

# International Transgender Day of Visibility

March 31<sup>st</sup> marks International Transgender Day of Visibility. Since it was founded in 2009, this day has been dedicated to celebrating transgender people and raising awareness of the discrimination faced by trans people worldwide as well as their contributions to society. In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic that we currently find ourselves in we wanted to take this opportunity to highlight some of the ways in which the trans community are being specifically impacted by this crisis.

You will have seen in the news that many non-emergent/non-urgent, routine surgeries are being postponed. For trans people, this means gender-affirming surgeries will not take place as despite the life-altering and in many cases, life-saving, nature of these surgeries the NHS still considers them non-essential. Many Gender Identity Clinics in the UK have waiting times of 18 months to 2 years to get a referral to a gender identity clinic. Indefinitely postponing surgeries will only add to the already agonising wait for essential support experienced by the trans community.

Information from the community care group Queercare indicates that many GPs are asking trans folk to do their own hormone injections at the moment. Queercare have produced guidance on this [here](https://wiki.queercare.network/index.php?title=IM_injection_protocol) if it is an option for you: [https://wiki.queercare.network/index.php?title=IM\\_injection\\_protocol](https://wiki.queercare.network/index.php?title=IM_injection_protocol). The Scottish Trans Alliance has also circulated information about how to request different hormone preparations from your GP if injectables are not an option.

Many trans people are also concerned about the impact that COVID-19 will have on stock and availability of vital hormones.

There are dedicated groups who can help trans and queer people in Edinburgh in these terrible COVID-19 times – contact us for more info.

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## A welcome message from our new events officer David

My name is David and I've recently joined the Edinburgh Research Office as a Solicitor, Contracts Manager in the Research Contracts, Governance and Integrity team. I'm really passionate about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and serve as Secretary of the Glass Network, the Law Society of Scotland's advisory body on LGBT+ matters and Scotland's organisation for LGBT+ legal professionals. Most recently I was elected to the University's Staff Pride Network as Social and Events Officer.



The Staff Pride Network is now running our weekly Wednesday lunchtime coffee meetups and our monthly social event online. More details are available at the following link with details on further events to follow in due course: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/staff-pride-network-virtual-social-tickets-101570819054>

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# Staff Pride Network Event: Lavender Menace LGBT+ Book Archive

Forty years ago, when Lavender Menace Bookshop opened, positive depictions of LGBT+ people in books were rare. One lesbian pulp novel of the 1950s was called *Women in the Shadows*. There were similar shadows over all queer people in print and film. And legal censorship was alive and well in the 1980s. It simply had to be more focussed than before, as with Section 28.

Today our lives can be explored straightforwardly in fiction and non-fiction – but how did the change come? It was mainly LGBT+ writers and presses, along with radical bookshops and book distributors, who took the risk and opened the door. Their success surprised everyone and gave a lead which others followed.

But now many of the original LGBT+ and feminist presses have closed and well-known books have been forgotten. Lavender Menace Returns hopes to create an archive and database of the material we knew best. They want to also include LGBT+ writing of today to form one body of work telling the story of our community – and our demand for equality and honesty.

Follow Lavender Menace Returns on:

Twitter: @menacesof2019

FaceBook: lavendermenacereturns

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# A response to the School LGBTQ+ Diversity Since Section 28/Clause 2a event

February is LGBT history month and in Scotland, the focus is on that Clause 2a/Section 28 was repealed 20 years ago (<https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/news/2019/announcing-the-theme-for-lgbt-history-month-2020/> ). There were three more years for it in England and Wales and the less said about Northern Ireland the better. I grew up under Section 28 and it was a confusing time. We had no internet, and no school or medical resources about homosexuality or bisexuality so all we had was the media and that was ... varied.

Most media articles were hysterical in tone. Gay men were either said to be or implied to be paedophiles, gay women were often ignored or considered frigid or man-hating and bisexuals needed to pick a side. Where there was variation in representation it was HUGE and isolated. The famous Brookside lesbian kiss (<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/1994-same-sex-kiss-between-two-women-brookside-builds-first-kiss-between-two-men> ) was often reported for being “saucy” and framed through the male gaze. The gay kiss between Simon and Tony in EastEnders ([https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/loud-proud-eastenders-gay-kiss-mark-homer\\_uk\\_5725ad16e4b0a1e971cb84f0](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/loud-proud-eastenders-gay-kiss-mark-homer_uk_5725ad16e4b0a1e971cb84f0)) meanwhile should never have been shown before the watershed. Because sexuality was inherently sexual and not to be discussed.

For me growing up as bisexual in that world, and wanting to get married and have kids one day, “pick a side” meant picking

men because there was no way I could have those things with a woman. I was still outspoken about gay rights but did not think that could apply for me. Things have changed but Section 28 cast a long shadow over the lives of so many people and has influenced the way children are taught, even today. There are more resources outside of school but they still take courage to find. It is still hard.

The Staff Pride Network held a schools event that highlighted the parallels between Section 28 and the treatment of trans rights and some attendees asked if there really was a parallel. For me, there are some obvious ones. Media representation of trans people has the same hysteria I remember from my childhood and teen years. Trans women are presented as sexually deviant, trans men are all but forgotten, non-binary identities? Pick a side. A recent Guardian Blind Dates column with a trans woman and a lesbian led to people claiming the trans woman was somehow tricking the lesbian. Thankfully she rebutted it in the strongest possible terms (<https://twitter.com/aigroe/status/1199431598929784838?s=20>).

I know the internet is a resource now, but not everyone has it in their homes. Imagine suspecting you are trans now in this media environment? How much courage would it take to look it up at school where people might see, particularly when everything you see is so hysterical and claims you are such a threat to the fabric of society (recalling Thatcher's words as she introduced Section 28)?

The fact that so many of the arguments and tropes that were used against lesbian, gay and bisexual people are being used against out trans siblings is something many of us can't ignore because we remember the impact those things had on our

own lives, and our own opportunities to be who we really are.

The shadow of Section 28 is still long, and the impact on trans lives is still harder. Research from LGBTYS (<https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/media/1354/life-in-scotland-for-lgbt-young-people.pdf> ) shows that when asked if they had a mental health problem, 40% of LGBT young people and 66.7% of transgender young people said “yes”, while half (50%) of LGBT young people and 63% of transgender young people experienced suicidal thoughts or behaviours. 73% of LGBT young people, and 83% of transgender young people, who had experienced at least one mental health problem, had been bullied at school and this shows why the work of organisations like LGBTYS is so vital.

The parallels are real. We need to learn from the past, I know the 80s and 90s are back in fashion but prejudice, discrimination and bigotry never should be.

*Siobhán*

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## **Staff Pride Network Event: School LGBTQ+ Diversity Since Section 28/Clause 2a**

It has been 20 years since the repeal of Section 28/Clause 2a in Scotland. This event was held to provide an understanding of current equality law pertaining to schools, to discuss the

experiences and challenges that our students and staff had in school before and after Section 28's repeal, in particular young trans students' experiences.

This event was intended as a positive experience for staff and students to share their LGBTQ+ experiences, for the audience to learn about the similarities and differences of their times.

Event Co-Chairs are Elliot Byrom, EUSA Trans & Non-Binary Liberation Officer and Sharon Cowan, Professor of Feminist and Queer Legal Studies.

Panellists were: Sarah Quinn (PrideSoc Faith rep who has done work in the background to section 28), Hazel Sanderson (PrideSoc Trans and Non-Binary Rep), Levi Mitchell (PrideSoc President) and LGBT Youth Scotland Head of National Programmes (including schools guidance), Cara Spence.

<https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/staffpridenetwork/>

<https://pridesoc.com/>

*Home*

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# University medical centre achieves LGBT Pride in Practice gold award

The University's Mackenzie Medical Centre has been awarded a gold accreditation by the LGBT Foundation's Pride in Practice.

Pride in Practice, a quality assurance support service, is endorsed by the Royal College of GPs and aims to strengthen and develop the Primary Care Services relationship with LGBT patients.

The Mackenzie Medical Centre have been working with Pride in Practice to implement changes to current processes and deliver staff training around how to effectively and confidently meet the needs of LGBT patients.

After completing a focused self-assessment, the centre successfully achieved the gold award, which demonstrates the practice's commitment to ensuring a fully-inclusive patient centred service for the LGBT community.

*As a University owned practice we thought it was really important to meet the needs of our varied practice population. Many LGBT patients can tell a story of a difficult health encounter they have had around their gender or sexuality. Following our Pride in Practice training, the entire team at Mackenzie Medical Centre (administrative staff, nurses and doctors) aim to ensure that is not the experience here.*

Hilary Young, GP at the Mackenzie Medical Centre

*The Mackenzie Medical Centre has demonstrated great commitment to improving processes to promote equality and inclusion for LGBT patients, showing how working in*



*partnership and with all staff can really bring about change.*

Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley, University-wide Lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Find out more about Pride in Practice

Location of the MacKenzie Medical Centre

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# **[POSTPONED] We Are Human: Personal Stories of LGBTQ+ Identities and Intersection**

THIS EVENT HAS BEEN POSTPONED DUE TO UCU STRIKES. A DATE LATER IN THE YEAR WILL BE DETERMINED.

The Staff Pride Network is excited to announce a new LGBTQ+ conference which will take place on **Friday 21st February 2020** (during Flexible Learning Week) called 'We Are Human: Personal Stories of LGBTQ+ Identities and Intersection'.

We Are Human Conference – Friday 21st Feb 2020 [MyEd booking link](#)

Presentations will be personal in nature from those with lived experience and panels will discuss the important topics of our time:

- Hassan Marah MSc Criminal Justice & Sharon Boateng

Criminal Investigation Officer with the Fraud Investigation Service

“Micro Incivilities – The Paper Cut Effect”