chamber, through committee work and through correspondence.

4a. Does your party support Equal Marriage for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland?

Yes/ Civil marriage should be available to same-sex couples on the same basis as different-sex couples. We do not believe that religious institutions should be required to conduct such marriages if they do not wish to do so.

4b. What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?

We have updated our party policy to reflect this and made this position clear in our manifesto.

5a. Does your party support the Conscience Clause?

No.

5b. What is your party's record in actively opposing the Conscience Clause?

Alliance tabled debated a motion in the Assembly which specifically rejected the proposed conscience clause as part of a wider reform of equality legislation.

Naomi Long spoke at a major rally in opposition to the clause.

6a. Does your party support a total ban on gay men giving blood?

No. We believe that gay men should be entitled to give blood on the same basis as those in the rest of the UK.

6b. What's your party's track record in opposing the blood ban for gay men?

We have challenged the relevant Ministers in both Westminster in order to ensure that this particular inequality is removed as soon as possible.

7. Does your party have any LGBTQ-identified candidates standing in the 2015 General Election?
Yes.

8. Does your party have any mandatory training or education for staff around LGBTQ issues? If NO, do you plan to change this? Please outline when.

Alliance has a small staff and currently there is no mandatory education around LGBTQ issues. We will introduce such training if a need for it arises.

9. Trans* communities in the UK And Ireland have united to produce a simple three point manifesto that they are asking all 2015 Election candidates to support or decline. It takes less than a minute to read and you can find it at www.transmanifesto.org.uk. Does your party support or decline the three main principles?

We support the three main principles.

INDEPENDENT FACT CHECK

This fact check is based on available public information and not on personal opinion. The aim of the check is to ensure that the factual information supplied by all parties is in their answers is correct.

4a Does your party support Equal Marriage for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland?

The Alliance Party have 1 MP at Westminster. There were 4 relevant votes in relation to Equal Marriage at Westminster. Naomi Long was absent for 1 and voted in favour 3 times.

http://www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/13814/naomi_long/belfast_east/divisions?policy=6686

4b What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?

The most recent debate and motion on Marriage Equality was in April 2014. 4 Alliance MLAs voted in favour of the Marriage Equality Motion. David Ford, Stephen Farry, Anna Lo and Chris Lyttle. The Alliance Party have 8 MLAs.

2 MLAs voted against the motion. Trevor Lunn and Judith Cochrane.

2 MLAs, Stewart Dickson and Kieran McCarthy were not present/did not vote. The official report can be found here.

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/plenary/details.aspx?&aff=2482&per=307&sel=1&ind=0&prv=0&doc=195843&pn=0&tab=4&sid=ms&cid=&cn>

ELECTION
2015

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT



People Before Profit contributed their answers for this Updated Version.

1a Does your party visibly support LGBTQ equality issues in your party manifesto, on your website and in election campaigning materials? If YES, please give examples. If NO, please state why.

Yes, we regularly produce material both in leaflet format and online that raises awareness of LGBTQ issues. Our candidate for Westminster Gerry Carroll has a strong record on LGBTQ rights, and this is mentioned in his manifesto.

1b. Please give any other examples of how your party supports LGBTQ visibility.

PBP has a long history of taking part in Pride events across Ireland. In Derry our members were central to forming the first Pride parade there. We have helped organise marches on a range of issues, from the gay blood ban, to opposition to homophobia and Transphobia in Russia and protests over homophobic remarks by politicians, including Jim Wells.

2a. What is your party policy on tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

PBP believe that we need a proactive and robust strategy to tackle homophobia and transphobia at every level of our society. We believe that people power and grassroots mobilisations is the best way to beat the bigots back. However, we also understand that the fight against homophobia and transphobia could be improved in our schooling system. We believe that teaching staff should be given proper training and that schools should take the issue of homophobic and transphobic bullying as serious as it takes other forms of bullying.

2b. What is your party's record in actively tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

We are a small party with limited resources. However, where initiatives emerge that we can lend support to we will actively and enthusiastically do so.

3a. What is your party's policy on addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

Austerity effects everyone, but it effects minority groups such as women and the LGBTQ community disproportionately. This means that in areas like

health LGBTQ people do not get the care they always need. We wish to work with the LGBTQ movement to fight austerity, and to give voice to specific demands that could improve the day to day lives of LGBTQ people, including in health.

3b What is your party's record in actively addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

We will actively support any initiative that seeks to readdress these inequalities.

4a. Does your party support Equal Marriage for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland?

100%.

4b. What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?

We have consistently called for equal marriage in the North. In the South we are actively involved in campaign for equal marriage. We recently helped launch the 'Liberation Campaign' which is campaigning for a Yes vote in the referendum, but also seeking to build networks of people committed to full liberation for LGBTQ people, not just formal legal equality.

5a. Does your party support the Conscience Clause?

No, we are 100% opposed to it.

5b. What is your party's record in actively opposing the Conscience Clause?

We have cooperated with LGBTQ groups and others across the North to help stop the clause. In Derry a number of our members were central to building the protest against the clause. We also helped build a public meeting against it. In Belfast we did the same and our councillor Gerry Carroll spoke on the main protest at city hall against the clause.

6a. Does your party support a total ban on gay men giving blood?

We are 100% opposed to the ban.

6b. What's your party's track record in opposing the blood ban for gay men?

We have consistently called on Stormont to lift this ban and have lent assistance to any event that seeks to end .

7. Does your party have any LGBTQ-identified candidates standing in the 2015 General Election?

Unfortunately not in this election. However, this is not reflective as we only have one candidate. In the last local election we stood two candidates, one of whom was Shá Gillespie, prominent LGBTQ campaigner in Derry. The chairperson of PBP is also the prominent feminist and LGBTQ campaigner Ailbhe Smyth.

8. Does your party have any mandatory training or education for staff around LGBTQ issues? If NO, do you plan to change this? Please outline when.

PBP organises regular discussions and day schools on all aspects of our policies, including on LGBTQ issues.

9. Trans* communities in the UK And Ireland have united to produce a simple three point manifesto that they are asking all 2015 Election candidates to support or decline. It takes less than a minute to read and you can find it at www.transmanifesto.org.uk. Does your party support or decline the three main principles?

We are fully supportive of this initiative.

INDEPENDENT FACT CHECK

This fact check is based on available public information and not on personal opinion. The aim of the check is to ensure that the factual information supplied by all parties is in their answers is correct.

Fact check is clear.

ELECTION
2015



The Ulster Unionist Party contributed their answers for this Updated Version.

1a Does your party visibly support LGBTQ equality issues in your party manifesto, on your website and in election campaigning materials? If YES, please give examples. If NO, please state why.

Yes. The Ulster Unionist Party visibly supports LGBT equality issues in our manifesto and on our website. In our 2015 Westminster manifesto we have a section titled 'Respecting all culture, faiths and sexualities' in which we make a commitment to ensure young people leave education with a better understanding of sexual and cultural diversity through age appropriate teaching.

1b. Please give any other examples of how your party supports LGBTQ visibility.

We have been at the fore of calling for the publication of Northern Ireland's Sexual Orientation Strategy. Our Party Leader, Mike Nesbitt, in particular has been very critical of its delay.

2a. What is your party policy on tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

Unfortunately we believe too many schools in Northern Ireland are not equipped to handle or respond to incidents of homophobia and transphobia. This is not a criticism on schools, but rather a lack of sufficient advice and guidance being provided by the Department of Education.

We believe Northern Ireland's anti-bullying legislation must be updated to place greater emphasis on homophobic bullying. No grant aided school sector should be allowed to opt out of any new regulations which emerge from this consultative and legislative process, in particular guidelines to direct schools to set up specific policies against homophobic bullying and to introduce the mandatory recording of specific types of bullying.

2b. What is your party's record in actively tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

We have actively participated in and contributed to a recent consultation process on bullying in schools. In it we have specifically called for regulations and guidelines for schools to be updated to deal with homophobia and transphobia. We noted that almost 45,000 children talked to ChildLine about

bullying in 2013. Over 1,400 young people talked to ChildLine about racist bullying. Over half of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people have experienced homophobic bullying at school, and more than 16,000 young people are absent from school due to bullying.

On a number of occasions Ulster Unionist representatives have challenged the Department of Education on the issue of homophobic bullying. For instance - <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/ni/?id=2013-01-28.5.52>

3a. What is your party's policy on addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

The Ulster Unionist Party is committed to tackling health inequalities faced by all communities across Northern Ireland. We do recognise however that many LGBTQ people face particular challenges – not least greater issues of poor mental health. We are in the lead for calling for greater work to tackle Northern Ireland's endemic rates of poor mental health.

3b What is your party's record in actively addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

Our Health Committee members have regularly raised the unacceptably level of health inequalities across Northern Ireland.

We will shortly be challenging the Minister of Health how he and his Department ensure that healthcare staff and organisations have the required levels of knowledge and awareness of LGBTQ people and their health needs.

4a. Does your party support Equal Marriage for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland?

This is a matter of conscience for the Ulster Unionist Party so each of our elected representatives, at all levels, have a free vote on it.

4b. What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?

As it is a matter of conscience, Ulster Unionist representatives are entitled to vote either in favour or against. We never place a whip on these votes and therefore our representatives divide across the voting lobby.

5a. Does your party support the Conscience Clause?

This is a matter of conscience for the Ulster Unionist Party so each of our elected representatives, at all levels, have a free vote on it.

5b. What is your party's record in actively opposing the Conscience Clause?

The legislation regarding the Conscience Clause has not yet commenced its formal processes so there has been no opportunity to either oppose or support it.

6a. Does your party support a total ban on gay men giving blood?

No, definitely not. It was the Ulster Unionist Party who in 2011 first exposed the Health Minister's disgraceful decision not to expand the permission for gay men to donate blood to Northern Ireland. There is no doubt that the shameful decision has been taken on prejudice rather than medical evidence.

<http://uup.org/news/150/30/McCallister-Questions-Health-Minister-s-Motives-Over-Refusal-to-Lift-Ban-on-Gay-Blood-Donation-in-NI>

<http://uup.org/news/570/30/Health-Minister-letting-personal-prejudices-blur-Departmental-responsibilities-McCallister>

<http://uup.org/news/2252/30/Beggs-comments-on-ban-on-blood-donations-from-gay-men>

6b. What's your party's track record in opposing the blood ban for gay men?

From 2011 we have repeatedly and consistently opposed the ban on gay men donating blood. In 2012 our Party Conference also formally adopted the below policy position:

"Ending the discrimination of potential blood donors:

We are not prepared to accept the current blatant discrimination against homosexual men. There is no medical evidence which proves that homosexuals should not be allowed to donate blood. Currently all blood donations are already subject to a strict screening process for a number of diseases and no blood is used unless it is approved, regardless of the donor...

...Given last year's ruling by the Health Ministers in Scotland, England and Wales that the ban was going to be lifted in their respective regions, we believe a similar measure should be adopted in Northern Ireland."

7. Does your party have any LGBTQ-identified candidates standing in the 2015 General Election?

No, however we did have LGBTQ-identified

individuals come forward and seek selection for candidacy. Sexual orientation plays no role in the selection of Ulster Unionist candidates.

8. Does your party have any mandatory training or education for staff around LGBTQ issues? If NO, do you plan to change this? Please outline when.

We have no mandatory training or education for staff around LGBTQ issues but staff training is on-going and kept under constant review.

9. Trans* communities in the UK And Ireland have united to produce a simple three point manifesto that they are asking all 2015 Election candidates to support or decline. It takes less than a minute to read and you can find it at www.transmanifesto.org.uk. Does your party support or decline the three main principles?

Yes the Ulster Unionist Party supports the three main principles.

EDIT NOTE: Answer 6b. was edited minimally to keep within the given 150-word limit per question. Deleted text was detail on the policy.

Due care was taken to include important points.

INDEPENDENT FACT CHECK

This fact check is based on available public information and not on personal opinion. The aim of the check is to ensure that the factual information supplied by all parties is in their answers is correct.

1b. Please give any other examples of how your party supports LGBTQ visibility.

Mike Nesbitt MLA is the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party and Chair of the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

The development and delivery of a sexual orientation strategy is the responsibility of OFMDFM.

A motion calling for the development of a sexual orientation strategy was brought forward in December 2013 by 3 Alliance MLAs.

7 Ulster Unionist MLAs voted in favour of the Sexual Orientation Motion. Roy Beggs, Leslie Cree, Jo-Anne Dobson, Danny Kennedy, Danny Kinahan, Mike Nesbitt and Robin Swan.

The Ulster Unionist Party has 13 MLAs.

6 MLAs were not present/did not vote. Michael Copeland, Tom Elliot, Samuel Gardiner, Ross Hussey, Michael McGimpsey and Sandra Overend. The official report can be found [here](#).

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/plenary/details.asp?&ses=0&doc=174097&pn=0&sid=vdSf>

(Continued on next page)

(UUP Fact Check Continued)

4a Does your party support Equal Marriage for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland?

The Ulster Unionist Party does not have representation at Westminster.

The Party members have a free vote as indicated.

4b What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?

The most recent debate and motion on Marriage Equality was in April 2014.

2 Ulster Unionist MLAs voted in favour of the Marriage Equality Motion. Michael Copeland and Danny Kinahan. The Ulster Unionist Party have 13 MLAs.

10 MLAs voted against the motion. Roy Beggs, Leslie Cree, Jo-Anne Dobson, Tom Elliot, Samuel Gardiner, Ross Hussey, Danny Kennedy, Mike Nesbitt, Sandra Overend, Robin Swann, 1 MLAs, Michael McGimpsey was not present/did not vote. The official report can be found here:

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/plenary/details.aspx?&aff=2482&per=307&sel=1&ind=0&prv=0&doc=195843&pn=0&tab=4&sid=ms&cid=&cn>

5a Does your party support the Conscience Clause?

The Conscience Clause was launched at Stormont.

1 Ulster Unionist MLA was photographed at this launch.

ELECTION
2015



The DUP were asked by email (and through a follow-up phonecall to Party HQ) to take part in this survey. I was told that the request would be passed on. There has been no response. In lieu of an official party response, I have gathered some basic information via Google search and party materials that will attempt to answer some of the questions where possible.

1a Does your party visibly support LGBTQ equality issues in your party manifesto, on your website and in election campaigning materials? If YES, please give examples. If NO, please state why.

There is no mention of LGBTQ equality or LGBTQ issues in official DUP policies or materials.

1b. Please give any other examples of how your party supports LGBTQ visibility.

Former DUP MP Iris Robinson, wife of DUP leader Peter Robinson, claimed in the media that gay people were an "abomination", compared homosexuality to child abuse and declared her support for reparative therapy, which aims to "cure" LGBTQ people.

DUP MLA Tom Buchanan also referred to LGBTQ people as an "abomination" when speaking to a school assembly in 2013.

Magherafelt District DUP Cllr Paul McClean called for homosexuality to be made illegal in Northern Ireland in 2012.

2a. What is your party policy on tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

There is no mention of homophobic bullying, LGBTQ young people or awareness training in DUP education policy documents.

2b. What is your party's record in actively tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

No active record.

3a. What is your party's policy on addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

No official visible party line or mention in health policy.

3b What is your party's record in actively addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

No available information.

4a. Does your party support Equal Marriage for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland?

No. The DUP is opposed to marriage for same-sex couples and tabled a petition of concern ensuring the motion for Equality Marriage was blocked under the Northern Ireland Assembly's cross-community voting rules. They blocked Marriage Equality motions a total of three times in 2013.

4b. What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?

Not applicable.

5a. Does your party support the Conscience Clause?

Yes. The Conscience Clause, which aims to introduce an opt-out clause from LGBTQ equality legislation on the grounds of religious belief, was introduced by the DUP's Paul Givan and is actively supported by the party.

5b. What is your party's record in actively opposing the Conscience Clause?

None.

6a. Does your party support a total ban on gay men giving blood?

Yes. DUP Health Minister Edwin Poots maintained the total ban despite scientific evidence against it. A judge ruled the health minister did not have the power to keep the ban. It is estimated that over £40,000 of public money was used by the Department to challenge the ruling, despite medical and legal backing for the ban to be lifted. The current DUP health minister, Jim Wells, is still appealing the judgment.

6b. What's your party's track record in opposing the blood ban for gay men?

None.

7. Does your party have any LGBTQ-identified candidates standing in the 2015 General Election?

No.

8. Does your party have any mandatory training or education for staff around LGBTQ issues? If NO, do you plan to change this? Please outline when.

No.

9. Trans* communities in the UK And Ireland have united to produce a simple three point manifesto that they are asking all 2015 Election candidates to support or decline. It takes less than a minute to read and you can find it at www.transmanifesto.org.uk. Does your party support or decline the three main principles?

There is no mention of trans* people in any DUP materials.



TUV were asked by email to take part in this survey. There was no available phone number for a follow up call. There has been no response. In lieu of an official party response, I have gathered some basic information via Google search and party materials that will attempt to answer some of the questions where possible.

1a Does your party visibly support LGBTQ equality issues in your party manifesto, on your website and in election campaigning materials? If YES, please give examples. If NO, please state why.

No. Part Leader Jim Allister is outspokenly anti-gay.

1b. Please give any other examples of how your party supports LGBTQ visibility.

Some quotes from Jim Allister on the call for a Sexual Orientation Strategy in Northern Ireland: "Given the vast plethora of protection enjoyed by this group...there is patently no need for any more special treatment.

TUV doesn't believe we should be pandering to these demands for special pleading and special status by special interest campaign groups. There is no more need for a sexual orientation strategy than there is for a married couple strategy, a singles strategy or a divorcee strategy. The whole thing is an unnecessary nonsense, yet to dare to say that is to risk spurious allegations of homophobia from those who think they are special and everyone should pander to them. Well TUV is one party which won't.

A sexual orientation strategy will be but a building block in advancing the demand for same sex marriage and other LGBT demands."

2a. What is your party policy on tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

There is no mention of homophobic bullying, LGBTQ young people or awareness training in TUV education policy documents.

2b. What is your party's record in actively tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

None.

3a. What is your party's policy on addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

No official visible party line or mention in health policy, except for supporting the blood ban.

3b What is your party's record in actively addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

No available information.

4a. Does your party support Equal Marriage for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland?

No. TUV supports "traditional family values" in its most recent manifesto and is outspokenly opposed to Equal Marriage. They also call for Civil Partnerships to be abolished.

4b. What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?

No party support.

5a. Does your party support the Conscience Clause?

Yes. It has also called for the Equality Commission's funding to be cut because it took the case against Ashers Bakery.

5b. What is your party's record in actively opposing the Conscience Clause?

None.

6a. Does your party support a total ban on gay men giving blood?

Yes. Jim Allister supports the ban despite scientific evidence against it.

6b. What's your party's track record in opposing the blood ban for gay men?

None.

7. Does your party have any LGBTQ-identified candidates standing in the 2015 General Election?

No.

8. Does your party have any mandatory training or education for staff around LGBTQ issues? If NO, do you plan to change this? Please outline when.

No.

9. Trans* communities in the UK And Ireland have united to produce a simple three point manifesto that they are asking all 2015 Election candidates to support or decline. It takes less than a minute to read and you can find it at www.transmanifesto.org.uk. Does your party support or decline the three main principles?

There is no mention of trans* people in any UUP materials, except for "transsexuals", who they state should not be allowed to remain in established marriages after they legally transition.



The Workers Party were asked by email to take part in this survey. They have been in touch to apologise for the delay and would like to take part. A reply is forthcoming. In the meantime, I have gathered some basic information via Google search and party materials that will attempt to answer some of the questions where possible.

1a Does your party visibly support LGBTQ equality issues in your party manifesto, on your website and in election campaigning materials? If YES, please give examples. If NO, please state why.

Yes. In its official party political broadcast, the party openly stands against homophobia and also has statements on its website in support of LGBTQ equality issues.

1b. Please give any other examples of how your party supports LGBTQ visibility.
No info available.

2a. What is your party policy on tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?
No info available.

2b. What is your party's record in actively tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?
No info available.

3a. What is your party's policy on addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?
No info available.

3b What is your party's record in actively addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?
No info available.

4a. Does your party support Equal Marriage for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland?
Yes. The Workers Party supports Marriage Equality.

4b. What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?
No information, though there is strong support for the YES campaign in the South.

5a. Does your party support the Conscience Clause?
No. It is openly opposed to the Conscience Clause.

5b. What is your party's record in actively opposing the Conscience Clause?

The party has opposed the ban in official statements.

6a. Does your party support a total ban on gay men giving blood?

No. The party opposes the ban.

6b. What's your party's track record in opposing the blood ban for gay men?

None.

7. Does your party have any LGBTQ-identified candidates standing in the 2015 General Election?

No.

8. Does your party have any mandatory training or education for staff around LGBTQ issues? If NO, do you plan to change this? Please outline when.

No.

9. Trans* communities in the UK And Ireland have united to produce a simple three point manifesto that they are asking all 2015 Election candidates to support or decline. It takes less than a minute to read and you can find it at www.transmanifesto.org.uk. Does your party support or decline the three main principles?

There is no specific mention of trans* people in documents.

A large, light pink circular graphic containing the text 'ELECTION 2015' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, slanted upwards.



UKIP were asked by email to take part in this survey. Some emails were exchanged and I was told that the request would be passed on but there has been no response. I have gathered some basic information via Google search and party materials that will attempt to answer some of the questions where possible.

1a Does your party visibly support LGBTQ equality issues in your party manifesto, on your website and in election campaigning materials? If YES, please give examples. If NO, please state why.

There is no mention of LGBTQ issues in the UKIP manifesto. They are the only UK-wide main political party who don't address LGBTQ issues in their manifesto.

1b. Please give any other examples of how your party supports LGBTQ visibility.

No info available. While UKIP has an LGBT group, its Chairperson stepped down due to "failure of the leadership to set a gay-friendly tone." UKIP has been accused of homophobia after incidents in which members have
(i) accused LGBTQ campaigners of being like "Hitler's Nazis"
(ii) said that Equal Marriage will lead to incestuous unions
(iii) said that "gay folk are being used by the forces of evil"

2a. What is your party policy on tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

A leaflet distributed by the UKIP Christian Soldiers claimed that an effort to challenge homophobia in schools is a "recruitment drive for fresh blood" and amounts to "sexual grooming".

2b. What is your party's record in actively tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools? None.

3a. What is your party's policy on addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?
No info available.

3b What is your party's record in actively addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

No info available. UKIP leader Nigel Farage has

been accused of using HIV and AIDS shaming of migrant people as a fear tactic for gaining support.

4a. Does your party support Equal Marriage for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland?

No specific information. UKIP councillor David Silverster infamously claimed flooding in the UK in 2013 was God's revenge for legalising gay marriage.

4b. What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?
UKIP MEP David Coburn, who describes himself as gay, blasted same-sex marriage as "false b*ll*cks" that "makes a mockery of the holy sacrament of marriage".

5a. Does your party support the Conscience Clause?

No info available.

5b. What is your party's record in actively opposing the Conscience Clause?

No info available.

6a. Does your party support a total ban on gay men giving blood?

No info available.

6b. What's your party's track record in opposing the blood ban for gay men?

No info available.

7. Does your party have any LGBTQ-identified candidates standing in the 2015 General Election?

No.

8. Does your party have any mandatory training or education for staff around LGBTQ issues? If NO, do you plan to change this? Please outline when.

No.

9. Trans* communities in the UK And Ireland have united to produce a simple three point manifesto that they are asking all 2015 Election candidates to support or decline. It takes less than a minute to read and you can find it at www.transmanifesto.org.uk. Does your party support or decline the three main principles?

There is no specific mention of trans* people in documents.

Former UKIP MEP, Nikki Sinclair, was the first openly transgender parliamentarian in the UK. She left the party in 2010 and alleges that she was forced to come out as having a trans* history because of "outing" threats from former party colleagues.

NI CONSERVATIVES



NI Conservatives were asked by email to take part in this survey. There was no response. In lieu of an official party response, I have gathered some basic information via Google search and party materials that will attempt to answer some of the questions where possible.

1a Does your party visibly support LGBTQ equality issues in your party manifesto, on your website and in election campaigning materials? If YES, please give examples. If NO, please state why.

Not specifically in available Northern Ireland materials, website, policies or manifesto.

1b. Please give any other examples of how your party supports LGBTQ visibility.

The party has taken part in PRIDE ON THE HILL debate on LGBTQ issues.

2a. What is your party policy on tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

No info available.

2b. What is your party's record in actively tackling homophobia and transphobia through education and training in schools?

No info available.

3a. What is your party's policy on addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

No info available.

3b What is your party's record in actively addressing the serious health inequalities faced by LGBTQ people?

No info available.

4a. Does your party support Equal Marriage for same-sex couples in Northern Ireland?

No info available.

4b. What is your party's record in actively supporting Equal Marriage for same-sex couples?

No info available.

5a. Does your party support the Conscience Clause?

No info available.

5b. What is your party's record in actively opposing the Conscience Clause?

No info available.

6a. Does your party support a total ban on gay men giving blood?

No. The party opposes the ban.

6b. What's your party's track record in opposing the blood ban for gay men?

NI spokespeople have spoken against the ban in online media and called for Edmin Poots to return the money "wasted" on maintaining the ban.

7. Does your party have any LGBTQ-identified candidates standing in the 2015 General Election?

No.

8. Does your party have any mandatory training or education for staff around LGBTQ issues? If NO, do you plan to change this? Please outline when.

No information available.

9. Trans* communities in the UK And Ireland have united to produce a simple three point manifesto that they are asking all 2015 Election candidates to support or decline. It takes less than a minute to read and you can find it at www.transmanifesto.org.uk. Does your party support or decline the three main principles?

There is no specific mention of trans* people in documents.



As CISTA is a single issue party, campaigning only for the decriminalisation of marijuana for medical and recreational use, they do not have any specific information on LGBTQ issues in their manifesto, party materials or social networks. At a guess they would probably enjoy subverting the meaning of the often quoted Leviticus 20:13: "If a man lays with another man, he should be stoned."

**ELECTION
2015**

