

Liberal Democrats Policy Consultation

Equalities

Consultation Paper 118



Spring Conference 2014

Background

This consultation paper is presented as the first stage in the development of new Party policy in relation to policies on Equalities. It does not represent agreed Party policy. It is designed to stimulate debate and discussion within the Party and outside; based on the response generated and on the deliberations of the working group a full policy paper will be drawn up and presented to Conference for debate.

The paper has been drawn up by a working group appointed by the Federal Policy Committee and chaired by Belinda Brooks-Gordon. Members of the group are prepared to speak on the paper to outside bodies and to discussion meetings organised within the Party.

Comments on the paper, and requests for speakers, should be addressed to: Steve O'Neil, Equalities Working Group, Policy Unit, Liberal Democrats, 8 - 10 Great George Street, London, SW1P 3AE. Email: steve.oneil@libdems.org.uk

Comments should reach us as soon as possible, and no later than 4 April 2014

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1. Introduction

1.1 Liberal Democrats have long championed equality and diversity in society. Recent policy papers and motions including policy paper 108 *A Balanced Working Life* (2013), conference motion *A New Liberal Democrat Approach to Race Equality* (2013), along with policy motion *Equal Marriage in the UK* (2010) and policy paper 91, *Real Women* (2009) have continued this strong tradition. Liberal Democrats in Government have: delivered same-sex marriage, shared parental leave, improved support for childcare costs, reformed the Access to Work Scheme, introduced fairer pensions, and by April 2014, 60% of those who are taken out of income tax altogether will be women.

1.2 These achievements form an important part of the great progress that has been made in recent years to improve the lives of those groups who have historically been discriminated against. We now live in a society where the majority support equal marriage and equal relationships, career opportunities and entitlements. The majority of British people at least in theory no longer tolerate unjustified discrimination; there is greater awareness of the challenges presented by disability, and greater acceptance of a pluralism of religion and belief.

1.3 An important step in securing the rights of those groups who have faced discrimination in the past is to ensure they are supported by the law. The Equality Act 2010 was a significant step forward in this regard. It brought UK equality law together in a single piece of legislation. In particular it aimed to harmonise and in some cases extend existing discrimination law covering the 'protected characteristics'. These include gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. Liberal

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Democrats strongly support the need for law to defend the rights of all citizens to play a full part in an increasingly global society. However, we also recognise that a legal framework on its own will not deliver the society we want and that other measures will be needed.

1.4 It is important to remember that the Liberal Democrats did not win the election – no party did, and the Coalition requires compromise. Where this has been necessary, the Parliamentary Party has strived to ensure that all proposals put forward by Coalition Government are as fair and sustainable as possible. Liberal Democrats in Government, as they are in local government, have been working to secure the best possible deal for the British public. This Coalition Government has worked hard to repair and rebalance the economy, helping to create 1.6 million new private sector jobs since the election, strengthening Britain’s economy and building a fairer society. We want to ensure that barriers to opportunity and the loss of human potential are a thing of the past, so Liberal Democrats recognise that there is much more to do.

1.5 The Equalities Policy Working Group will set out to look at how the UK can be as inclusive, tolerant and fair a society as possible; in doing so it will make an assessment of the disadvantages faced by particular groups, with the focus on those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, though open to whether other groups need to be included. The group will consider the role played by the state, the third sector and the private sector in overcoming the barriers that prevent individuals being treated fairly and reaching their potential. The group have taken and will take further evidence from a wide range of organisations and individuals with specific expertise in this field. The chapters within this consultation paper are set out in relation to the numbers of people affected by each issue, in descending

order. **We now seek the views of the Party to help shape our final plans.**

2. Gender

2.1 Enormous strides have been made in the position of women in society. For example, 67% of working age women are in work, an increase from 53% in 1971. The education gap has been successfully closed in some areas, with girls outperforming boys in many subjects at GCSE and nearly half now gaining a degree. Women's health, including during pregnancy and maternity care, has also improved over the last few decades.

2.2 With the economic outlook improving we're seeing record levels of employment, with more men and women in work, but some inequalities remain. Many of these are rooted in women's traditional greater responsibilities for children, elder care and the household, as well as from deep-rooted prejudices. Additionally, any changes in the state provision of services will have a proportionately greater impact on women. There is still a significant pay gap between men and women and there are still comparatively few women in the highest earning and leadership positions. There are various challenges that prevent women from reaching their potential in the workplace – gaining the management skills to rise further in organisations, the affordability of childcare, the lack of flexible working practices, the opportunities for those in part-time work and how able women feel to enter and remain in traditionally male vocations all play a part.

2.3 In Government Liberal Democrats have taken steps to address these problems and have existing policy to go further. This consultation aims to build on policy paper 91, *Real Women* (2009), key proposals from which have been implemented in government, including the introduction of shared parental leave and the

extension of the entitlement to free early education for 2 to 4 year olds. It will also build on the proposals of policy *paper 108 A Balanced Working Life (2013)* in particular those to extend state funded childcare provision even further.

2.4 In recent years we have seen improved progress in the number of women in FTSE 100 directorships¹. However, Liberal Democrats believe it is important to end the ‘micro-inequalities’ that affect women throughout their working lives because a more diverse workplace does not only benefit women, but it is also good for business. The Women’s Business Council show how more diverse teams perform much better on hard performance measures such as staff retention, engagement, productivity, quality of work and team satisfaction in the workplace. Investors too have become more vocal in this issue. To this end, some European countries have introduced quota schemes to promote diversity on boards. There is also a persistent pattern of female under-representation within UK politics. Policy paper 117 *Power to the People (2014)* presents policies that aim to address under-representation of women and other groups including BAME, LGBT and disabled people.

2.5 The level of violence against women remains a grave concern. Liberal Democrats have led the way on these issues in Government, introducing new laws against stalking and forced marriage, and allocated £28 million to support victims of rape and domestic violence. We have also taken strong action on Female Genital Mutilation worldwide, spending up to £35 million with the aim of reducing FGM by 30% in 10 countries within the next 5

¹ Women on Boards, High Pay Centre, April 2013

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years. These issues are also addressed by the *Crime and Criminal Justice* consultation paper (2014).

2.6 There are also other challenges for women in the modern world. One concern is how women and girls are perceived by society, and the impact their portrayal in the media and fashion industries has on self-esteem. In this regard the prevalence of eating disorders, particularly amongst under 18s, is a concern.

Key Facts

1. The professional occupations associated with higher levels of pay remained more populated by men than women in 2013, with 37% of men employed in the upper middle skilled roles compared with 18% of women².
2. Men make up the majority of workers in the top 10% of earners for all employees but the gap is lower for those under 30years.
3. Research suggests that fewer than 1% of fathers take advantage of their full entitlement to paternity leave.
4. Approximately 85,000 women (and 9,000 men) are raped on average in England and Wales every year; over 40,000 women (and 4,000 men)³ are sexually assaulted each year; 1-in-5 women (aged 16-59) has experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 16⁴.

² Women in the Labour Market, ONS, September 2013

³ *An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales*, Joint Official Statistics Bulletin on Sexual Violence, MoJ, ONS, Home Office, January 2013

⁴ Ibid

5. According to the World Health Organisation, more than 100 million women and girls worldwide are living with the effects of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Three million girls are at risk each year in Africa alone. Although there is existing British legislation making it an offence to carry out, aid, abet or procure FGM services, to date no prosecutions have been made.
6. Around 1.5% of people suffer from eating disorders; they are nine times more prevalent in women than in men⁵.

Questions

1. *How can we ensure that more young women and girls study subjects such as science, technology, engineering and maths at A Level and beyond?*
2. *What more can be done to achieve equal pay for men and women?*
3. *How do we address the 'Pipeline Challenge' of women in middle management gaining the skills for board-level leadership?*
4. *How do we promote diversity at boardroom level while retaining flexibility for businesses to respond to changing conditions, and without additional regulation?*
5. *What sort of mentoring schemes or quota ideals might be encouraged to promote diversity at boardroom levels?*

⁵ Reported by Mind

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6. *How can we encourage more women entrepreneurs, and embed equality at ground level in the fastest growing sectors?*
7. *How do we remove the 'micro-inequalities' that impact women throughout their working lives?*
8. *How can we promote and encourage the positive role played by fathers?*
9. *How can we remove the barriers that pregnancy and parenthood place in the way of careers progression?*
10. *How can we encourage more organisations to implement flexible working practices?*
11. *What role can better, more affordable, childcare arrangements play in helping parents to achieve a balanced working life?*
12. *How can we reduce violence against women and girls? What is the role of safe transport? How can we better support victims of sexual assault and rape?*
13. *How should we respond to the problem of female genital mutilation?*
14. *What measures would protect young women and girls from body image pressure?*
15. *How should the state work with schools and the relevant industries and institutions to promote and encourage positive treatment of women and girls?*

16. *Are there any changes we wish to see in the Equality Act relating to sex and gender? Should the Liberal Democrats push for faster implementation of the provisions in Section 78 of the Equality Act 2010?*

3. Age

3.1 The UK population is getting older; according to current forecasts by 2025 20% of the population will be over 65 years of age. Recent years have seen great strides for older people in the UK with improved healthy life expectancy, improving pensions and growing national wealth. However at the same time we have seen a significant drop in older people's participation in the workplace and people feeling isolated from families and friends; this combined with increased demand for healthcare and pensions presents new challenges in providing older people the support they need. The consultation paper *Age Proofing the UK* looks in detail at these issues.

3.2 Since entering Government, Liberal Democrats have taken steps to ensure that older people, particularly those out of work, do not fall into poverty. These include: the 'triple lock' on state pensions, guaranteeing automatic workplace pensions for 11 million workers and committing to a cap on long-term adult care costs. It is also important that employers ensure older people are able to contribute in the workplace; Liberal Democrats have protected the rights of older people in work, making it illegal for employees to be forced to retire at 65. Greater instances of ill health among older people present barriers to participation and there are particular challenges for those who also have caring responsibilities.

3.3 The possibility of age discrimination in the provision of services also needs to be considered. For instance, it is important to ensure private companies do not discriminate unfairly on the basis of age, for example when providing motor, health or travel insurance. It is important that 'age' is not used unjustifiably in the

provision of services, for example, in relation to a perceived inability to benefit from treatment.

3.4 There are also challenges for young people. Even before the 2008 recession there were particular difficulties for young people in looking to enter the labour market. Liberal Democrats in Government have led the way on addressing this through a focus on generating apprenticeships, training and work experience for young people. We're proud to have seen youth unemployment fall by 39,000 in the last quarter, but too many young people remain out of full time education or employment.

Key Facts

1. Today there are more people over the age of 65 years in the UK than there are children under 15 years.
2. Between 1965 and 2012 the UK saw a significant 24% drop in the number of men aged 55 years and over participating in the labour market.
3. According to the UK Workplace Employment Relations Survey (2011) people over 50 years report receiving fewer days of training than their younger counterparts.
4. A fifth of 18-24yr olds in the UK are not in full-time education or employment.

Questions

17. *How can we reduce discrimination in the workplace on the basis of age?*

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18. *Are there age discriminatory practices in the provision of services, for example is it right that travel, health or motor insurance be withdrawn over a certain age? Are there any legislative changes that could address age discrimination in the provision of services?*
19. *What more can we do to reduce youth unemployment further? How can we improve older people's chances of entering the workplace?*
20. *How do we improve services and outcomes for older LGBT+ people while meeting demographic and financial challenges?*
21. *How can we improve the provision of support for older LGBT+ people if they face being evicted from their home?*
22. *How can we make travel more accessible for older people?*
23. *How can we improve access to health information and health care for young people?*

4. Disability and Mental Health

4.1 As the UK population has got older, thanks to the great strides made in technology and healthcare, the number of people with a disability has increased to 11 million people. This includes 45% of those over 45 years of age. Disabled people are much less likely to be employed than those without impairments and disability has obvious implications for health. Access to health care, leisure activities and transport are important challenges for the disabled population. Disabled people, however, have different needs, and greater awareness of invisible disabilities is an essential component to policy in this area.

4.2 The employment rate for disabled people rose from 44.5% in 2002 to 48.9% last year. This progress shows there are steps that can help disabled people in the workplace. Yet there remains a gap between the employment rate for disabled and non-disabled people. Reduced hours, flexible or modified working patterns and reasonable adjustments all play a role in closing this gap. In addition, measures championed by the Liberal Democrats in Government, such as grants of up to £3,200 as part of the Access to Work scheme have helped. Increasing the take up of such schemes is a challenge, of 740,000 disabled people in London, only around 3,000 are currently benefiting from Access to Work.

4.3 It is also important that the state provides financial support to those who need it. Liberal Democrats have done much to improve support for disabled people - uprating disability benefits at a higher rate than others, making improvements to the Personal Independence Payment and improving the work capability assessment, introduced under Labour.

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4.4 Mental health and learning disabilities remain under recognised and it is vital to make the right care and culturally sensitive support available to people with them. Liberal Democrats believe more can be done to improve the health of millions by banishing the stigma and unfairness surrounding the perception and treatment of mental health illnesses; this is echoed in *84 Empowerment, Fairness and Quality in Health Care* (2008) and conference motion *Equality and Fairness in Mental Health Provision* (2008). Achieving this requires making the appropriate funds available within the NHS budget for mental health services, and in February 2011, former Liberal Democrat Health Minister Paul Burstow MP announced £400m of funding to allow access to modern psychological therapies.

4.5 In the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Coalition Government set out for the first time ever that mental health and physical health deserve equal recognition, a significant legislative step.

4.6 In January 2014, Nick Clegg and Minister of State for Care and Support Norman Lamb MP launched the Mental Health Action Plan, which details how the right care and support can be made available to people with mental health illnesses and learning disabilities. This Action Plan includes expanded support for talking therapies so that 300,000 more people will benefit, a nation-wide roll-out of talking therapies for children and young people by 2018, and from 2015 the Government will introduce new standards for mental health access and waiting times.

4.7 Even when compared to people with physical disabilities those with mental health conditions and learning disabilities are considerably disadvantaged in terms of employment, type of work

and level of unemployment⁶. It is important that employers understand these complex conditions, so that they can provide the appropriate support in the workplace.

Key Facts

1. Of all disabled people, 47.8% currently work compared to 75.9% of non-disabled people⁷.
2. Disabled people are most likely to mention modified hours/days or reduced work hours as something that has helped/could help them into work⁸.
3. For all adults who report at least one impairment the most commonly-cited life areas in which a barrier was experienced were transport and leisure activities⁹. Disabled people remain significantly less likely to participate in cultural, leisure and sporting activities¹⁰.
4. Mental health charity Mind report that 9 in 10 people using mental health services feel stigma and discrimination has had a negative impact on their lives. This can be exacerbated with dual discrimination, for example, on the basis of race or sexual orientation.
5. One in ten children aged between 5 and 16 years has a mental health problem, and many continue to have mental health

⁶ Labour Force Survey, Q3 2012

⁷ Measuring National Well-being, ONS, 2012

⁸ Labour Force Survey, Q3, 2012

⁹ Life Opportunities Survey: Conclusion', ONS, 12th November 2012

¹⁰ Ibid.

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problems into adulthood. Self-harming in young people is not uncommon; 10 - 13 per cent of 15 - 16 year-olds have self-harmed¹¹.

Questions

24. *What barriers are preventing more disabled people and those with mental health problems/ learning disabilities from finding work and how can we remove them?*
25. *How can we encourage investment in assistive technologies which support disabled people?*
26. *How can we increase understanding and raise awareness of mental health problems and learning disabilities in the workplace?*
27. *What barriers remain for disabled people in accessing public services?*
28. *Should all providers have to carry out an accessibility audit?*
29. *How can we ensure that disabled people have better access to transport?*
30. *How can we continue to promote the full participation of disabled people in society, including in sport and leisure activities?*

¹¹ *No Health Without Mental Health: A Cross-Government Mental Health Outcomes Strategy for People of All Ages*, HM Government, 2011

31. *How can the processes of the welfare system be improved to better support disabled people?*
32. *How should we respond to problems regarding the introduction of the Work Capability Assessment?*
33. *How can we encourage all organisations to train front line service staff on disability and mental health issues?*

5. Race

5.1 The British population has become increasingly more ethnically and culturally diverse. Since 1991, the population with a non-white ethnic background has more than doubled and now accounts for 14 per cent of the population. The trends for different ethnic groups vary greatly, but it is clear that on many counts ethnic minorities are still worse off than white British people. While the gap in employment levels between the Black and Ethnic Minority population and the white population has narrowed, the unemployment rate is still twice as high for working age people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Ethnic minorities also have generally worse health than the white population and there remains a gap in educational attainment and teacher representation for some ethnic groups.

5.2 As outlined in the policy motion *A New Liberal Democrat Approach to Race Equality* (2013), Liberal Democrats in Government have ensured that equality, diversity and human rights feature in Citizenship classes and that a number of different international cultures are covered in History classes as part of the new National Curriculum. The policy motion also included the following proposals to address economic and education inequities, and 'micro-inequalities':

The full implementation of the Codes of Practice in the Equality Act 2010:

- Require private sector and third sector organisations in receipt of public money to undertake equality monitoring and, for the relevant public authority to publish its results

- Ensure the school curriculum reflects the diversity of the country
- Require universities to be transparent about their selection criteria
- Implement the Children Commissioner’s report into the prevention of exclusion and reinstate the rights of appeals panels for excluded pupils

5.3 Wider issues also need to be addressed. Ethnic minorities are overrepresented in the prison population, in stop and search figures, and there remain tensions in relations between some ethnic minority communities and the police. There are also tensions within certain ethnic minority communities, for example due to caste. At the same time around one in six non-white citizens still fear racially motivated crime. These issues are also addressed by the *Crime and Criminal Justice* consultation paper (2014).

5.4 For some ethnic minority communities, where English is a second language, feeling engaged with the English speaking community can be a difficulty as can fully benefiting from public services. The policy paper *Making Migration Work for Britain* (2014) includes proposals to improve English language skills in communities where this is a problem. This builds on measures Liberal Democrats have taken in Government to help non- native speakers achieve their potential.

Key Facts

1. The unemployment rate for working age people across all ethnic minority groups was 14% in 2013, compared to 7% for white people.

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2. The youth employment rate among people from black ethnic backgrounds is 47% compared to 20% of young people from white ethnic backgrounds.
3. GCSE achievement amongst black ethnic pupils is significantly worse than other groups, 45.2% get five good GCSEs compared to 50.8% for white pupils. The attainment at GCSE of Gypsy Roma pupils is particularly poor.
4. Liberal Democrats have delivered our manifesto commitment to introduce the Pupil Premium, benefitting many low income ethnic minority children. In 2013-14, every school will receive £900 for each child receiving free school meals and by 2015, the Government will be providing a total of £2.5 billion extra funding for disadvantaged children in schools.
5. A disproportionate one in four prisoners comes from an ethnic minority background. On average, five times more black people than white people are imprisoned in England and Wales.

Questions

34. *What measures could improve the employment prospects for ethnic minority communities?*
35. *How should we respond to the problem of high unemployment rates for young black men?*
36. *What more can schools do to reflect diversity at staff level within schools? How can we ensure universities are transparent about their selection criteria?*

37. *How can we reduce the exclusion rate for Black and Gypsy Roma pupils?*
38. *How can we improve community relations between non-white communities and the police?*
39. *What measures would help break down language barriers?*
40. *Do some other characteristics, such as caste, need to be protected by law?*
41. *Should we support 'affirmative action' in relation to ethnicity and race in employment selection criteria?*
42. *How can we improve political participation and voter registration of minority ethnic communities?*
43. *Are there specific issues that relate to specific ethnicities?*
44. *Are there any changes we wish to see in the Equality Act relating to race, nationality or ethnicity?*

6. Religion and Belief

6.1 While religious belief and practice has declined over the years in Britain, over half of the population still identify with a religion. Many Britons see themselves as Christian, but there is a wide variety of religions in the UK, and the membership of other religious communities such as Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish communities are growing, as is the number of those who identify with non-religious and secular belief systems such as humanism, or who are secular regardless of religious background.

6.2 Liberal Democrats celebrate diversity in religion and belief, and acknowledge the great benefits they bring society, however we also recognise that tensions can occur. People in some religious groups are more likely to suffer hate crime or harassment than others and it is important to address issues of community cohesion between people of different religious and cultural backgrounds (and those of no religion).

6.3 The law now provides protection for religious people in the workplace but many incidents of discrimination still occur and these affect some groups, such as Muslims and members of new religious movements, more than others. Individual cases have exposed these kinds of difficulties, for example those involving women who wear head coverings or those who wear religious symbols.

6.4 Some religious and non-religious people alike have concerns about inequalities in the way religion is reflected in our society and public services. Marriage is also a sensitive issue for many religious people and those with belief. Liberal Democrats in Government believe that the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act

2013 struck the right balance in allowing marriage to be available to the majority of people, but without forcing religious institutions to perform ceremonies contrary to their beliefs.

6.5 Discrimination in admissions and recruitment to faith schools is an important issue and one on which Liberal Democrats have clear existing policy. Policy Paper 89 *Equity and Excellence* (2009) sets out that existing faith schools should have plans to demonstrate the inclusiveness of their intakes and that Liberal Democrats would end employment discrimination, except those responsible for religious instruction. It also details existing party policy on the appropriateness of prayer in schools.

Key Facts

1. The EU Commission report that discrimination on the grounds of religion or beliefs is perceived as more pervasive in the UK than in many other European countries¹².
2. The risk of being a victim of personal hate crime is highest for Muslims and those who identify with new religious movements¹³.
3. There is a need to improve relations between religious groups and wider society.

¹² Special Eurobarometer 39 Discrimination in the EU in 2012

¹³ Crime Survey for England and Wales, 2012/13

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Questions

45. *How should we handle sensitive issues around religious discrimination in the workplace, particularly those involving the wearing of religious clothing or symbols?*
46. *How can we improve community relations between different religious groups?*
47. *What measures can we take to improve community cohesion between different religious and belief groups?*
48. *How do we end segregation based on religion in schools? We feel pupils should be taught about belief and not what to believe. Do we need to develop party policy on faith in schools?*
49. *Does existing legislation need to be amended in relation to exemptions from the Equality Act (2010)?*

7. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

7.1 Acceptance of same sex relationships and the rights of LGBT+ people have steadily improved over the last few decades and they do not experience the same economic inequities of many other protected groups. However, health inequalities for LGBT+ people remain, as do concerns about how they are treated in society, from instances of hate crime to bullying and discrimination. In November 2013, Equalities Minister Jo Swinson MP launched a project to research homophobic bullying in schools, helping the Government to understand how to reduce the occurrence and impact of this kind of bullying. This builds on action Liberal Democrats in Government have already taken to tackle bullying in schools, including updated guidance for schools and in giving schools greater legal powers to tackle poor behaviour and cyber bullying.

7.2 Health inequalities for LGBT+ people are well established. Rates of suicide, self-harm, drug and alcohol use are higher in LGBT+ people. Amongst elderly LGBT+ people there are often issues of social isolation and vulnerability. The prevalence of hate crime is also still high and homophobic bullying at school remains a concern.

7.3 The introduction of same-sex marriage is a proud achievement for many Liberal Democrats inside and outside Government. It was a big step forward in recognising the rights of LGBT+ people. The Liberal Democrat conference motion *Equal Marriage* (2010) called for many of the measures provided for in the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act (2013) and included proposals to go further. In particular the motion called for the

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Government to promote recognition of same sex marriage and civil partnership across the European Union. Achieving better recognition for same sex marriage and civil partnership internationally is an important next step.

7.4 There are many more specific issues in this area that need recognition, for example the lack of recognition of 'x gender' on passports and further unnecessary barriers preventing gay people from giving blood.

Key Facts

1. In 1983, 50% of the population thought homosexuality was wrong but social attitudes have changed significantly and by 2012 only 22% took that view¹⁴.
2. The *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Public Health Outcomes Framework* reported that "there is a substantial body of evidence demonstrating that lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people experience significant health inequalities".
3. One in eight lesbian, gay or bisexual people and three in four transgender people are the target of hate crime each year. Over half of these crimes go unreported¹⁵.
4. Half of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people experience homophobic bullying at schools¹⁶.

¹⁴ British Social Attitudes Survey 30

¹⁵ Galop, Hate Crime Survey 2013

¹⁶ Stonewall *The School Report* 2012

5. Intersex and gender reassignment was left out of legislation in the Equality Act 2010.

Questions

50. *How can we tackle health inequalities for LGBT+ people?*
51. *What more can we do to support young and elderly LGBT+ people?*
52. *What more can be done to reduce homophobia and bullying in schools and in sports?*
53. *What should be the next steps to build on same sex marriage? How should we promote the rights of LGBT+ individuals abroad?*
54. *How can we improve recognition of transgender issues? What improvements are needed in the way the state deals with transgender people?*
55. *How can we better protect LGBT+ people from hate crimes?*
56. *How can we/should we change the law to benefit transgender and intersex relationships and civil partnerships?*
57. *What more can be done to promote LGBT+ rights in the UK and internationally? Are there any immigration issues for LGBT+ people that need to be addressed?*
58. *Are there particular needs for specific groups within the LGBT+ community that differ from each other in their policy requirements?*

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59. *Should there be any change in marriage and civil partnership law to support and enshrine the rights of remaining groups?*

This Consultation Paper is designed to stimulate debate about Equalities and suggestions for distinctly Liberal Democrat policy in this area. The Working Group has identified key questions it would like to discuss but we also welcome thoughts and suggestions on any other important issues not covered in this paper.