



## **LGBT+ Committee**

University of Sheffield Students' Union

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# **Constitution**

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## 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 13 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

### 3.1 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.

### **3.2 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.

Whenever possible, LGBT+ committee socials should be held at venues in support of the committee trans\* policy.

### **3.3 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.

### **3.4 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, and 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.

### **3.5 Orientation and Intro Weeks**

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.

### **3.6 Attending NUS LGBT+ Conferences**

The Committee works with the unions 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.

### **3.7 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 thirteen positions. An officer of the Union, as agreed by the Committee, is also present as a non-voting member.
- The Committee 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 committees 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. The committee's decision to postpone a by-election until the AGM will be ratified by an Officer of the Union and/or relevant staff support.

## **5 Responsibilities of individual members**

Each Committee member is 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.

### **5.1 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 vice chair and secretary. Acts as a spokesperson for committee when necessary. Is jointly responsible for overseeing executive committee alongside the vice chair (i.e. secretary, treasurer and inclusions officer), plus roughly half of the remaining committee members. It is suggested but not required that the chair oversees Campaigns, Volunteering and fundraising, and the three welfare officers.

### **5.2 Vice Chair**

Chairs meetings of the Committee when the chair is not present. Develops agendas with the chair and secretary. Is jointly responsible for overseeing executive committee alongside the chair (i.e. secretary, treasurer and inclusions officer), plus roughly half of the remaining committee members. It is suggested but not required that the vice chair oversees events, publicity and social media.

### **5.3 Secretary**

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

#### **5.4 Treasurer**

Oversees the finances of the Committee. Submits budget proposals to the Union when required and maintains a projection of expenditure throughout the year. Takes responsibility for completing and authorising of all finance forms. Liaises with the appointed officer of the union

#### **5.5 Inclusions Officer**

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.

#### **5.6 Men's Welfare Officer**

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. Maintains contact with counselling/health authorities, including those within the University.

#### **5.7 Women's Welfare Officer**

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. Maintains contact with counselling/health authorities, including those within the University.

#### **5.8 Trans Welfare Officer**

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. Maintains contact with counselling/health authorities, including those within the University.

#### **5.9 Campaigns Officer**

Organises and oversees all aspects of the Committees campaigning within the University and wider community, 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. Liaises with both publicity officers and the secretary to ensure adequate publicity for all campaigns. Oversees the development of the trans\* policy and Trans\*Map application. The campaigns officer is free to convene a working group to help with this development if they feel it appropriate to do so.



### **5.10 Volunteering and Fundraising Officer**

Takes responsibility for recruiting and training all volunteers for the PSHE volunteering programme. Coordinates volunteering sessions with local schools. Takes responsibility for committee fundraising throughout the year.

### **5.11 Socials Officer**

Takes responsibility for planning and arrangements for all the social activities organised by the Committee, including weekly events and any other, one-off events. The socials representative should ensure that at least one committee member is present and visible at all socials. Liaises with both publicity officers and the secretary to ensure adequate publicity for all events.

### **5.12 Publicity Design Officer**

Takes responsibility for all creative media (posters, cards, programmes, etc) for the LGBT+ Committee, including for campaigns, socials, events and general use. Designs the committee handbook containing all relevant information about the committee and its activities to be distributed throughout the academic year. Liaises with the Publicity Media Officer.

### **5.13 Publicity Media Officer**

Takes responsibility for all social media for the committee, including Facebook, Twitter and the website. Regularly posts on Facebook and Twitter on behalf of the committee. Oversees and maintains the blog on the LGBT+ website. Liaises with and distributes the work of the Publicity Design Officer.

## **6 Representative Positions**

The LGBT+ Committee is committed to inclusion and representation for all students who identify with a minority sexuality or gender. As such, committee members commit to fulfill additional representative positions for groups into which they identify. The duties of committee members holding representative positions are to be overseen by the inclusions officer. It is suggested that these representative positions should include (but are not restricted to):

- Bisexual
- Asexual
- Non-binary/ Genderqueer

- Disabled
- BME
- Women
- Mature/ Postgraduate
- International

### **6.1 Unfilled Positions**

Any position not filled by a committee member following the AGM should be open to a by-election in a general meeting. Members elected to fill such a position will be considered full members of the committee with a vote in all committee decisions until the next AGM.

### **6.2 Additional Positions**

Additional positions should be considered by the committee upon student request and established by a majority vote of committee members. Upon the addition of a new representative position, a general meeting should be held to conduct a by-election for the new role.

### **6.3 Responsibilities**

Committee members holding a representative position should be a point of contact for students and should keep in mind the issues faced by their representative group in meetings of the committee. A caucus/ open consultation with students identifying into each representative group should be held at least once per year, with the meeting being chaired by the committee member holding that particular representative position. The committee should use this consultation as an opportunity to gain feedback and information about issues faced by each of the groups and ways in which the committee could address any such issues.

## **7 Arrangements for support from the Students' Union**

The designated Students Union Officer is responsible for overseeing the budget and general finances of the committee as well as providing general support to the treasurer. The Officer and/or the Specialist Development Coordinator (Equality and Liberation) support 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 relevant staff members consider and act in accordance with the views and opinions of the Committee in all other areas of their work.

## **8 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.

## **9 Budget and resources**

The LGBT+ Committee applies for and is allocated a yearly budget. This money is then to be allocated to fulfil each of the objectives as appropriate. A majority vote of the Committee shall agree any expenditure of £100 or more, with the treasurer overseeing day-to-day expenses. Comprehensive records should be kept of all expenditure.

## **10 Procedures for grievances and non-performance**

### **10.1 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.

### **10.2 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.

## **11 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.

## **12 Accountability**

Copies of minutes from each weekly meeting are made available on the Committee website. This constitution is also published on the Committee website. Committee meetings should remain open to students at the discretion of the committee.