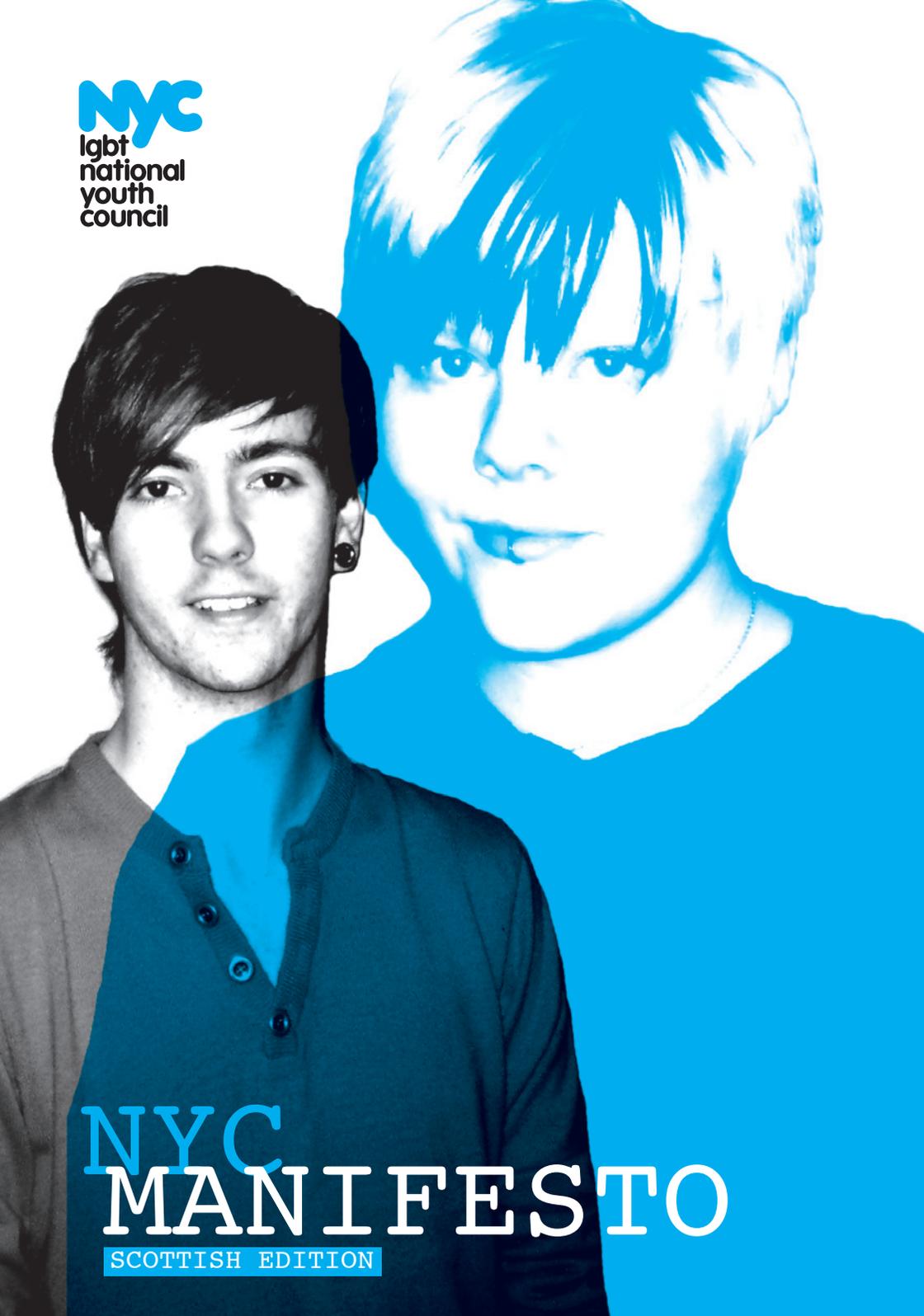




NYC
lgbt
national
youth
council



NYC
MANIFESTO

SCOTTISH EDITION



"Politicians don't reach out to young people. If they want our vote, they need to act like we matter."

NYC INTRODUCTION

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) National Youth Council (NYC) first began in 2003. It brings together young people from across Scotland to address serious issues affecting all LGBT young people.

This year we have worked on a campaign to [Rock your Vote](#), which was developed to educate young people on the importance of engaging with politics and democracy. It also encourages them to register and use their vote. We realise by voting and lobbying for change we can hope to make positive and lasting differences to the lives of LGBT young people.

As part of the campaign we asked over 125 young people to tell us the top issues they would like to see politicians working on. This manifesto contains the eight most popular issues that LGBT young people identified and their vision for a more inclusive, equal and successful Scotland. We ask you to read this and improve the lives of LGBT people across Scotland by supporting us in our campaign to [Rock your Vote](#).

NYC SUMMARY

The LGBT NYC wants you to Rock Your Vote to...

- Support marriage equality for all people in Scotland
- End the discriminatory blood donation ban for men who have sex with men
- Challenge homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in Scotland's schools
- Continue work to tackle homophobic¹ and transphobic hate crime in Scotland
- Make democracy relevant and accessible to young people
- Ensure educational opportunities are available for all young people in Scotland
- Challenge negative representations of young people in society
- Listen to what young people think about society and citizenship across Scotland

1. Biphobia is included within our definition of homophobia. Under Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) (Scotland) Act 2009; all sexual orientations are protected by law in Scotland.

"People should have the choice if they want a marriage or civil partnership. It's a modern world, we need modern laws."



NYC MANIFESTO

The LGBT NYC wants you to rock your vote to...
support marriage equality for all people in Scotland.

We believe that any loving, committed couple should have access to equal partnership rights regardless of whether they are in a same-sex or mixed-sex relationship. Scotland is being left behind when it comes to equal partnership rights.

We want to see:

- The ban lifted on same-sex marriage and mixed-sex civil partnership. We want the Scottish Parliament to legislate to open up marriage to same-sex couples and open up civil partnership to mixed-sex couples. This can be done by repealing section 5(4)(e) of the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977, and section 86(1)(a) of the Civil Partnership Act 2004.
- Religious and humanist celebrants allowed to legally solemnise same-sex marriage. Amendments to the recent Equality Act saw the right for civil partnerships to happen on religious premises in England and Wales. We want to see this brought into effect in Scotland. We call upon the Scottish Parliament to enable approved religious and humanist celebrants – that wish to do so – to have the power to legally solemnise and celebrate same-sex marriage.
- An end to the discrimination faced by transgender people and their partners. We call upon the Scottish Parliament to end the current discrimination that exists against transgender people and their partners, whereby a person cannot currently remain married or in a civil partnership if they wish to seek gender recognition and alter their legally recognised gender under the terms of the Gender Recognition Act 2004. This discrimination would be remedied by equal marriage rights.
- Support for our campaign for marriage equality. By signing up to our Marriage Equality (M.E.2) photo petition along with hundreds of others who have already taken part, you can help us shout out for equal partnership rights for everyone.

The LGBT NYC wants you to rock your vote to...
end the discriminatory blood donation ban for men
who have had sex with men.

Currently men in Scotland who have had sex with men are banned from ever donating blood. We believe this attitude is homophobic and rooted in reactionary stereotypes of gay men from the past. There is a national shortage of blood in Scotland. This policy excludes many potential healthy donors who could save lives.

Many countries around the world including Italy, Spain, Australia, France and Portugal have changed their guidelines on who can donate blood. Figures from these countries demonstrate, at the very least, that infections have not increased as a consequence of the ban being lifted.

As LGBT people, we want the right to donate blood in the same way as everyone else - when it is safe to do so and when we choose to.

We want to see:

- Criteria on who can and cannot donate blood based on up to date clinical, medical and epidemiological evidence.
- Donors assessed according to the risk associated with their sexual behaviour, rather than their sexual orientation.
- The body that advises the UK Government on blood safety - the Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO) - has formed a working group, which is due to report later this year. We call on you to support the recommendations from this review that will ensure men who have sex with men have the right to donate blood the same way as anyone else.
- Political support for the LGBT Network's petition which was submitted to the Scottish Parliament in March 2008 calling for a review of the existing guidelines on who can donate blood. The petition is currently on hold until SaBTO have finished their review.

The LGBT NYC wants you to rock your vote to...
challenge homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying
in Scotland's schools.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying are still a huge problem in schools across Scotland. For the purposes of this manifesto we use the term 'homophobic' as an umbrella concept that includes homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and any other bullying as a result of someone's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Research from LGBT Youth Scotland found that 84% of LGBT young people were aware of homophobic bullying in their schools and 52% had been homophobically bullied at school. Only 15% of those who had been homophobically bullied had reported it to school staff.

In Scottish schools today, bullying too often leads to young people suffering from mental ill health, limited academic achievement, self harm and lowered confidence and self-esteem. It can have a lasting impact on their lives.

LGBT Youth Scotland is continuing in its campaign to challenge homophobic bullying in Scottish schools and we call on you to support this work.

We want to see:

- Schools taking homophobic bullying as seriously as other forms of bullying. Schools must be encouraged to record and act upon incidents of homophobic bullying.
- Teachers and other educational staff supported and trained to recognise homophobic bullying and be supported to challenge it in their policies and practices.
- LGBT awareness lessons or workshops delivered in every school across Scotland. It is important for this awareness to be cascaded across subject boundaries, which will contribute to creating

a climate of respect and inclusion across school communities. We believe this will help develop the capacities set out in A Curriculum for Excellence, whilst also challenging homophobic bullying in Scotland's schools.

- Any young person experiencing bullying to have access to support, guidance and help from a trained and supported staff team.

The LGBT NYC wants you to rock your vote to...
continue work to tackle homophobic and transphobic hate crime in Scotland.

We welcome the recent legislation in the form of the Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) (Scotland) Act 2009, the law that means homophobic and transphobic hate crimes are now recognised by the legal system and treated appropriately. We see a real need, however, to ensure that this legislative change is understood and supported by police, judiciary and also by local and LGBT communities.

We want to see:

- More education and training for those directly affected by this new Act.
- Awareness raising campaigns to empower victims of homophobic or transphobic hate crime to report it. This should include the promotion of 'Third Party Reporting.'
- Campaigns directed at the general public to highlight the new legislation and the serious emotional and physical effects that homophobic hate crime can have.
- Support available for all victims of hate crime throughout, and beyond, the reporting and judicial process.

The LGBT NYC wants you to rock your vote to...
make democracy relevant and accessible to young people.

Recent research undertaken by the LGBT NYC shows that young people in Scotland do care about politics and are passionate about the issues affecting them. 54% saw voting as very important, 38% saw voting as important and 8% saw it as not important. We believe democracy education in school needs to empower young people to have their voices heard in order to make a positive difference on the issues that matter to them.

We want to see:

- Compulsory and good quality political, citizenship and democracy education provided in all schools in Scotland. Education must empower young people to understand the impact that politics has on their lives. It should not end with education in schools. Education delivered in informal educational settings such as youth groups is just as valuable to encourage young people to positively engage in their communities.
- Relevant, accessible and impartial information available to young people about the importance of voting. To be most effective, we believe these resources should be designed by young people, for young people.
- All young people have the opportunity to get involved in local decision making and in designing the services that affect them.
- Real debate into allowing young people to vote at sixteen. We don't believe that lowering the voting age to sixteen without educating young people is the way to go, but we do believe that a powerful message of empowerment can be translated to young people by coupling democracy education in schools with a commitment to lowering the voting age in the near future. The NYC calls on MSPs to lobby Westminster to lower the voting age to sixteen.

"Young people need to feel empowered, to feel that they are being taken seriously. Politicians and decision makers say young people are our future, but what kind of future is it if the voices are being hushed."



The LGBT NYC wants you to rock your vote to...
ensure educational opportunities are available for all
young people in Scotland.

When thinking about leaving school, every young person should have adequate advice and support to help them make the right choice about what to do next. For some young people this may mean going on to college, university or an apprenticeship. For others it may be entering the job market or going into enterprise. Either way, there should be an emphasis on the long-term development of Scotland's young people, equipping them with important skills and experience on which to build careers.

We want to see:

- Proper and appropriate educational and careers guidance available to all young people in education. This must empower young people to make decisions that are right for them. Young people should be made aware of all options open to them.
- The importance of inclusion recognised by schools and other education establishments. This can be achieved, in part, by inviting LGBT organisations to deliver awareness raising workshops and lessons to build a culture of respect and acceptance.
- A commitment from Scottish politicians to make education affordable for all. No young person should face poverty or hardship in pursuit of their education.
- Schools providing up-to-date and relevant personal, social and sexual education about LGBT relationships.
- Formal recognition of the benefit of informal education. Education is not just about exams. Funding for youth projects and groups should be a priority.
- Adequate and tailored support for young people who are not in education, employment and training. There must be an understanding of the variety of reasons why young people 'drop out' and support available to help them move on to positive destinations.

The LGBT NYC wants you to rock your vote to...

challenge negative representation of young people in society.

Young people in society are too often characterised as 'hoodies', 'neds' or 'goths' with nothing positive to contribute. As young people, we are demonised and blamed for all of society's ills. We believe that negative representations of young people are discriminatory, inaccurate and damaging for society. If young people are consistently viewed in a negative way then this is likely to impact on their own attitudes, values and self-esteem. Only by truly recognising the often uncelebrated impact young people are making in society, can we hope to encourage other young people to get involved and make a difference.

We want to see:

- The Press Complaints Commission recognise ageism as a form of discrimination.
- Young people seen as positive contributors to society. We call on you to make others aware of the positive work that many young people do by volunteering and campaigning for positive change in their communities.
- Support for programmes that recognise the achievements and contributions of young people, such as Youth Achievement Awards and the Young Scot Awards.
- Greater efforts aimed at tackling the issues which lead to anti-social behavior in the first place. Young people should be supported through their difficulties rather than stigmatised.

“Student funding is very bad in this country. They should introduce systems like those on the continent where student funding is so much more advanced.”



*"Young people are not
educated in politics as
much as they should be."*

The LGBT NYC wants you to rock your vote to..
listen to what young people think about society and
citizenship across Scotland.

LGBT young people, like all young people, care about their
communities, the environment, foreign affairs, and about
what's going on in their society.

– We call on you to make a commitment to engaging with young
people and listening to our views.

Throughout the LGBT NYC's campaign to [Rock your Vote](#) young people
have consistently proven they have opinions on issues as wide and
varied as any other section of the electorate, and they deserve the
right for their opinions to be sought out, listened to and valued.

NYC CONTACT

If you have any suggestions, or would like to find out more about the LGBT NYC, just get in touch:

nyc@lgbtyouth.org.uk

www.lgbtyouth.org.uk

LGBT Youth Scotland runs youth groups and other services for young people in many areas across Scotland. To find out what is happening in your area, you can get in touch in the following ways:

Email: info@lgbtyouth.org.uk

Text: 07781 481 788

Forums: www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/forums

