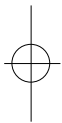


ASLEF sexual equality consultative committee newsletter

facing points



TUC gives trans advice



Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen

Transsexual people are those who wish to live as a member of the opposite gender to that to which they were assigned (a condition known medically as gender dysphoria). TUC policy is to campaign for equal treatment for all workers. The basis of a trade union approach is that all trans workers, should be treated with equal respect.

Definitions

Gender: 'is expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity. It is largely culturally determined.'

Transsexual: 'A person who feels a consistent and overwhelming desire to transition and fulfil their life as a member of the opposite gender and actively desire and complete Sex Reassignment surgery.' However, it is important to note that not all transsexual people will go through surgery.

Transgender: 'A term used to include transsexuals, transvestites and crossdressers. The word trans is used to cover both transsexual and transgender workers. This is a term that may

be used without causing offence. Transvestites are people who dress in the clothing of the opposite sex, but will not normally wish to change their physical characteristics.'

Changing gender – the process

Those undergoing treatment through the NHS will begin by receiving specialist medical advice and diagnosis. They will be expected to commit to the 'real life test' before hormones are prescribed. The next stage is that the individual begins to live as a member of the new gender, and may have records changed to reflect this. The period during which the person is living and working in their new gender is called the 'real life test'. One year is the minimum period for the real life test recommended under the international standards of care. Finally, for the individual intending, and able, to undergo surgery, after one or two years of hormone therapy the person undergoes corrective surgery to complete physically the transition.

The process can be very stressful requiring support and sympathetic handling from all concerned.

The legal position

The Government introduced the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) regulations 1999. These regulations extended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. This law protects a person who 'intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment' and includes those preparing for such medical treatment. In November 2003 the Government introduced the Gender Recognition Bill into Parliament. The bill enabled transsexual people to gain full legal recognition in their acquired gender and to have their birth certificates altered to reflect their new gender. The new law enables those who comply with certain conditions to obtain a Gender Recognition (GR) certificate that confirms their new gender. The Gender Recognition bill completed its progress through Parliament



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(June 2004) and takes effect from April 2005. The condition for obtaining this is that the individual has lived in their new gender for a minimum of two years and intends to do so permanently. However the law will not allow a marriage to continue after the change of gender. Anyone holding a Gender Recognition Certificate also acquires new privacy rights.

Workplace issues

(i) Underlying principles

At every point in the process maximum confidentiality must be observed for as long as the member wishes that to be the approach. Developing a plan with the individual covering some of the issues listed here will be a good approach.

(ii) Remaining in post or redeployment?

In larger workplaces the member may wish to transfer to another position at the point at which they adopt their new gender, and it is important to discuss how to manage this with management in order to achieve the best outcome.

(iii) Support during the transition.

Information and training

A plan for support during the transition and after will need to address such questions as what information and training will need to be provided for managers and colleagues.

(iv) Time for treatment

The plan will necessarily include how to deal with the time off needed for medical treatment. Trans people will need to take time to attend a Gender Identity clinic at intervals up to and beyond surgery.

(v) The changeover: records

The plan will need to identify the point at which the individual's new gender is formally established in terms of

the employer's personnel records and any consequent alterations. The right of the individual to maintain the confidentiality of their previous identity needs to be secured as part of this stage.

(vi) The changeover: other workplace issues

It would be good practice for an employer with a dress code to allow flexibility during transition. Agreement needs to be reached on use of toilets and changing facilities.

(vii) Harassment

If the employer does not already include gender identity among the grounds covered by a policy against harassment it will be important at an early stage to ensure that this is negotiated.

(viii) Pensions

Union representatives may need to negotiate to obtain the best outcome for someone who has changed their gender and remains part of an employer's pension scheme.

(ix) Disclosure, references etc

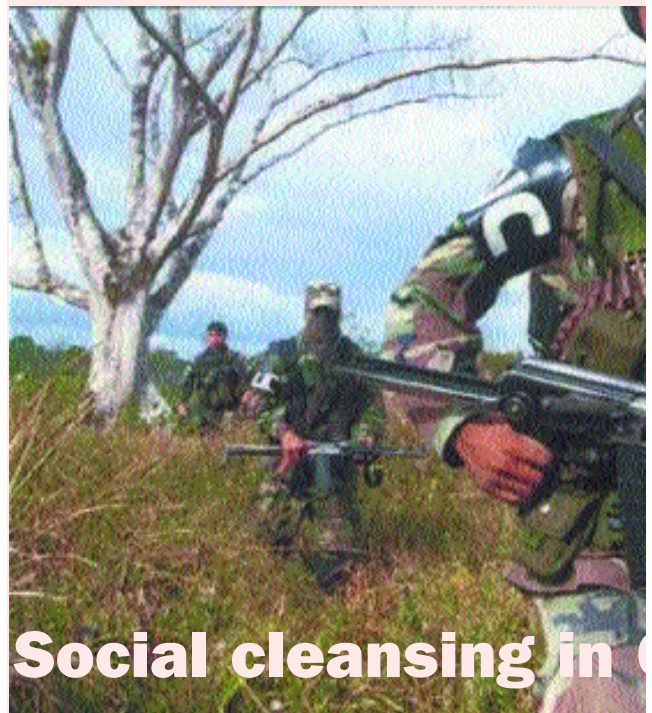
As part of the overall approach of respecting the right of the individual trans worker to decide if they wish to be disclosed about their present or previous identities, unions need to negotiate with managers to ensure that no such disclosure is made without the express permission of the individual.

There will be further issues that arise subsequent to the transition and/or the obtaining of a GR certificate.

(x) Record retention

As considered in (v) above, long-standing employment records may well reveal the trans person's previous gender identity, and where records are retained over a long period issues arise over who should have access to these records and what should be done in the event that someone's previous gender identity is revealed without the person's permission.

Gender Trust publishes Recommendations for Management Guidelines and Recommendations and Guidelines for Employers each costing £8 and available from Gender Trust. PO Box 3192, Brighton BN1 3WR www.gendertrust.org.uk
Press for Change publishes *Transsexual People in the Workplace*, available at www.pfc.org.uk
EERD, TUC, 2004.



Social cleansing in C

Being a trade unionist in Colombia is dangerous. However if you're gay it is also as dangerous reports Susan Greenwell. LGBT people are regular targets for 'social cleansing' in Colombia for 'moral' reasons and are considered 'human garbage that taint society's morality'. LGBT people risk verbal and physical assault and even death in their everyday lives.

They have been driven out of universities, sent death threats and been told to leave their homes and places of work within 48 hours or be killed. When doing so they are forced to hand over their businesses to paramilitaries *pictured above.*

Some members of the LGBT community have just simply 'disappeared'. In the city of Barrancabereja a gay adolescent boy was stripped naked and forced to walk through the streets with a sign saying, 'I'm a faggot'. In another incident paramilitaries raped two women 'so as to show these girls what it's like to feel a man'. Another young man

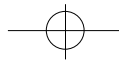
was murdered because he 'looked' like a homosexual, His body was later found showing signs of torture and his penis had been cut off. It is reported that paramilitaries have lists of people who 'act gay or show gay tendencies'.

A report from a group called 'Grupo Ambiente' based in the city of Medellin says that during a four-year period they documented 328 murders by right wing paramilitaries of gays and lesbians and that many of the bodies showed signs of torture.

During 2002 at least 92 cases of the police attacking gay men were recorded in Medellin alone. But it is not just Colombia.

In Ecuador, Brazil and Chile even though gay and lesbian relationships are legal people can't live without fear of hostility towards them, Between 1980 and 1997 1,600 homosexuals were murdered in Brazil, and only five per cent of the killers went on trial. And in Chile gay bars are regularly raided and customers jailed. Justice for Colombia is based at ASLEF head office.





Colombia

▲ DEATH SQUADS

“... the AUC – an umbrella organization of different paramilitary terrorist groups –with the Government ... continued to commit numerous unlawful and political killings...[which] Often [included] kidnapping and torturing suspected guerrilla sympathizers prior to executing them. They also conducted kidnappings for ransom and committed ‘social cleansing’ killings of homosexuals and other supposedly ‘undesirable’ elements.’

US State Department Report on Human Rights Practices – 2003
www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, February 25, 2004

Our first at ASLEF’s 125th AAD

The 2005 ASLEF AAD took place at the St Nicholas Hotel Scarborough from the 23 – 27 May 2005 was an historic event in ASLEF’s 125th year and the first AAD ever to have Consultative Committee members there as delegates in their own right reports *Susan Greenwell*.

My first AAD as a delegate saw me at the rostrum on the first day during the international debate. I reminded delegates that it was not just union officials who faced danger in South America but also LGBT people had had atrocities committed against them or had been killed or disappeared.

I also spoke in the Health and Safety debate and the need for the TOC/FOC’s to have clear guidelines laid down for HIV and Aids infected staff especially since the heterosexual cases of HIV infected people has now overtaken that of gays with education and confidentiality being major factors in any policy.

The Equality debate was supported overwhelmingly from the floor and the top table. Endorsing the work of the Consultative Committees and the Retired Members’ Section and calling for the recognition of equality reps I also made a plea for the delegates to go back to their branches and fill the vacancies within the committees, which in turn is a chance to get less active lay members involved within the union.

It was my first AAD as a delegate and even though it was hard work and at times nerve-racking it was a pleasurable experience – making me feel proud to be the first ever SECC delegate to an AAD.

FBU LGBT Week-End School

The FBU LGBT Week-End School will be held from the 21st-23 October 2005 at Wortley Hall in Wortley, near Sheffield.

If you would like to attend, please contact Sharon Allen, Equalities Officer on 0207 317 8600 as soon as possible

National Secretary resigns

The Sexual Equality Consultative Committee, officers and head office staff would like to send their very best wishes to Dave Bacon who recently resigned as National Secretary of the Committee. Dave is taking a sabbatical from the industry to further his education and help run a public house. Dave has made a tremendous contribution to the work of the Committee and the wider work on LGBT issues in the labour and trade union movement. We wish him every success for his future endeavours and hope that he will keep in touch.

Susan Greenwell, District 4 Rep on the SECC, was elected as National Secretary at the last meeting of the Committee. We would like to offer her congratulations at her election and best wishes for her future work and role on the SECC.

TUC LGBT Conference 2005

The TUC LGBT Conference will take place from 30 June – 1 July 2005 at Congress House in London. ASLEF will be fielding a full delegation, and will be moving a motion calling for people who have changed gender to be allowed to stay married to their partners if that is their wish. At present under the law, couples where one partner changes sex are forced to annul their marriages even if they are remaining as a couple and both wish to stay married. The law is clearly discriminatory in this area, and we will be looking for support on this motion. There will be a full report of the Conference in our next edition of Facing Points due out in the Autumn.

Get involved

There are currently three vacant seats on the ASLEF Sexual Equality Consultative Committee which is made up of representatives from the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Trans members in the union.

The committee meets three times a year at ASLEF Head Office in London, and the meetings last about three hours starting at 11.00am.

Once a year (usually in November) there is a head office meeting open to all LGBT members. This includes guest speakers and has a slightly different format.

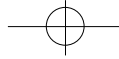
SECC members are expected to attend their district council meetings to give a report on the work of the committee. The District Councils also meet three times a year at head office.

The Consultative Committees help to develop progressive policies and set the agenda for equalities in the union.

Another role that the Consultative Committee Reps play is to support other members in their district who may be experiencing difficulties because of their gender, sexuality, race or ethnicity. They may also help to recruit under-represented groups into membership by promoting the union’s equalities activities.

So if you are a member who is LGBT in either District, 3, 6 or 8 and you want to get more involved or you feel you’ve got something to contribute, drop a line to your Branch Secretary and let them know you would like to be nominated – or better still pay your branch a visit. If you are not sure what goes on at a branch meeting, contact Sharon Allen the Equalities Officer and ask her to send you a copy of the last edition of Sisters on the Move in which we explain what happens.

ASLEF has a confidential mailing list for LGBT members who want to receive information about what is happening in ASLEF. To be added to this list (you don’t have to be out at work) please contact Sharon Allen, Equalities Officer on 0207 317 8600



EVENTS

15 June-2 July 2005
PRIDE LONDON

Saturday 9 July 2005
BOURNE FREE - Bournemouth

12-31 July 2005
SOUTHAMPTON PRIDE

Saturday 16 July 2005
OXFORD PRIDE

15-17 July 2005
RAINBOW WEEKEND -
YORKSHIRE PRIDE - Leeds

30 July-6 August 2005
BELFAST PRIDE

31 July-6 August 2005
PRIDE IN BRIGHTON & HOVE

Saturday 20 August 2005
EAST OF ENGLAND PINK PICNIC

Saturday 20 August 2005
LEEDS GAY YOUTH PRIDE

18-28 August 2005
WORLD PRIDE - Jerusalem

19-29 August 2005
MANCHESTER PRIDE

25-29 August 2005
BiCon, 23rd UK Bisexual
Conference

3 September 2005
READING PRIDE

10 September 2005
CARDIFF MARDI GRAS

15-18 September 2005
EPOA Conference in London

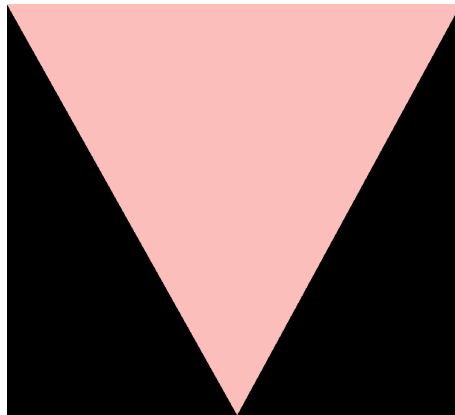
21-23 October 2005
FBU W/E School

24 October 2005
ASLEF SECC Meeting

16 November 2005
ASLEF SECC Open Meeting

1-20 November 2005
GLASGAY

1 December 2005
WORLD AIDS DAY



Committed to sexual equality

The trade union movement represents all working people regardless of their gender, race, religious belief, sexual orientation or disability.

ASLEF believes in fairness at work for everyone and is fully committed to the elimination of discrimination in all its forms, both at work and in the community.

The SECC wishes to ensure that Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered people are fully represented and a voice within the workplace.

The SECC was set up ● to provide support for LGBT people within our workplaces ● identify and deal with issues/problems faced by LGBT people ● highlighting issues of human rights abuse of LGBT people internationally ● provide members with the opportunity to talk/meet with other members.

Any Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans person can contact the committee for advice or assistance on a STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL basis by ringing 0207 317 8600.

Get Involved

We are anxious to contact as many lesbian, gay and transgender ASLEF members as we can. We now have a confidential database of LGBT members at head office so that we can get information to you direct.

Should any member require a personal copy of this newsletter and future newsletters, confidential arrangements can be made for a copy to be mailed direct to your home address. Just contact the SECC delegate for your District or Sharon Allen at ASLEF Head Office and we will add your name to our confidential mailing list. This mailing list will be treated in the strictest confidence and no information held on it will be divulged to branches or other members.

How to contact us

District No.1 Zol Kakouris
(National Chair)
Tel: 01273 683275 Mobile: 07779 716701
Email: ztiger201@aol.com

District No.2 Gary Conn
Email: aslefsecc.scotland@virgin.net

District No.3 Vacancy

District No.4 Susan Greenwell
(National Secretary)
Mobile: 07901 977688
Email: susan.greenwell@ntlworld.com

District No.5 Keith Valla

District No.6 Vacancy

District No.7 Neil Adams
Tel: 020 8747 8740 Mobile: 07879 241245
Email: neil_adams35@hotmail.com

District 8 Vacancy

Useful addresses

Gay.com UK Dedicated to supporting the LGBT communities in the UK and Ireland

Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights Campaigning organisation for lesbian, gays and bisexuals in the labour movement.
PO Box 306, London N5
email lclgr@yahoo.co.uk.
Membership details on website.

LAGER Details of the advice and training services offered by Lesbian and Gay Employment Rights Unit IG Leroy House
436 Essex Road, London N1 3QP

Stonewall National campaigning group working for legal equality and social justice for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. Stonewall Lobby Group
46-48 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0EB
Tel: 020 7881 9440 email:
info@stonewall.org.uk.

Press for Change Lobbying and educational organisation which seeks to achieve equal civil rights and liberties for all transgender people in the UK through legislation and social change.
BM Network, London WCI N 3XX
email letters@pfc.org.uk

