

LGBT Report October 2011

National LGBT Conference

The national LGBT Conference is being held in Glasgow from 18th – 20th November 2011. The final agenda is due to be published online on 21st October and will be mailed out to all delegates and visitors. The closing date has passed to register as a delegate but you can still register to attend as a visitor. Please encourage any LGBT members in your branch to attend.

Also at conference, we will be celebrating the best recruitment initiatives by awarding our annual LGBT Organising and Recruitment awards. There is still time to enter if your branch or region have had any successful initiatives.

No to Hate Crime Vigil

There will be a No To Hate Crime Vigil being held on 28th October 2011. Wherever you are, say no to hate crime by holding a vigil or observing the 2 minute silence at 8pm, alone or with friends and family. From 7.30 – 9pm, people will be gathering in Trafalgar Square in London and other places around the UK and abroad including Brighton, Kettering, Norwich, Reading, Stoke and Suffolk.

TUC Conference on the Equality Deficit

The TUC are holding a free conference on defending opportunity and fairness against the cuts. This is being held in London on 16th November and will include plenary sessions, panel discussions, workshops and a host of speakers from trade unions, the voluntary sector, campaigners, researchers and writers. The conference is free to attend.

Equal Marriage

Our campaign for equality in marriage and civil partnership has taken a step forward. The UK government has announced that it will be consulting on same sex marriage for England and Wales from March 2012. Marriage law in Scotland is devolved to the Scottish Parliament who are already consulting on the issue.

EHRC intervention on Ladele and McFarlane

The EHRC has submitted its intervention to the European Court of Human Rights on four cases relating to alleged religious discrimination in the workplace, including those of Ladele and McFarlane. As urged by UNISON and others, it has said that it believes that in the cases of Ladele and McFarlane, the domestic courts came to the correct conclusions. It says 'In the Commission's view, refusing to accommodate the manifestation of a person's discriminatory religious belief in the workplace always pursues the legitimate aim of non-discrimination'.

Removal of Convictions

UNISON has welcomed the tabling of amendments to remove convictions for consensual now-legal sexual activity from people's records. An estimated 16,000 convictions could be removed from police records, including malicious convictions for 'loitering with intent'.

The amendments are contained in the Protection of Freedoms Bill and will give men the right to ask their local chief constable to remove the conviction from records and the police national computer.

Although the age of consent was equalised years ago, the changes did not affect convictions prior to that. At the moment, men convicted of consensual sex acts that are now legal must still declare the convictions when applying to work with children or vulnerable adults.

Elaine Duffy

Energy SGE representative to B&E Equal Ops Working Group