

LGBT+ matters

FROM THE CHAIR

There's little doubt that 2018 has seen its ups and downs when it comes to LGBT+ equality, both inside and outside of PCS.

As you'll see throughout this issue, PCS' Annual Delegate Conference made several decisions which positively shape how PCS represents LGBT+ members as well as across the equality spectrum.

As a union, PCS aspires to put equality at the heart of everything we do. However we must recognise that, as with any large group, we are not homogenous and our idea of what equality looks like vary greatly.

As the Westminster government consultation on the Gender Recognition Act draws to a close, the 'debate' created around the proposed reforms have led to, at times, language that hasn't been

“Let's reach out and make those divisions smaller between us”

inclusive, leading to hurt and exclusion of some members, LGBT+ and allies.

We've also seen some individuals and groups engage in behaviours which run counter to what our union believes in, including provocation and resulting violent outbursts against women, both cisgender and transgender, on both sides of the 'debate'.

Proud believes that to learn and grow in our drive to make our society more equal, we

need to know that there is a safe space to ask questions but also to recognise and apologise where we unintentionally cause offence.

We must not however excuse those who deliberately choose to offend or hurt fellow members and others. That is not acceptable.

Engaging in behaviour, such as misgendering and deadnaming of trans people, is behaviour which fosters hate and division among us when it has never been more important to be united against a government which continues with its ideological austerity agenda and harms so many across under represented communities.

In the words of the late Jo Cox, we have more in common than the things that divide us. Let's reach out and make those divisions smaller between us.

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Proud AGM

Since being formed, Proud has ensured that those who hold the power are our members, giving members the ability to elect their representatives and set the agenda for the incoming committee.

Held each year, our annual general meeting is members' opportunity to play their part by nominating the new Proud national committee and/or by submitting motions for debate during the meeting.

For 2018, Proud's AGM will be taking place on Saturday, 10

“Members interested in getting involved with Proud are encouraged to consider nominating themselves for the incoming Proud National Committee, there are a range of roles available including Officers, Equality and Regional reps”

November in the PCS Leeds office. All Proud members are entitled to attend with costs met centrally to ensure members have the opportunity to be involved.

Members interested in getting involved with Proud are encouraged to consider nominating themselves for the incoming Proud national committee, there are a range of roles available including officers, equality and regional reps.

For those who have an LGBT+ equality issue they believe

more needs to be done around, why not submit a motion for debate at the AGM and ensure Proud is working for you.

Full details have been issued electronically to all Proud members, if you have not received these then email proud@pcs.org.uk immediately with your current email address to arrange a reissue.

Members who have any questions regarding the AGM are also encouraged to contact Proud, all contact will be treated in confidence.



PCS ADC 2018

In May, elected delegates gathered in Brighton for this year's PCS Annual Delegate Conference (ADC), to discuss and debate motions submitted by members from across the country in order to set the direction of PCS for the year ahead.

A key issue of this year's ADC was the issue of pay with a range of other issues debated including defending jobs and offices as well as continuing to challenge austerity and defending public services.

In our last issue we highlighted a number of motions of interest for LGBT+ members on this year's agenda and how members could get involved to ensure their views were heard as part of each debate at ADC.

The most notable of these was motion A18 on the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) and the government's failure to follow through with the recommendation's of the Women and Equalities Committee's 'Transgender Report' which ADC had previously supported in 2017.

The motion noted the rise in transphobic hate as the proposed reform of the GRA has

“Improving LGBT+, and wider equality throughout PCS

continued to be delayed and committed PCS to pushing for reform as soon as possible while ensuring our union made clear our support for trans members and the wider trans community (See page 3 for more).

Other motions which were carried at ADC included the commercialisation of Pride, making clear our union's position that Pride should be political, not for profit and to the benefit of local communities across the UK, as well as ensuring true representation within our union leadership with the introduction of dedicated seats for each of PCS' equality groups on the national executive committee.

In addition, delegates at this year's ADC acknowledged the growing diversity among our community, making clear our support for all LGBT+ members by incorporating this directly into our union's rules to ensure support for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender



ADC delegates enjoying Proud ADC social

identity.

Proud National Committee member, Kris Hendry, speaking after ADC said, "I always enjoy attending Conference and getting involved, particularly when it comes to issues such as LGBT+ equality and seeing the support there is from across the whole of our union."

"It was good to see support for trans equality reaffirmed by delegates following the debate last year on motion A78. I was also glad to see our union commit itself to improving LGBT+, and wider equality,

representation throughout PCS and look forward to seeing the steps agreed this year come to fruition moving forward."

Held every May, Proud encourages all members to get involved with ADC. Whether that be by attending as a branch delegate or submitting a motion through your branch annual general meeting (AGM). ADC is your opportunity to set the agenda for your union.

For further information or advice then contact proud@pcs.org.uk. All contact will be treated in confidence.

Proud survey

As we reported in our last issue (A Proud Future) our union wanted to hear from members on what they wanted to see in terms of LGBT+ equality.

At this year's annual delegate conference PCS equality department and Proud officially launched our national Proud survey, inviting delegates at ADC to offer us their thoughts on LGBT+ equality in our union with dozens of delegates taking the opportunity to share their thoughts.

Following ADC, and after a slight delay while members set their focus on the pay ballot,

“Looking to the future to organise and campaign for LGBT+ equality

the Proud survey was launched among the wider membership, open to all PCS members whether they were LGBT+ or an ally to the LGBT+ community.

We received numerous responses from members across our union highlighting the various ideas members have on taking forward LGBT+ equality

within PCS.

As we went to press, Proud's national committee and the PCS equality department have begun the process of sifting through these responses to consider members' feedback and what members' priorities for LGBT+ equality are within PCS.

A full report of our findings will be issued in due course. Members are encouraged to watch out for this and to get involved as we look to the future and continuing to organise and campaign for equality for all LGBT+ members in PCS.



Proud Officer, Kris Hendry, launching the Proud Survey at ADC

Leading from the top

Jackie Green was this year elected as vice president to PCS' national executive committee, providing an LGBT+ voice at the highest levels of our union's leadership. We put some questions to Jackie to give members an opportunity to learn more about her.

As vice president of PCS, how would you describe a typical day?

I can honestly say that the only typical thing about my days are they are never typical.

How would you describe your coming out experience?

I had more than one, but the main one for me, was coming out to my elderly mother because an embittered ex-partner was threatening to do the job for me. The build-up was excruciatingly nerve-wracking the reception was comedic but ultimately very freeing and uplifting.

As an out LGBT+ woman, have you encountered any issues in your workplace?

No.

What prompted you to first get involved in trade unionism?

My Dad when I first started work said I must join a union.

Have you come across any issues within the union as an out LGBT+ woman?

No.

Having represented PCS at both TUC LGBT+ Conference and TUC Congress, how would you describe your experience of wider trade union events?

I believe that everyone committed to unions has a desire to change people's lives for the better and have a wish to make the world a better place. The TUC provides a platform for this and allows us to share our experiences and unites us in engagement in common areas.

What would you consider your greatest accomplishment as a trade unionist?

I am not sure I have one as every time I manage to make just one



Jackie addressing TUC Congress on the GRA

“Every time I manage just one person's life better I think is an accomplishment”

person's life better I think it is an accomplishment. I know my Dad would have been immensely proud that I was the first female and openly gay Ministry of Justice group president. That is only in the last

10 years so we have a bit of catching up to do Proud.

Away from work, how do you like to unwind?

I live close to the Yorkshire dales and I am an out of doors kind of person so walking, birdwatching (not a euphemism) and I play an extreme sport which accounts for more deaths than any other sport...crown green bowls.

Finally, what one piece of advice would you give to an LGBT+ member interested in becoming more involved in PCS?

If you are unsure, start small, be a distributor, maybe join your branch. It does not have to be onerous and it does not have to take over your life. PCS is a safe space to be yourself and by being yourself and visible you may find you give others the impetus to get involved.

Jackie will be addressing this year's Proud annual general meeting. All Proud members are invited to attend, contact proud@pcs.org.uk for more details.

Fighting for trans equality

In 2017, PCS annual delegate conference agreed our union's support for the Women and Equalities Committee 'Transgender Report', a groundbreaking report which provided more than 30 recommendations on improving equality for the UK's trans community.

A key recommendation of the report was reform of the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) 2004, at the time a pioneering piece of legislation which for the first time allowed trans individuals to apply for a replacement birth certificate, legally recognising, their affirmed gender but

increasingly recognised as overly bureaucratic and medicalised.

In recent years there have been moves in several countries, such as Ireland and Malta, to introduce a more streamlined approach, providing greater autonomy and dignity, for trans people to be recognised in their acquired gender through a process of statutory declaration.

In the meantime the Westminster government continued to defer the issue, creating a vacuum which has led to a variety of misinformation and fear mongering on the issue and has resulted in an increasing polarisation of views around the

Gender Recognition Act, and trans equality in general.

In July, more than two years since the publication of the 'Transgender Report', the UK government finally announced details of its public consultation on GRA reform, following the Scottish Government consultation which closed earlier in the year.

Following the announcement, the union's national executive committee issued a statement reiterating PCS' position in support of reforming the current gender recognition process and beginning the process of formulating our response to the

consultation.

In August, Proud and PCS' equality department surveyed Proud members to ensure LGBT+ members views were captured as part of the consultation. A report of our findings was produced and submitted to the national executive committee to consider ahead of the October deadline.

This year's TUC Congress also debated the issue, in September. Jackie Green, PCS vice president and Proud's NEC liaison, spoke in support of the motion which was carried without opposition to further show our movement's support for trans equality.

Members of Proud's national

continued from pg4

committee also met with our General Secretary, Mark Serwotka, discussing members' concerns surrounding the "debate" on trans equality. The meeting was honest with both parties agreeing to further discussion on how to work together moving forward in support of trans members, and the wider trans community.

As we went to press, the national executive committee was finalising PCS' submission to the GRA consultation, which will

also be made available for members to view. Our union remains committed to reform of the GRA and opposed to all forms of transphobic hate and discrimination in the workplace and in our communities.

Any members who find themselves the target of, or who witness, such behaviour are encouraged to report this. You can also contact Proud at proud@pcs.org.uk if you require advice – all contact will be treated in strict confidence.



Proud Chair, Richard Jones, and West Mercia Branch Say No to Transphobia

Loud and Proud at TUC



PCS Delegates at TUC LGBT+ 2018

Ahead of this year's Pride in London in July, PCS delegates attended the TUC LGBT+ conference in Congress House. Held each year, the Conference focusses on the issues facing LGBT+ workers across the country with delegates from across the trade union movement in attendance.

Our union delegation, led by Proud's Chair Richard Jones, were heavily active throughout the two days of Conference. Delegates spoke on a wide range of motions on the agenda, including care for older LGBT+ people, mental health and neurodiversity, supporting LGBT+ refugee and asylum seekers.

A key discussion during the two days was on trans equality with various speakers taking part in the debates surrounding Gender Recognition reform, as well as non-binary inclusion, sharing their experiences of

supporting trans members in their union and showing their solidarity with the trans community.

PCS' motion to conference focussed on international LGBT+ equality, committing the TUC LGBT+ Committee to organising ahead of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022, ensuring the example set during the 2014 games in Glasgow is carried on to continue challenging LGBT+ phobic discrimination across the Commonwealth.

Guest speakers included TUC President, Sally Hunt, as well as Clare Moore who updated delegates on the Love Equality NI campaign for marriage equality in Northern Ireland.

Members interested in attending future TUC LGBT+ conferences are encouraged to email equality@pcs.org.uk for more details.

STUC LGBT+ conference

Just a few weeks prior to TUC LGBT+ Conference, the STUC held its annual LGBT+ Workers' Conference on the banks of the river Clyde.

PCS was represented by Proud national committee member, Kris Hendry, and first time delegate Sarah Valentine with both delegates taking part in the majority of debates surrounding motions.

PCS motions covered issues surrounding asexuality as well as supporting Pride House, taking place as part of the European Championships in Glasgow, which was held over the course of the summer.

Our union is incredibly active within the STUC equality structures with elected reps on almost all of the equality committees of the STUC, a pattern set to continue as Kris was successfully reelected to the STUC LGBT+ Workers' Committee for the coming year.

Speaking after conference, Kris said "This year has been a fantastic display of our Union's commitment to equality as conference welcomed both Lynn Henderson, as STUC President, and Sharon Edwards, chair of the STUC women's committee."

"Sarah also did a fantastic job representing LGBT+ members, with several delegations

“This year has been a fantastic display of our Union's commitment to equality”

complimenting her performance over the course of the weekend. Hopefully this year will prove to be another productive one for PCS and the LGBT+ workers' committee and we'll see even more progress when we come together in May next year for conference."

Members interested in attending future TUC equality conferences are encouraged to email equality@pcs.org.uk for more details.



Delegates with Lynn Henderson (centre), PCS Regional Officer and STUC President

Summer of Pride

2018 has been the biggest year yet for Pride across the UK with more events taking place than ever before.

In recent years many of the larger city based Pride events have taken an ever increasing commercialised approach, giving less visibility to the political aspects of Pride in favour of corporate sponsors 'celebrating' our community.

At this year's annual delegate conference the issue was debated, making clear our union's position that Pride must remain political and free to all wherever possible. PCS recognises that some Pride events now rely on ticketing in the face of funding cuts, largely due to the continued impact of the government's austerity agenda on local authorities funding.

Our union is clear, where such requirements become

“Pride must remain political and free to all wherever possible”

necessary, all funds must be put back into supporting local LGBT+ communities and not to line the pockets of individuals.

The response from members has been nothing but superb with members turning out across all regions and devolved nations to march and help support LGBT+ members and the ongoing fight for LGBT+ equality across the UK.

Ahead of Glasgow Pride, members displayed their solidarity with the ongoing campaign for marriage equality in Northern Ireland,



Northern Pride

hosting a quiz night which raised £200 to support the ongoing efforts across the water. In London, PCS continued its support for UK Black Pride, the UK's only event dedicated to promoting and celebrating the contributions of the UK's black LGBT+ community, with members speaking to visitors throughout the day.

Our union is a proud supporter of Pride and encourages all members, whether you identify as LGBT+ or as an ally, to attend their local Pride. Members interested in coordinating a PCS presence at a Pride event are also encouraged to contact Proud at proud@pcs.org.uk who will happily assist you.

International Pride

Alan Runswick, HMRC GEC member, shares his experience at Europride 2018.

Europride is a pan-European event, hosted by a different city each year (Stockholm this year), and stages a range of events, including political and cultural, which reflects on LGBT+ equality across Europe.

I was able to spend a day there with my daughter Emma, who is an LGBT+ activist within the doctors' union, the BMA, and who is queer herself.

We attended two discussions at the city centre hub Pride House. The first was on the changing presentation of LGBT+ people in TV and film, and how despite improvements there is a long way to go. Too often if there is an LGBT+ character, their sexuality is the story. This isn't the case for cis heterosexual

characters.

Stereotyped white gay men have increasing representation, while other stories are still largely absent. The discussion noted that bigger steps are being made by channels and platforms that don't require adverts – BBC and Netflix.

There was also an interesting discussion on LGBT+ rights in the workplace, run by the biggest private sector, white collar, trade union.

We were even able to have a chat with their deputy president at the end of the discussion.

The launch event at Pride Park was great. This had speakers, entertainment, and many interesting stalls. We spoke to people on two trade union stalls, the student LGBT+ group, and to a range of

“Solidarity with trans people was expressed from the stage, alongside LGBT+ asylum seekers and others in difficult circumstances”

political parties. These included the Social Democrats, the Left party, and Feminist Initiative.

Emma was able to have discussions about some of the current levels of debate surrounding gender recognition and trans rights in the UK.

This caused some surprise, as the Swedish activists had not come across this. Solidarity with trans people was expressed from the stage, alongside LGBT+ asylum seekers and others in difficult circumstances, with the crowd loudly approving this show of support.

It was a really interesting and enjoyable event. Our day ended with some fabulous entertainment, notably a drag act, the Stockholm Gay Choir, and the choir from Abba the Museum.

From Stonewall to equality

June 28 1969. A date that will forever be synonymous with the LGBT+ community for the events that took place at New York's Stonewall Inn. A night where a group of LGBT+ people rose up against the continued persecution of local police and, for many, kickstarted the modern day global LGBT+ rights movement.

As we approach the 50th anniversary of this monumental event, there is no doubt that the landscape for LGBT+ people in the UK is vastly different to that of 1969, where male homosexuality had only been decriminalised (partially) just two years earlier.

Today LGBT+ people are able to marry, have families, legally protected from discrimination, receive legal recognition of their gender among a whole range of advances that have been

Our Union is a long standing supporter of LGBT History Month

fought for and won over the past five decades. For many there is a belief that the battle for equality has been won.

Yet we know that isn't the case. Trans equality is an issue still up for "debate", non-binary members and the wider community are without legal recognition, ace (asexual) people are presently excluded from legal protections and LGBT+ phobic hate and behaviours remain a constant threat for so many within our workplaces and our communities.

In February we mark the annual LGBT+ History Month, and next year we should take the time to reflect on and celebrate the achievements already achieved, but also



LGBTHM attendees at Glasgow Quiz Night showing their support for LGBT HM

remember the issues that still lie ahead and how we can continue to organise and campaign for proper equality for everyone within the LGBT+ community.

Proud and PCS' Equality Department will be producing materials to assist members

and branches with organising events as part of LGBT+ History Month. If you have an idea or want advice on arranging an event then contact proud@pcs.org.uk and someone will get in touch with you. All contact will be treated in confidence.

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LGBT+ matters is published by the Public and Commercial Services union, 160 Falcon Road, London SW11 2LN

The next edition will appear early 2019. Please email proud@pcs.org.uk with articles, feedback, photos and events listings.

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Dates for your diary

If you're interested in holding an event in your workplace then visit the PCS Equality pages or contact proud@pcs.org.uk

November – Young Workers' Month

Nov 19 – International Men's Day

Nov 20 – International Trans Day of Remembrance

Nov 22 - Dec 22 – Disability History Month

Dec 1 – World AIDS Day

Dec 10 – Human Rights Day

Jan 27 – Holocaust Memorial Day

Feb – LGBT+ History Month

Mar 8 – International Women's Day

Mar 31 – International Trans Day of Visibility

May 17 – International Day Against Homo, Bi and Transphobia

Jul 14 – International Non-Binary People's Day

Sept 23 – Bi Visibility Day

Oct – Black History Month

Oct 21-27 – Asexual Awareness Week

Oct 26 – Intersex Awareness Day