

LGBT Committee Constitution



1. DEFINITIONS

- ◆ “LGBT students” refers to all self-defining lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans* students within the University of Sheffield Students’ Union, and is also assumed to include all MSAGI (minority sexuality and gender identity) students, including queer, intersex or asexual students.
- ◆ “LGBT Committee” or “Committee” refers to the 10 members of the LGBT Committee, whose roles are detailed in section 5, who are elected at each Annual General Meeting (AGM), or by by-election at a General Meeting (GM).
- ◆ “Quorum” refers to the minimum number of committee members who must be present at a meeting for decisions to be binding. For committee to have quorum, two thirds of the members must be present.

2. ROLE

The LGBT Committee exists to:

- ◆ promote the views and interests of LGBT students within the Students’ Union and the University of Sheffield.
- ◆ provide support and signposting through organising events, activities and services for LGBT students.
- ◆ counter prejudice and discrimination against LGBT students by campaigning and creating awareness of LGBT-related issues.

whilst continually developing and improving our established aims.

3. OBJECTIVES

3a. LGBT Lounge

The LGBT Lounge can be found on level 2 of the Students’ Union building. It is intended to provide a safe, discrimination-free space for any student wishing to:

- ◆ meet and socialise with other LGBT students.
- ◆ gain access to literature and resources.
- ◆ interact with the Committee, formally or otherwise.

The Lounge also houses the LGBT Library, which provides free access to material that may not be normally accessible to the student body. This includes topical/popular LGBT literature and films, useful for students undertaking research projects or for personal interest.

3b. Weekly socials

The LGBT Committee aims to:

- ◆ provide weekly meetings/activities catering both to non-drinking and drinking students.
- ◆ provide an opportunity for LGBT students to meet with organised activities whilst in a safe environment.

3c. Other socials

The Committee also aims to provide other socials outside the weekly socials, including, for example:

- ◆ trips to the “gay scenes” of other cities.
- ◆ additional nights for LGBT at the Students’ Union.
- ◆ speakers and workshops to raise awareness of LGBT-related issues.

3d. Campaigning

The Committee remains an active voice in campaigning, and campaigns should:

- ◆ run at least twice a year, perhaps once per semester.

- ◆ respond dynamically to issues that the LGBT Committee feels are important.
- ◆ run for the length of time that the Committee feels is appropriate.
- ◆ raise the profile of the LGBT Committee amongst all students, explaining how and why we provide support for LGBT or questioning students.
- ◆ counter discrimination towards (and amongst) the LGBT community.
- ◆ make all students aware of the issues LGBT students face, such as homophobia.
- ◆ promote the equal rights of LGBT students, locally and internationally
- ◆ include a celebration of the history and achievements of the LGBT movement during LGBT history month

3e. Intro/Freshers' Fortnight

During the first two weeks of the first semester of each year, the Committee strives to:

- ◆ introduce new and returning LGBT students to the facilities and services the Committee and the Students' Union provide.
- ◆ create awareness of an LGBT movement within the Union.
- ◆ inform new LGBT students of the activities and services Sheffield has to offer the LGBT community.

3f. Attending NUS LGBT Conferences

The Committee works with the union's delegation to NUS LGBT conference, and smaller NUS LGBT training days. Delegates are encouraged to:

- ◆ attend training and gather information in order to develop the skills to feedback to LGBT students.
- ◆ attend discussions, workshops and guest speakers.
- ◆ influence the views, tactics and action of the NUS LGBT Campaign to benefit the LGBT students of The University of Sheffield.

3g. Other national events

The Committee also aims to attend other national events to:

- ◆ ensure the Students' Union and Committee remain at the forefront of the national LGBT movement, so we are best placed to counter new issues as they arise.
- ◆ give LGBT students the opportunity to be involved in national demonstrations, etc.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- ◆ The full LGBT Committee consists of ten positions. An officer of the Union, as agreed by the Committee, is also present as a non-voting member.
- ◆ The LGBT Committee is supported by a Socials Working Group, consisting of two permanent positions and several open places, convened by the Socials Representative.
- ◆ The Committee and Socials Working Group are voted for annually by AGM, open to any University of Sheffield student who defines as LGBT.
- ◆ The Committee may also call a by-election to fill any unfilled positions after the AGM, and may temporarily co-opt members to fill any empty roles until a by-election can take place. At the committee's discretion, if a by-election is not appropriate (due to insufficient time before the AGM or other concerns), members may be co-opted until the next AGM. If possible, a by-election is always preferred.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

The LGBT Committee consists of nine positions elected by AGM, as well as the Councillor, elected by referendum. These are:

5a. Chair

Chairs meetings of the Committee, except at their own discretion. Facilitates and mediates discussion between Committee members, and keeps Committee members accountable to their roles. Develops agendas with the secretary. Acts as a spokesperson for committee when necessary.

5b. Secretary

Agrees the agendas for meetings with the chair, and takes responsibility for minutes of meetings as well as composing updates sent to LGBT students. Takes responsibility for the majority of the Committee's communication with other organisations, both within and outside the Students' Union.

5c. Treasurer

Oversees the finances of the Committee, and submits budget proposals to the Union when required.

5d. Campaigns Representative: Internal

Organises and oversees all aspects of the Committee's campaigning within the University, including the campaigns detailed in section 3d, and events such as LGBT history month. Remains aware of issues affecting LGBT students in order to respond effectively. Works in harmony with the External Campaigns Representative.

5d. Campaigns Representative: External

Organises and oversees all aspects of the Committee's campaigning within the wider community, including the campaigns detailed in section 3d, and events such as national demonstrations or Pride. Remains aware of issues affecting LGBT students in order to respond effectively. Works in harmony with the Internal Campaigns Representative.

5e. Socials Representative

Takes responsibility for the social activities organised by the Committee, including weekly events and any other, one-off events. Convenes the Socials Working Group, and liaises between the Working Group and the Committee.

5f. Men's Welfare Representative

Takes responsibility for all aspects of the welfare of male students, including sexual and mental health, providing individual support and maintaining the resources available in the LGBT Lounge. Also maintains contact with counselling/health authorities, including those within the University.

5g. Trans Welfare Representative

Takes responsibility for all aspects of the welfare of trans students, including sexual and mental health, providing individual support and maintaining the resources available in the LGBT Lounge. Also maintains contact with counselling/health authorities, including those within the University.

5h. Women's Welfare Representative

Takes responsibility for all aspects of the welfare of female students, including sexual and mental health, providing individual support and maintaining the resources available in the LGBT Lounge. Also maintains contact with counselling/health authorities, including those within the University.

5i. Publicity Representative: Design

Takes responsibility for all creative media (posters, cards, programmes, etc) for the LGBT Committee, including for campaigns, socials, events and general use. Liaises with the Media Representative.

5h. Publicity Representative: Media

Takes responsibility for all social media for the committee, including facebook, twitter and the website. Liaises with and distributes the work of the Design Representative.

5i. Inclusions Representative

Ensures that the Committee and any activities organised by it remain accessible to any students who belong to underrepresented groups and/or may identify as having specific needs. This includes, but is not limited to, BME, disabled and mature students, as well as students who do not drink and students of faith.

5j. Students' Union LGBT Councillor

Elected to the Union Council, represents LGBT students and the decisions of the Committee to Council and keeps the Committee, and wider LGBT student body aware of developments in Council. The Committee may vote to allow the councillor to stand for another role on committee at AGM or GM.

Each Committee member is also expected to maintain a visible presence at socials and campaigns organised by the Committee. Each member may also form and lead a working group to perform tasks within their remit. All LGBT students are eligible to freely join and leave these working groups.

6. ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUPPORT FROM UNION OFFICERS

The designated Students' Union Officer supports the Committee by:

- ◆ giving logistical help in liaising with other Union staff and departments.
- ◆ advising in matters of policy.
- ◆ ensuring action has been taken on decisions made by the Committee.

It is also important that the Officer should remember, and act in accordance with the views and opinions of the Committee in all other areas of their work.

7. ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEETINGS

The LGBT Committee meets weekly during term (and where possible during examination periods), or more often as required by the Committee. Quorum shall be required for any binding decision to be made. Most decisions require a simple majority; however, a two thirds majority vote shall be required for any decisions which are felt to fundamentally affect the running of the Committee or any of its activities.

8. BUDGET AND RESOURCES

The LGBT Committee is allocated a yearly budget. This money is then be allocated to fulfil each of the objectives as appropriate. A majority vote of the Committee shall agree any expenditure of £50 or more, with the treasurer overseeing day-to-day expenses.

9. PROCEDURES FOR GRIEVANCES AND NON-PERFORMANCE

9a. Committee or a Committee member not complying with role

If any person wishes to file a complaint about the Committee, an individual Committee member or the general performance of the Committee, they should submit (in writing or by email) a formal complaint to the supporting Students' Union Officer. This will be raised for discussion at the next Committee meeting. The supporting Officer will reply to the complainant within 14 days, outlining any decisions made as a result of the complaint.

9b. Removal of office or duties

- ◆ If any Committee member misses two meetings in a row or three in a term, without formal apologies which are acceptable to the rest of the Committee, or is absent for five out of ten consecutive meetings (even with apologies) the secretary will put forward a vote of no confidence to the Committee.
- ◆ A no confidence vote may also be raised at any time if a Committee member is deemed not to be fulfilling their role. If a two-thirds majority of the Committee agrees, that member will then be removed from their position on

the Committee. A vote of no confidence requires a member of committee to propose and one to second.

- ◆ A Committee member may be removed from their position or may have specific responsibilities removed by a simple majority resolution of a General Meeting of LGBT students. A GM may be called at the request of at least 20 LGBT students.
- ◆ Any person deemed to have resigned following a resolution of no confidence may stand again in any subsequent election or by-election.

10. THE STATUS OF THE COMMITTEE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STUDENTS' UNION

The LGBT Committee is an elected Representative Committee of the University of Sheffield Students' Union. It is accountable to the Students' Union Council, the Student Executive Committee and ultimately Union Membership.

11. ACCOUNTABILITY

Copies of minutes from each weekly meeting are made available on the Committee website. This constitution is also published on the Committee website.

Last revised 30/4/2012